

Global Displacements: Geographies of work and industrial restructuring in the  
Dominican Republic

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## Abstract

Many accounts of the globalization of production in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries focus on the boom of new foreign direct investment in so-called global factories in the global South. *Global Displacements* shifts the focus of academic inquiry to an equally pervasive moment of transnational capitalist production: the collapse of labour-intensive employment strategies and the restructuring of spatial and social divisions of labour in their wake. Drawing on ethnographic methods and historical accounts of economic change in the Dominican Republic's northern Cibao region, I consider the restructuring of the country's export apparel industry, the most long-standing and successful in the circum-Caribbean.

Over the past decade, facing increased competition for US market share and a new regime of trade regulation without global quotas, garment firms in the Dominican Republic undertook a process of restructuring, including the retrenchment of the majority of the country's garment workforce. I explore this process from the perspective of four sociospatial locations: Dominican firms integrated into transnational production assemblages, the embodied labour geographies of former garment workers, the layered histories of accumulation and disinvestment of the Cibao region and its border with Haiti, and my own position as a researcher. Bringing the insights of deconstruction and Marxist and feminist theory to bare on a critical ethnography of industrial restructuring, I examine geographies of production as constituted by displacements: that is, the complex mechanism of inclusion in and exclusion from circuits of capital accumulation that reproduce subjects and places with difference. My study of displacements in the Dominican Republic illustrates how accumulation proceeds through the reproduction of hierarchies of labour, premised upon reworking the violent abstractions of race, gender and nation along existing and new spatial contours of profit-making and disinvestment.

Geographies of work and industrial restructuring in the Dominican Republic reveal problematic assumptions that lie behind much contemporary analysis of industrial change. Many accounts frame global industrial restructuring since the 1970s as a process of outward capitalist expansion, incorporating new places and new subjects into transnational labour processes. Such a framing reduces complex, nonlinear experiences of industrial transformation to a teleological sequence, where industrialization serves a marker of "development," signifying a measure of one's closeness or distance from Eurocentric modernity. By decentering teleological assumptions of industrialization, the geography of displacements presented in the following pages demonstrates industrial restructuring to be an on-going reworking of industrial and deindustrial processes irreducible to fixed and sequential categories of the postindustrial, newly industrializing, or so-called developing worlds.

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## Chapter 1: Global displacements and the Third World factory frame

Do we need now to repeat that unless we assume this very peculiar type of determination once we have identified it, we will never be able to think the possibility of political action, or even the possibility of theoretical practice itself, that is, very precisely, the essence of the object (the raw material) of *political* and *theoretical* practice, that is, the structure of the ‘current situation’ (in theory and practice) to which these practices apply.

- Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 210

This is a geography, not of jobs but of power relations, of dominance and subordination, of enablement and influence, and of symbols and signification.

- Doreen Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour*, p. 3

The violence of abstraction produces all kinds of fetishes: states, race, normative views of how people fit into and make places in the world. A geographical imperative lies at the heart of every struggle for social justice; if justice is embodied, it is then therefore always spatial, which is to say, part of a process of making a place.

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference,” p. 16.

### 1. Introduction

Contemporary accounts of globalization are defined by a fundamental reorganization of industrial production. Since the 1970s, studies of the substantial surge in foreign direct investment outside of “core” capitalist countries have underwritten an understanding of a new structural relation between the global North and the global South.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have argued that the global South is no longer primarily enrolled in

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<sup>1</sup> The disjunction between nomenclature (i.e. North/South and First World/Third World), history, and geography is an effect of the concern that lies at the heart of my dissertation. I use the term “Third World” in order to identify a convention of thought that has come to identify the “Third World” with a fixed, non-coeval “Other.” This, of course, is not the term’s original meaning, stemming from the Bandung process in the 1950s and strongly associated with the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War. It should be noted that Latin American and Caribbean states, many formally independent since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, were largely peripheral to that process until after the Cuban revolution. While authors and activists assert the term “Third World” to recuperate its former meaning as an alternative to imperial capitalism and Soviet-style communism, I use the North/South distinction, following Walden Bello amongst others, as it has been adopted by anti-capitalist and south-south solidarity movements during the neoliberal period. The North/South distinction refers to a relation of power premised upon the articulation of exploitation with

global capital accumulation via the extraction of raw materials for industrial processes in the global North. Rather, in the post-WWII period, the industrial labour process has been reorganized socially and spatially in tandem with the development of communications technology and the deregulation of trade and investment, incorporating workers in the global South in low-wage industrial production. The “global factory” – foreign-owned branch plants producing goods for markets in north Atlantic countries – is iconic of this transformation in the transnational organization of production as well as the *sin qua non* of capitalist development debates in countries that have wedded their economic futures to attracting foreign direct investment in labour-intensive production. While much critical attention has been devoted to these workplaces and the complex social processes that produce labour for these new factories, these large and diverse literatures generally leave industrialization, as a marker of development and a measure of one’s closeness or distance from an attendant Eurocentric modernity, untouched.

A deep-seated belief in capitalism as an expansionist system enrolling growing numbers of people in its relations of production and consumption lies at the heart of accounts of Third World industrialization. For this reason, as I will argue in the pages that follow, the reordering of post-WWII production, in particular since the 1970s, has been circumscribed by studies of the labour process in factories at a particular moment: the introduction of a new technical division of labour into a Third World place.

Analyzing these geographies through the lens of slices of space-time defined by new

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domination. More than a determined geography, the premise of my study is that north/south differences are continually remade through the rearticulation of exploitation/domination and the reworking of space/power. The distinction, therefore, does not correspond to a neat geographical divide; rather, its spatiality is the object of study. See Mohanty (2003) who argues for a plural approach and Gilmore (2008) for a recuperation of the Third World as an overdetermined, dialectical “Third.”

capital investment in the global South reinforces what I call the “Third World factory frame.”<sup>2</sup> This factory frame anchors a teleological imaginary of transnational production indexed by the expansion of wage labour geographically and socially, focusing on the inclusion of previously non-waged subjects, embodied in the figure of the young, Third World woman, entering into the factory workforce in so-called Greenfield sites. The factory frame has the effect of tethering production to a notion of industrialization, stretching out simultaneous and interrelated forms of livelihood along a sequential, historicist trajectory. Ultimately, the factory frame reworks heterogeneous livelihood strategies in shared space-time into narratives of transition and objects of development. Identifying the teleological assumptions of this mode of inquiry is one step towards deepening our understanding of the on-going re-workings of uneven social and spatial divisions of labour.

Underlying my research and writing, however, is my belief that the project of de-centering Western teleologies, like that symbolized by the Third World factory frame, is a contribution to, but not a substitute for, a political project of forging global connections differently. “Deconstruction,” Spivak has written, “cannot found a politics...” Its purchase, she continues, is in making “founded political programs more useful by making their in-built problems more visible” (1993: 121). If deconstructing texts opens a space in thought to grasp the conditions of possibility for the structure of thought, the conundrum of engaging with the “structure of the current situation,” that is, the ethico-

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<sup>2</sup> The “Third World factory frame” resembles an “essential section,” a term used by Althusser to describe Hegel’s rendering of historical time. The “essential section” presents itself as a splice of historical time “in which all the elements of the whole are given in a co-presence, itself the immediate presence of their essences, which thus become immediately *legible in them*” (1997: 94, emphasis in the original). This is similar to what Massey calls “the prisonhouse of synchrony” (2004).

political problem of *praxis* as the link between thought and action, cannot be continually deferred. It is only by engaging with the messiness of daily life, the irreducibility of experience, and the complexity of difference that one might contribute to redefining the ways of confronting and transforming powerful abstractions like capitalism and global production, and their normative assumptions about how people and places marked by difference fit into circuits of production, exchange and consumption. The project that I call displacements, then, tacks between deconstructionist and critical ethnographic approaches. To unseat Eurocentric framings of production geographies, I seek not only to make visible the conditions of possibility for such visions to be reproduced, but also to contribute to a critical political imaginary of industrial production as a contingent, structurally uneven and volatile process reconfiguring the geographies of capitalism. I develop this imaginary through an account of displacements: the complex mechanism of inclusion and exclusion iteratively producing subjects and places, and making the renewal of capitalist accumulation possible. Bringing together deconstruction and critical ethnography, my goal is to wedge open space for imagining different sorts of connections across difference and distance. “The challenge,” writes Mohanty, “is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully”(2003: 226). My efforts are embedded in the politics of my own location, as an activist, teacher and researcher in North America, and my commitment to a geographical imperative of social justice: a politics engaged with constructing solidarities across social and spatial positions of difference that are transformative, mutual, and non-homologous (see Gilmore, above; also Gilmore 2008).

If the Third World factory frame reinforces teleological assumptions of production geographies (a point I will expand upon below), what are the alternatives for understanding the social and spatial relations that constitute the dynamic and uneven geographies of global production? In the chapters that follow, I draw on ethnographic methods and historical accounts of regional economic change in the Dominican Republic to consider the decline of an accumulation strategy, the transnational production of apparel. In the simplest sense, my purpose in conducting fieldwork has been to shift the focus of academic inquiry from the boom of new foreign capital investment in so-called global factories and attendant debates about wage labour, gender politics, and development to an equally pervasive moment of global capitalist production: the collapse of labour-intensive employment and the restructuring of spatial and social divisions of labour. What emerges when the lens of academic inquiry is shifted to the dynamics of factory flight and disinvestment is, on the one hand, an inquiry into the politics of representation that links changes in capital accumulation to a sequential narrative of development, and, on the other hand, the politics of gender, race, class and nation that shape geographies of livelihood on the unstable frontier of dis/accumulation.

In the rest of this introduction, I begin to wedge open space for an alternative imaginary of global production by deconstructing the epistemological premise of the Third World factory frame and proposing an alternative theoretical framework of uneven geographies of production. In section two, I discuss the predilection of industrial production towards a teleological narrative of Eurocentric development and draw on Foucault's idea of the modern episteme to understand why this is the case. The linking of "value" to abstract, homogeneous labour in production is not only the premise of wage

exploitation, but the condition of possibility for mapping “the economy” onto a sequential history of Eurocentric development. In section three, I draw on this perspective to consider Marxist and feminist writings on post-WWII industrial geographies. I argue that the Third World factory frame has been stabilized through a particular story about capitalist crisis in the global North in Marxist writings on globalization. Feminist scholars have adopted two strategies to de-center homogeneous labour and abstract accounts of globalization, one that I call “constructionist” and the other “subjectivist.” I discuss the contributions of each while arguing that neither strategy has sufficiently addressed the underlying stage-ism inherent in the dominant narratives of the globalization of production in the social sciences. I then turn briefly in section four to post-structuralist approaches to de-centering capitalism in the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham. While Gibson-Graham interrogates teleological accounts of industrialization and deindustrialization to argue for a de-centered study of economic relations, the latter is premised on fixing an outside to capitalism, rather than grappling with the dynamic relationship between formally capitalist and non-capitalist livelihoods. Having explored Marxist, feminist and poststructuralist approaches to understanding contemporary changes in industrial geography, I turn, in section five, to present an alternative way of thinking about global production, one that brings together an understanding of spatial divisions of labour with postcolonial theories of labour, social difference, and place. In section six, I sketch out how I have gone about conducting a study of displacements organized around three sociospatial locations: garment firms, garment workers and a sub-national region where the industry consolidated in the Dominican Republic called the Cibao (see map). Through studies of the relative position



of place and key subjects (current and former garment workers, managers, and owners), I explore how the meaning of value was reshaped in relation to changing patterns of factory production. I also take up the question of my own position as a researcher in the context of multi-sited ethnography across differences of power. The final section outlines the dissertation chapters. Each chapter draws on these three specific sociospatial locations – that of firms, workers and the region – to develop an understanding of how displacements constitute the iterative production of place and of raced and gendered labour, a process that renews spatial divisions of labour in well-documented and unexpected ways.

## *2. Industrialization as a Eurocentric sequence*

Eurocentric notions of industrialization represent the latter as a process of outward capitalist expansion, incorporating new places into a progression that is at once volatile and linear. New centers of industrial production are understood as iterations of the original center of capitalist industry, England. An example of one such linear story is presented by Storper and Walker:

...[N]ot only does the forward edge of industrialization push outward, enlarging the effective core territory of the capitalist world, but the central places of the world economy are usually associated with the newest of the principal countries or meta-regions which have most recently shifted into industrial high gear. (1989: 11)

The diffusionist model of industrialization is but one of several spatial imaginaries that continue to produce the global economy as comprised of nation-states located along an industrial spectrum: advanced industrial, newly industrializing, and Third World or

developing. How is this possible in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean where industrial processes have been undertaken throughout the twentieth century and, many would argue, long before? The teleology of industrialization locks particular regions into a seemingly perpetual, hamster-wheel-like trajectory of “development,” a trajectory that eludes an industrial or post-industrial “stage.” “[S]een through the mirror of concepts minted in Europe or the US,” Hualde explains in reference to Mexican industry, “the reflection of Latin American reality seems always to be deformed... making it impossible to speak of pure categories” (2003: 94).<sup>3</sup> Latin American and Caribbean production is given meaning through derivative forms, while, simultaneously, the varieties of actually existing production relations are obfuscated in the enduring epistemic centers of industry (Castillo in Ibid: 95).

Why does industrial production seem to substitute so easily for a teleological history of development as industrialization? In his explanation of European systems of representation, or *epistemes*, Foucault analyzes the transformation of the problem of value from a self-evident *sign*, premised on a system of equivalences where commodities are comparable and exchangeable with one another, to value as *product*, the exteriority of an internalized, hidden relation to labour (1970 [1966]: 254). Foucault argues that the preoccupation of the modern science of political economy with the relationship between labour and its product, value, is the manifestation of a new mode of thought, the modern episteme. This transformation is made possible through the slow dissolution of the space of representation of the classical episteme<sup>4</sup> that sustains identities and differences through

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<sup>3</sup> All translations of Spanish texts to English in the dissertation are mine.

<sup>4</sup> The classical episteme should not be confused with “classical” political economy whose foundational figures mark the transition, for Foucault’s genealogy, to the modern episteme of economy (i.e., Smith,

comparison, self-identity to self-identity. Representation as self-evident identity and difference, where knowledge is available through visual observation, is made possible by what Foucault describes as an epistemological surface, the table, exemplified by Linnean botany or the bookkeeping practices of medieval merchants (Poovey 1998). The modern episteme is marked by the fracturing of the table: the negativity of the empirical as a system that attributes identity through the ordering of forms in space becomes dislodged from the categories of thought to know this order.<sup>5</sup> Representation “doubles onto itself” and the great horizontal plane of apparent self-identity is toppled, thereby inaugurating the hidden forces of Eurocentric History:

European culture is inventing for itself a depth in which what matters is no longer identities, distinctive characters, permanent tables with all their possible paths and routes, but great hidden forces developed on the basis of their primitive and inaccessible nucleus, origin, causality, and history. (Ibid: 251)

Foucault thus identifies the conditions of possibility for an economic system comprised of reciprocal exchanges to be rearticulated as a system of production, defined by, in Foucault’s formulation, labour determined by relations of production. A theory of production becomes necessary to understand relations of exchange; the latter present

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Ricardo, Malthus and Marx). For a later interpretation of the birth of the modern economy, see Foucault’s essay “Governmentality” (1991).

<sup>5</sup> Foucault summarizes the transition in the Western episteme as follows: “negatively, the domain of the pure forms of knowledge becomes isolated, attaining both autonomy and sovereignty in relation to all empirical knowledge, causing the endless birth and rebirth of a project to formalize the concrete and to constitute, in spite of everything, pure sciences; positively, the empirical domains become linked with reflections on subjectivity, the human being, and finitude, assuming the value and function of philosophy...” (1970 [1966]: 249). Like all post-structuralist thinkers in Western philosophy, the dialectic is the insurmountable limit and condition of possibility of thought. A decade later, Foucault recapitulates this epistemic movement in juridico-political terms as the victory of the dialectic to codify a rationality that “ensures the historical constitution of a universal subject, a reconciled truth, and a right in which all particularities have their ordained place” (1997: 59). The dialectic has shifted from an explanatory mechanism to the movement to be explained; in fact, Foucault states that the purpose of his lectures on the juridico-political origins of the modern state is to explain the birth of the dialectic, the mode of Western thought that creates the Subject and the Present as the endpoint of its universal, sequential movement (236-237 cf. Nancy 2002 [1997]).

themselves as a composite state concealing their actual determination, labour. Labour thus becomes the ultimate and sole determination of value, creating the possibility of production as “a great linear, homogeneous series” (Ibid: 255). Foucault continues:

All labour gives a result which, in one form or another, is applied to a further labour whose cost it defines; and this new labour participates in turn in the creation of a value, etc. This *accumulation in series* breaks for the first time with the reciprocal determinations that were the sole active factors in the Classical analysis of wealth. *It introduces, by its very existence, the possibility of a continuous historical time... At the level of the conditions of possibility pertaining to thought*, Ricardo, by dissociating the creation of value from its representativity, made possible *the articulation of economics upon history*. (255, emphasis added).

The modern European narrative of industrialization is perhaps best described by this notion of *accumulation in series*, premised on an understanding of labour as homogeneous, as wage-labour, and the sequential addition of Labour as History. This epistemological change transforms actually existing heterogeneity of economic forms into a temporal sequence. Space is thereby reduced to sequential distance, a historicist “not yet” that reworks heterogeneous livelihood strategies in shared space-time into narratives of failed transitions, derivative *-izations*, and a continued reworking of the singular problem of Eurocentric capitalist development (Chakrabarty 2000; Fabian 1983).

Foucault’s analysis of the isomorphism between commodity production and knowledge production of capitalism is plagued by important shortcomings. Postcolonial scholars have drawn on Foucault’s insights while simultaneously elucidating the ways in which his erasure of colonial connections and his thinking within the limits of Europe make his critique possible. I draw on Foucault’s insights similarly to frame an inherent tendency in the representation of production, its Eurocentric predilection, while

recognizing that this framework in itself is premised on erasures of colonial connections, specifically what Quijano describes as “the coloniality of power” in the context of the Americas: a geographic and social distribution and articulation of multiple forms of labour organized along hierarchies of race, gender and nation that lies at the center of Eurocentric modernity and is the condition of possibility of the “modern” episteme itself (Dussel 1998; Quijano 2000). Thus, while Foucault’s account is useful for an initial interrogation of the dominant framing of industrial change through historicist narratives, we will see that the limits of his genealogy precisely denote the need for multiple interventions to displace Euro-centric thinking.

### *3. Homogeneous Labour and the Third World factory frame*

In this section, I begin by tracing the emergence of the Third World factory frame in the texts of theorists of contemporary capitalist crisis. In the Marxist and institutionalist literatures, the presence of export manufacturing in places with few or no factories (often rural sites dubbed ‘Greenfields’) contributes to an analysis of capitalist crisis in so-called advanced capitalist countries premised on the flexibilization of Labour (that is, labour hitherto constructed as homogeneous). Feminist scholars seek to destabilize this rendering of crisis premised on the singularity of Fordist labour by studying the gendered politics of mass production in the Third World. I review both the Marxist and institutionalist analysis of Fordist crisis and the feminist literature on global production. The feminist literature draws on ethnography and feminist theory to unseat homogeneous Labour through the study of the cultural politics of identity as the condition

of possibility of export production. Despite its intent, I argue that this tradition in feminist political economy often inadvertently stabilizes “global production” as the unilateral movement of foreign capital to “new” sites and “new” subjectivities. The focus on subject production in factory work tends to marginalize analysis of the spatially-fragmented and non-linear trajectories of production, thus reproducing the “Third World factory frame.”

*a. Marxist/Institutionalist Constructs of Third World Mass Production*

Marxist and institutionalist scholars identify a shift in global capitalism beginning in the early 1970s. Over the course of the decade, manufactured export growth from the global South outpaced raw material and food exports leading the earliest analysts of this period to identify a “new” international division of labour, or NIDL (Dicken 1998; Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye 1980). Like much of the early literature, analysis of changing trends was largely descriptive. For example, Fröbel and colleagues drew on surveys of German textile and apparel firms to track increased outsourcing to “peripheral” countries by German firms. They argued that these new “world market” factories (i.e., producing for rich consumer markets in the global North) were the clearest expression of a structural crisis of capitalism that had exhausted rationalization practices in Germany. Assuming a zero-sum distribution of wage labour, the NIDL thesis predicted that increasing structural unemployment in OECD countries would be accompanied by increasing precarious wage employment of the “reserve army” in mass production in the global South.

During the 1980s, this zero-sum interpretation was modified. Institutionalists, exemplified by Piore and Sable, and Marxists, exemplified by David Harvey, argued that export factories in Third World places were part of a shift from Fordism to “flexible” forms of production. Flexibility responded to the problem of “rigidity” in Fordist mass production. Piore and Sabel argued that a contemporary crisis of overproduction was due largely to a mismatch between production technologies (mass production) and consumption in industrial countries (1984). Market saturation in the heartlands of capitalist accumulation had been exacerbated by the rise of Third World mass production (Ibid: 187-8). Based on the resilience of small-firm clusters in Italy, Piore and Sabel sought to recuperate a lost past of “flexible specialization” in capitalist production in Western Europe and project it into a kinder, gentler future for US economic hegemony (Ibid; ch. 10-11). Mass production in Third World countries could be sustained, they argued, if North Atlantic governments aided in shifting advanced capitalist production to more flexible, distributive arrangements.<sup>6</sup>

David Harvey contributed to the theorization of Fordist crisis by positing what he termed a new labour “eclecticism” as an aberration to the capitalist mode of production, and arguing that this aberration was a phase in the accumulation cycle of capital. In his

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<sup>6</sup> Piore and Sabel’s text is primarily interested in shifting the paradigm of industrial policy in the US. Their very perfunctory treatment of the international division of labour essentially amounts to positing a linear shift of the colonial division of labour from the extraction of raw materials to the production of mass consumer goods. They argue that “flexible specialization and mass production could be combined in a unified *international* economy. In this system, the old mass-production industries might migrate to the underdeveloped world, leaving behind in the industrialized world the high-tech industries and the traditional dispersed conglomerations in machine tools, garments, footwear, textiles, and the like—all revitalized through the fusion of traditional skills and high technology” (279, emphasis in the original). In reference to apparel, Raphael Kaplinsky has appropriately called such an arrangement “industrial monocropping” wherein the relative value of consumer goods is eroded to that of traditional colonial commodities like sugar, coffee, and cacao through the reproduction of value hierarchies in world markets (1993).

theoretical treatment of materialist dialectics, Harvey argues that the accumulation cycle detailed by Marx provides the arena for the reconfiguration of the capitalist mode of production. Accumulation prior to crisis is marked by proliferating, seemingly disorganized social forms of production; following capitalist crisis, capitalism does not return to its *status quo ante* but rather subsumes these new forms within a reconfigured capitalism:

The accumulation cycle provides an ‘open space’ within which productive forces and social relations can adjust to each other. The speculative activity associated with the upswing allows individualized and private experimentation with new products, new technologies (including organizational forms), new physical and social infrastructures, *even whole new cultures, class configurations, and forms of class organization and struggle. This atomistic ferment of experimentation creates much that is superfluous and ephemeral but simultaneously lays the material basis for later phases of accumulation...* The crash rationalizes and restructures production *so as to eliminate extraneous elements* – both old and new alike. (1999 [1982]: 326, emphasis added)

In his monograph, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), Harvey synthesizes the various Marxist accounts of flexibility (as well as Piore and Sabel’s institutionalist account) into his reading of the capitalist accumulation cycle through the notion of “flexible accumulation.” The “atomistic ferment” of post-Fordism<sup>7</sup> is marked by, on the one hand, rationalizing practices in centers of mass production in North Atlantic countries and, on the other hand, outsourcing of mass production to Third World

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<sup>7</sup> By implication, post-Fordism then is an “upswing” following the crash of the early 1970s. The consolidation and contraction to come in Third World mass production is predicted by Erica Schoenberger and seemingly evident in the turn to “upgrading” and “flexible” production in the literature on industrial policy in the global South (1997). I am arguing that these production logics simply cannot be understood as sequential phases that map onto different macro-regions of the global economy. Moreover, “mass production” and “flexible production,” as I discuss in more detail in chapter 3, are much harder to discern than one would assume by reading the literature on upgrading (Ibid.). Furthermore, wedded to a stage-ist logic, neither descriptor (mass or flexible) places any analytical significance on the way in which hundreds of sites worldwide are unevenly enrolled into and expelled from factory production – mass, flexible, or more likely, some combination. Harvey’s recent work on accumulation by dispossession addresses the latter to a degree but continues to portray the vicissitudes of this process as a series of homogeneous stages motored solely by global capitalist crisis (Harvey 2003: especially 163-4).



countries. The former is evidenced by the proliferation of small businesses and paternalist and 'ethnic' forms of labour control associated with these diverse business arrangements. Harvey associates deindustrialization and outsourcing with Marx's notion of *absolute* surplus value. The rate of profit is increased by eroding wages and shifting to lower-cost regions, practices predominant in the NIDL thesis. This tendency is cross-cut with technological innovation and organizational change, associated with the Marxian concept of *relative* surplus value. Here, the profit rate is increased by decreasing the ratio of necessary-to-surplus labour by deploying labour more efficiently; this is the thrust of Piore and Sabel's "second industrial divide." While parsing out the absolute and relative components of surplus value, Harvey rightly argues that the challenge for analysts is to understand how the two combine. And yet, in his own account, Harvey places great emphasis on the novelty of non-Fordist labour processes in the heartlands of capital and mass production in its periphery, adding that these form "a rather sobering vision of capitalism's supposedly progressive history" (Ibid: 187). Rather than rethink the limits of this progressive history, however, Harvey deems this labour eclecticism to form "alternative systems of labour" (i.e., alternative to the Fordist employment relation) and ascribes to these the character of a response to the crisis of Fordism in so-called advanced capitalist economies (Ibid: 192).

In the Marxist and institutionalist literatures, then, the emergence of mass production in the Third World is drawn upon as evidence of a shift in the heartlands of capital to a new, post-Fordist phase of accumulation. Mass production is seen as a kind of past that is to be superceded by a new kind of production, the diversity of which is taken as evidence of a transition in capitalist History. One of the conditions for ascribing

mass production to capitalism's past is the presence of factories producing mass consumer goods in capitalist peripheries. Analyses of post-Fordism rest, first, on positing multiple labour forms as evidence of capitalist crisis (as aberration, as a stage prior to synthesis), and, second, projecting spatial divisions of labour along a historicist trajectory. Mass production in the global South is thus enrolled as evidence of a new post-Fordist accumulation cycle in the global North and as a stage of derivational industrialization in the global South (e.g., late, peripheral or both). Furthermore, the incorporation of Third World women into export manufacturing is presented as an external consequence to capitalist restructuring rather than inherent to it. It is in this spatial and temporal sense that the Third World factory frame anchors the imaginary of a new phase of capitalist production centered on transformations in the global North.

*b. Feminist Approaches to Global Production*

Feminist scholars argue that such analyses inscribe an enduring male/female binary upon our understanding of the global economy. Attention in the critical literature (Marxist, post-Marxist) to abstract flows of capital and labour reproduces capitalism, formal institutions and experts as the primary agents of globalization, impacting on a "feminized" local, a passive space acted upon by capital (Freeman 2001; Gibson-Graham 1996; Hart 2002; Massey 1994; Nagar, Lawson, McDowell, and Hanson 2002). In contrast to this abstract globalism, feminist scholars have long followed the frontier of capital investment to new sites of mass production in order to explicate the multiple social relations that produce women as labouring subjects in these new arrangements of

transnational production. Feminist studies of transformations in transnational divisions of labour draw on ethnography and situated histories of economic change to de-center homogeneous Labour by demonstrating the multiple ways in which gender matters for the reorganization of capitalist production.

This substantial and diverse literature can be divided into two approaches, a division that is influenced by broader theoretical trends. The first, which I call *constructionist* (cf. Demeritt 2002), destabilizes the figure of homogeneous Labour by studying the cultural and political conditions that incorporate women into industrial workforces. These studies create knowledge of a Third World woman worker in order to destabilize assumptions of industrial work and class consciousness premised on the masculinized figure of industrial labour. The second, which I call *subjectivist*, focuses on the contingency of the category itself. These scholars argue that “women workers” are not recruited into export factories; rather feminized labour is produced (or not) within the production process itself. Yet in de-centering homogeneous Labour through representation of invisibilized subjects in the former literature, and by hollowing out the subject as an effect of capital in the latter, the feminist literature still hews too closely to Eurocentric understandings of the space and time of capitalist production: a transition to industrial capitalism is largely assumed rather than interrogated. In other words, the feminist literature interrogating transnational divisions of labour destabilizes homogeneous Labour, but largely does not address the historicist *accumulation in series* that it underwrites. The “Third World factory frame” thus remains only partially displaced.

Constructionist approaches to new divisions of labour elaborate upon the nexus of patriarchy and capitalism in relation to women factory workers in Asia and Latin America (e.g., Elson and Pearson 1981; Mies 1986). Scholars' analyses of factory work and exploitation are largely descriptive, focusing attention on the transformation of household dynamics in relation to women's wage labour. In studies of East and Southeast Asia, the "factory daughter" has been a prominent figure (e.g., Wolf 1992). Scholars draw on village ethnographies and intensive work with households to explore the ambivalent experience of a "neophyte" female workforce (Ong 1987; Ong 1991). Their findings reveal that young women's exploitation in these new factories yields contradictory effects on their status in the home – intensifying the obligations of dutiful daughters, recreating moral codes and taboos around women's sexuality, while also leading to more autonomy in marriage decisions and household spending. In Latin America and the Caribbean, scholars link the entry of women into manufacturing more closely to the dissolution of male-headed households, connected to migration, structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and the related demise of import-substitution industrialization (Cravey 1998; Fernández-Kelly 1983; Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Safa 1995). The conditions of social reproduction – especially women's position in households – accounts for women's high exploitability in industrial work as well as increased autonomy in the domestic sphere. Like their counterparts in Asia, women factory workers' social position is further regulated by moral codes reproduced between the workplace and the household. In short, the household-workplace nexus proves to be an ambivalent locus of cultural subjection and negotiated autonomy.

I describe this literature as constructionist because it largely stabilizes the category of “Third World woman” in order to explain how the category fits within a new international division of labour. To do this, scholars draw upon multiple spaces of women’s subjection – primarily the household, but also the village and the factory – to theorize sex and gender oppression inseparable from the “new” international division of labour in the form of export factories. In the context of expanding capitalist relations that demand not women workers but merely exploitable labour, these scholars look to the realm of social and cultural reproduction to understand why “women increasingly become the bearers of labour so defined” (Fernández-Kelly 1983: 152).

What I call subjectivist approaches deconstruct the predetermined subject category of “Third World woman worker” by theorizing the workings of power that contingently produce feminized labour and its subordinate incorporation into capitalist accumulation (e.g., Ngai 2005; Salzinger 2003). These approaches are variously situated in relation to Judith Butler’s work on performative subjectivity (1993), Foucauldian analysis of subjectivity (drawn upon by Butler) (1980), or Bourdieu’s work on the cultural politics of distinction (1984). In diverse ways, feminist scholars of “global production” mobilize and extend the metaphor of production to embrace the twin processes of subjection and signification (Joseph 1998). If indeed capitalist accumulation has become dependent on its access to “cheap, docile” workers associated with culturally-produced femininity, the latter subject does not somehow pre-exist the arrival of export production, nor does s/he exist fully formed in the labour process. Rather, understanding subjectivity as a continually materializing process, feminized labour can

be understood as a discursive effect mobilized to produce a form of labour that is disposable, temporary, and docile. For example, Salzinger (2003) argues that:

Femininity is a trope—a structure of meaning through which workers, potential and actual, are addressed and understood, and around which production itself is designed. The notion of “productive femininity” thus crystallizes through a process of repetitive citation... Contrary to managerial hopes and feminist fears, docile labor cannot simply be bought; it is produced, or not, in the meaningful practices of shop-floor life. (16)

These authors, then, locate subject production at the crossroads of gendered discourses of labour and the corporeal practices of the workplace.

This conclusion leads subjectivist studies to focus on how place-specific conjunctions of cultural politics and working bodies come together in contingent ways in the labour process. Wright, for example, examines the hierarchical discourses of gender and nationality that combine to extract surplus value from Mexican women workers, who are themselves produced as disposable. Cultural identities materialize in an “imaginary anatomy” of the hermaphroditic supervisor, a figure that preserves the gender hierarchy of mind/masculine and body/feminine by locating skill in the eyes and minds of male supervisors governing unskilled women workers (Wright 2001). Salzinger analyzes the relationship between the gendered discourse of low-wage women workers and the gender regimes of particular *maquilas*, where “feminization” assumes a different form depending on management style, and works itself through increasingly mixed-gender workforces (2003). Freeman’s work in the informatics industry in Barbados explores the sector as a contradictory site of low-wage, de-skilled office work through the practices of distinction of Barbadian women produced as pink-collar workers (2000). Although touched upon in other accounts (e.g., Fernandez-Kelly), Freeman’s text is the first to balance the

analytical priority of subject production in the labour process with subjectification processes in the realm of consumption (see also Ramamurthy 2004). By demonstrating how the cultural politics of subject-making is integral to the labour process, these studies detail the constitutive connections between wage-work and multiple forms of subjection, capitalist and non-capitalist, overwhelming the presumed or desired notion of homogenous Labour so strongly associated with capitalist industrial production.

The subjectivist literature on “global production” goes a long way towards de-centering the subject of labour, hollowing out an essentialist core and explicating the constitutive connections between relations of wage labour and relations of gender. This opens up the possibility for thinking of these relations through other axes of social difference like sex, race, caste, nationality, and ethnicity, albeit aspects of difference less explored in this literature.<sup>8</sup> The apparent closure of the body, and the seemingly stable cultural meanings produced through it, in fact provides “corporeal breadth” to the reworkings of capitalist accumulation (Wright 2006: 12-13). Yet, these diverse studies do not go far enough in theorizing the connections between changing relations of production and their spatial organization. While the constructionist literature assumes both a subject and an industrial transition, the subjectivist literature, while de-centering the subject of homogeneous Labour, rarely addresses the resilience of the transition story itself. Flexibilized subjectivities are shown to be central to the reworking of the labour process as more industries transform the terms of skill and combine new sets of tasks to

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<sup>8</sup> Gender difference is overwhelmingly the main category of global production studies. Fewer studies have drawn on a subjectivist approach to engage with complex identities and the industrial labour process in the global South. The exceptions are Yelvington (1995) and Fernandes (1997), both studying domestic factory production from the import-substitution era. Perhaps the need for feminists to unseat the masculine/global and feminine/local problematic binary has retarded theorization of the labour process with respect to complex identities. Hennessey (2006) is one of the few theorists to publish work on export production and complex identities with respect to queer sexualities.

rationalize labour. In this way, we gain an understanding of how cultural categories produce the flexibility of subjects that cycle through assembly plants; and yet the plants themselves continue to serve as static containers for processes within them. The “Third World factory frame” is reproduced through studies of socially devalued labour in new exports (most recently, call centers) or the flexibilization of labour through differently articulated cultural bodies (e.g., feminized labour). In this way, feminist approaches to global production work to excavate the cultural particularity of the labour process itself, but do not sufficiently interrogate the articulation of the capitalist labour process and the production of place. In the present text, I argue that both “corporeal breadth” and “geographic breadth” – i.e., the reproduction of uneven geographies – are the conditions of the possibility for the on-going process of recombining mass and flexibilized production, racialized and gendered bodies, and the production and positioning of places in what I call assemblages of global production (see chapter 2).

#### *4. Discursive interventions: De-centering “the economy”*

What are the tools to de-center economic narratives of change and, in particular, the teleological assumptions of industrialization and development? Much scholarship drawing on post-structuralist approaches has focused attention on the invention and representation of “the economy” as a total, self-regulating, natural system (Buck-Morss 1995; Gibson-Graham 1996; Mitchell 2002). Feminist geographer Gibson-Graham combines Foucault’s insights with feminist theories of the body through her critique of “capitalocentrism,” the notion that capitalism and “the economy” are one and the same.



The condition of possibility of capitalocentrism rests in the modern episteme that gives rise to homogeneous Labour and History as also the concretization of an organicist metaphor to understand social relations (Ibid; Foucault: 226-232). Just as the modern episteme is the doubling of representation creating the hidden abode of production (in political economy) and labour theories of value, it is also the condition of possibility for understanding this hidden realm as a natural organism, borrowing from metaphors of natural history, and in particular, the organic body.<sup>9</sup> The organic body of the modern episteme is a coherent totality, singularly determined by a vital force.

This organic “body economic” is signified, like all Western bodies, by a hierarchical binary regime of gender. Gibson-Graham argues that the gender binary “by analogy and by extension” makes possible a host of dualisms that privilege the economic/male over the non-economic/female:

This hierarchical ordering of the social body, with the economy at/as its head, can be translated into relations of determination. The economy’s ability to author its own causation... confers upon it the status of determinant with respect not only to itself but to its insufficient other, the external determined [i.e., the female, non-economic]. (1996: 103)

Gibson-Graham draws on feminist theories of the body to question this hierarchy by interrogating the totality and integrity of the “body economic,” and, in particular, its purported heart: manufacturing and wage-labour. Drawing on the same materialist feminist theory (especially Haraway and Grosz) as the subjectivist scholars of global production, Gibson-Graham seeks not to de-center the subject of labour within the capitalist labour process, but rather to make room for multiple subjects and noncapitalist practices that she renders as capitalism’s “constitutive outside.” Gibson-Graham argues

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<sup>9</sup> As numerous authors have noted, this borrowing went both ways: Darwin drew on Smith and Malthus’ ideas of competition in constructing his theory of evolution (Buck-Morss 1995).

for metaphorically “starving capitalism’s bloated body” in order to empower its noncapitalist outsiders (21).

If the hierarchically-structured, singularly-determined organic body dominates representations of the economy and dictates that the latter progresses through stages determined by natural phases of growth, reproduction, and death, followed by a new phase, how can we understand economic change differently? Here, Gibson-Graham joins with other critics of single-path industrialization narratives in borrowing from 20<sup>th</sup> century evolutionary biology and, in particular, the work of Stephen Jay Gould (Ferguson 1999; Gould 1996; Sabel and Zeitlin 1985).<sup>10</sup> Gould argues that evolution is not a series of linear stages but a labyrinthine pathway akin to a “bush” of multiple, coexisting variation. Gibson-Graham posits a parallel “non-capitalist” bush, equally complex and varied. The project to de-center representation of economic change is to excavate, theorize and re-center representation on a plurality of practices that are deemed to be non-capitalist.

Although the critique of capitalocentrism can help us to understand how the “Third World factory frame” has become such a resilient category of analysis in North Atlantic academia, by displacing capitalism through appeals to non-capitalist practice, imagined as distinct and separate (like the parallel bush, p. 114), we lose the sense of precisely how a multiplicity of practices are interlaced, how the “outside” is, in fact, “constitutive.” As Glassman argues, Gibson-Graham’s work is suggestive of the idea that uneven capitalist relations signify a plurality of livelihood strategies that coexist

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<sup>10</sup> In fact, the Sabel and Zeitlin essay is key for the subsequent and much more influential text, Piore and Sabel’s *Second Industrial Divide*. Gould’s metaphor of nonlinear change, the bush, is dropped for the notion of technological branching points as Kuhnian paradigm shifts, accounting for the dominance of mass production through a “survival of the fittest” narrative (1984: 44-45).

with, but are erased by, dominant representations of capitalist relations of production (2003: 690).<sup>11</sup> A theory of non-linear economic change, however, requires understanding not the coexistence of multiple capitalist and non-capitalist practices, but rather, their dynamic interrelatedness.

### *5. Towards displacing the Third World factory frame: Coloniality and the space-times of production*

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<sup>11</sup> This is part of Glassman's main critique of Gibson-Graham's reading of Althusser: the abandonment of the sense in which overdetermined, complex totalities, are, indeed, structured, i.e., determined in hierarchical relation. Althusser resurrects a very different organic metaphor from Marx (the *gliederung*, or articulated whole), one that I elaborate upon below and that makes space for his important concept of overdetermination. I agree with Glassman although I would locate the problem more centrally in the question of political practice. I share Gibson-Graham's impetus to want to unseat representations of class relations as narrowly capitalist, premised on wage labour relations and, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, largely dominated by a purified, masculinist idea of "Fordism" and its crisis in "advanced capitalist countries." And surely, part of this project requires an understanding of the diversity of actually existing production relations and the centrality of this diversity in relation to a much circumscribed "non-household sector," to borrow one of many felicitous phrases. However, I am skeptical that the assertion of non-capitalist class categories as "remains" or "outsides" unearthed and given epistemological validity (by academics located within relations of capitalism) can form the basis of a radical politics (e.g., 1996: 20-21). To assume this is to deny the complexity, materiality, and purpose of *praxis* as the linking of theory and action, as an obligation to grapple with the structure of the current situation, to return to Althusser (see chapter epigraph). Forging a praxis of the current situation is a process; capitalocentrism seems to reduce this process to the problem of a thing: the conflation of the economic with capitalism, the denial of capitalist outsides. Although the motivation is to deconstruct capitalist Presence, the outcome has been to reify an "outside" to capitalism as an object, rather than a commitment to understanding the on-going need for radical politics and theory to think through, create, and define outsides *in some relation to* capitalism. As an axiomatic, capitalism is adept at transforming "outsides" into insides: "[W]e'll always find a place for you within the expanded limits of the system, even if an axiom has to be created just for you" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983 [1972]: 251). This recognition of capitalist rhizomatics is not the zenith of capitalocentrism but rather an irreducible locus of politics and action (i.e., not the only one, but one that must always be considered even as we desire noncapitalist politics). These limitations have become clear in later work but have not led to a fundamental change in the feminist post-structuralist project as led by Gibson-Graham. For example, Gibson-Graham's recent revision of her heretofore celebration of the Mondragón cooperative (MCC) in the Basque country (which has increasingly become a multinational corporation) demonstrates the limits to this project:

[W]e have had to acknowledge our identitarian investment in the noncapitalist "purity" of the MCC and our disappointment in this change, while at the same time recognizing that the change is neither total nor irreversible. Mondragón is still a complex of cooperatives and its future is still open. And though we may not like it, the MCC may have been strengthened through marshaling surplus from noncooperators as well as cooperators, and using that surplus to create more cooperative employment back home. (2006: 123)

This is a key case in understanding the workings of the capitalist axiomatic categorically denied by holding on to a fixed notion of capitalist outsides. This seems to me to be the antithesis of praxis.

There are two predominant assumptions that underlie the Third World factory frame: that capitalist production is always expanding to “new” places and that “new” subjects (e.g., women workers), or the construction of new subjectivities (e.g., feminized labour), is fundamental to this process. I have argued that this framing unwittingly underwrites sequentialist, unilinear thinking of the transnational ordering of global production when it fails to interrogate the on-going reorganization of spatial and social divisions of labour, together with the production of subjectivities and places that intersect with them. De-centering the teleological assumptions of industrialization would yield a complex topography of industrial and deindustrial processes, irreducible to fixed geographies of North and South. There is not only “corporeal breadth” (Wright 2006) to the dynamic reorganization of capitalism, but a certain geographical breadth: the differential reproduction of subjects and places makes the reproduction of capitalism possible. The binary notion of, on the one hand, the sequential expansion of industrial production, and, on the other, its failure, is insufficient to understand this process, as is a dialectical understanding that relegates changes in industrial organization outside the heartlands of industrial capitalism to a mere reflection of the latter.

Scholars of Latin America and the Caribbean have long de-centered the sequentialist narrative of capitalist development – of economics as History – by highlighting the multiple forms of labour that are integral to capitalist production. Eric Williams’ (1994 [1944]) classic study of the English industrial revolution from the perspective of slavery and merchant capitalism in many ways inaugurated a long debate about the nature of the relationship “between” these formations, later conceived as

“articulated” but separate “modes of production” or as one and the same world-system (Foster-Carter 1978; Hall 1980). Sydney Mintz (1985) argued for a more finely developed relational perspective by exploring the connections between industrialization and slavery, not only through capital formation but also through the complex forms of labour organization on slave plantations (which he argued were the first modern industries), giving rise to new practices of commensality amongst an emerging English working class. While these studies too quickly fixed Europe (‘the West’) as a central formation and focused on colonial forms of labour (e.g., slavery) that produced Europe as the center of capitalism, they contributed to an emerging field that would disrupt Eurocentric notions of modernity by tracing the complex geographies of cultural and economic processes whose European provenance has been produced.<sup>12</sup>

Displacing Eurocentric histories of production brings us to a crossroads with post-colonial theory and the multiplicity of theoretical approaches that such a label attempts to signify. I draw specifically from Latin American and Caribbean thinkers of structural dependency who have engaged with and reconsidered “modernity” from Latin American and Caribbean positions.<sup>13</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Marxist debates on the nature

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<sup>12</sup> Mitchell faults world-systems approaches for effectively re-centering Eurocentric capitalism as a singular History by rewriting the story of Western industrialization as one of interaction between the West and the non-West. He argues that such a strategy “assumes the existence of the West and its exterior, long before the world’s identities had been divided into this neat European-centered dualism” (2000: 3). Mitchell argues that world-systems scholars deploy blunt instruments in the advance of critical studies of modernity but clearly recognizes their contribution (Mintz and Wolf included) to opening up a field of inquiry focused on relational analyses of cultural and economic phenomena, a field that has moved us far beyond making connections across epistemological ‘centers’ and ‘peripheries’ to questioning the production of such categories altogether.

<sup>13</sup> Slater (2004) argues that critiques of dependency thinkers in the English academic literature (e.g., Rist) tend to reduce this tradition of thought to simple economism, in part connected to limits of translated texts and to the tendency to associate this heterogeneous school with the work of A.G. Frank. While acknowledging the limits of the dependency school, Slater draws out the more postcolonial aspects of the dependency tradition, including attention to the politics of identity and recognition, and to epistemologies that challenge Euro-centrism (pp. 138-140).

of heterogeneous labour span the twentieth century, fundamentally shaped by internecine struggles of the Left and party politics in the region.<sup>14</sup> What has gained more prominence in the last two decades is a rethinking of this question with respect to colonial domination and its legacy in the Americas, in tandem with emergent social formations articulating political subjectivities with indigenous, African-descent, and other subaltern identities. No doubt influenced by these transformations, Dussel, for example, argues for an understanding of modernity and modern labour from the premise of “first modernity,” or the colonial moment that founded the right of Europeans to “occupy, dominate and manage recently discovered<sup>15</sup> cultures” (1998: 14). The ordering of labour in what Foucault described as the “classical” episteme – where bodies are made comparable through constructed systems of race and gender and their “value” made apparent through that comparison – inheres in a dynamic way and continues to structure the social and spatial organization of wage labour through complex forms of inclusion and exclusion in paid labour, as well as exploitation and hyper-exploitation within the wage-labour relation. This argument is expressed most clearly in Quijano’s notion of the “coloniality of power,” a system that “articulat[es] all historical forms of labor control around the capitalist wage-labor relation” (2000: 539).<sup>16</sup> “Coloniality of labor control,” he

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<sup>14</sup> Two key texts for Latin America are Frank’s *Capitalism and Underdevelopment* (1967) and Laclau’s ingenuous response (1971). Hall’s discussion of their debate remains most insightful and apposite to contemporary scholarship (1980: 317-320). For recent critical reviews see Grosfoguel (2000) and Slater (2004).

<sup>15</sup> Dussel deliberately uses the term in its Euro-centric meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Grosfoguel (2000) argues that Quijano is the exception rather than the rule for dependency thinkers in Latin America. He argues that the *dependentista* project contained a basic contradiction between a framework of national development strategies and the premise of uneven core-periphery relations. For example, Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s analysis of the failures of import-substitution industrialization considers the problem as one of inter-locking, uneven national formations benchmarked by the European industrialization experience (again, understood as a “national” phenomenon), rather than a structural premise of uneven, mutually constituting, global capitalist relations (i.e., a world-system).

continues, “determined the geographic distribution of each one of the integrated forms of labor control in global capitalism” (Ibid.). The coloniality of power, he concludes, persists in the Americas as an “historical-structurally heterogeneous model of power with discontinuous relations and conflicts among its components” (Ibid: 571).

Social and spatial divisions of labour, then, are produced at the dynamic intersection of accumulation, disinvestment and forms of labour hierarchically structured through systems of domination that reproduce and connect the violent abstractions of race, gender and nation and the production of place. To understand this geography several questions come to the fore: How is wage-labour articulated with other forms of labour control and bodies that are socially marked as “Other” in relation to an enduring association in the Americas between wage labour, whiteness, and masculinity?<sup>17</sup> How are these relations forged through place and through relations between places? How do social constructions of embodied differences get reworked in the on-going process of creating relations of value across social and spatial difference? Finally, how are space and place recreated in the process?

To begin to answer them, let me elaborate on Quijano’s framework and its implications by drawing on the work of Althusser and Massey. The problem of unseating “accumulation in series” as History, for Althusser, is put forth as the problem of understanding parts of social totalities as expressions of a single center. In such a framework, change or development can only be an expression of a singular movement or

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<sup>17</sup> Other articulations include: blackness, masculinity, and non-labour (i.e., criminalization); blackness, femininity and informal or poorly paid labour; and whiteness, femininity and domestic, non-wage labour. All of these must be explored in their specific social and spatial formations. One of the critiques from Caribbean studies of the Third World factory frame is the assumption that working class women of colour were previously not enrolled in paid labour (Freeman 2000; Trouillot 1992). For a comparative discussion of the history of gendered labour in the Spanish- and Anglo-Caribbean, see Safa (1995) and Freeman (2000; 2001).

contradiction. This, indeed, is the organic metaphor of evolution applied to the economy where Man/capitalism (in the present) is the highest expression of History as the movement towards Man/capitalism (Foucault 1994 [1970]). Rather than repudiating Marx, as Foucault seemingly desires, Althusser proposes a reading of Marx that brings forth an understanding of a socioeconomic system unified by complexity itself (Althusser 1990; Althusser and Balibar 1997; cf. Montag 1995). Against the abstraction of a singular movement of history that organizes difference into subsumable phases along a single, sequential trajectory, Althusser draws on Marx's image of an articulated whole composed of a host of uncoordinated rhythms, turnovers, and times out of which the particular structure of capitalist production is constructed (1997: 101). "The structure of the whole," he argues, "...is the very existence of the whole" (1990: 205), held together by the uneven interactions of different "levels" – relations of dominance and subordination – that comprise the complex whole.<sup>18</sup> What emerges is a totality that is inassimilable to homogeneous time, the time of Labour and History. Nevertheless, the whole is indeed structured. Relations of domination and subordination are neither coincident nor uniformly consequential; rather, the "structure in dominance" is worked out through the way in which these uneven relations come together.

The task of understanding sociospatial relations of production, then, is to understand how these multiple relations intersect to form immanent relations of unevenness and heterogeneous space-times. As the critical post-dependency scholarship

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<sup>18</sup> In this way, a dominant relation is not a de facto center to the system. Althusser argues: "...[T]his dominance of a structure, of which Marx gives an example here [in the Grundrisse] (the domination of one form of production, e.g., industrial production over simple commodity production, etc.), cannot be reduced to the primacy of a center, any more than the relation between the elements and the structure can be reduced to the expressive unity of the essence within its phenomenon." (1997: 98-9)



in Latin America emphasizes, uneven relations of power – especially between the US and its Southern neighbours – are insufficient to understand the divergent paths of unevenness and the complex spatialities of Latin American and Caribbean political economy. Both Quijano’s and Althusser’s readings of uneven development emphasize unevenness as a condition that is contingently produced through articulation, not merely applied as an external force, through, for example, foreign direct investment. Contingency here is historically specific: the terms of reproducing relations of power and challenging that reproduction are formed within the complex system.<sup>19</sup> With respect to Quijano’s notion of the coloniality of power, we can conceive of the way in which relations of domination forged through racial and gender hierarchies are unevenly articulated within the social totality of production, structuring the whole and its geographies as much as being reworked within this process.<sup>20</sup> It is the way in which each of these relatively autonomous parts of the structure are unevenly structured within themselves and in relation to the complex totality that we can say that the articulation between race, gender, class, and nation to use the social relations that most concern me here, is overdetermined.

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<sup>19</sup> In Althusser’s framework, contingency and overdetermination are one and the same:

Only overdetermination enables us to understand the concrete variations and mutations of a structured complexity such as a social formation... not as the accidental variations and mutations produced by external ‘conditions’ in a fixed structured whole...but as so many concrete restructurations... *the ‘play’ of the articulations of the complex structure in dominance which is reflected in them.* (1990: 210, emphasis added)

In other words, how these categories combine is conditioned, but not determined, by structural relations. Hall draws on Althusser to argue for a much less “structural” sense of contingency, arguing for a more rigorous interrogation of how the categories to be combined are constituted and emphasizing the “non-necessary” aspect of structural relations (1980; 1996a). Over time, his formulation of a “post-structuralist” Marxism has been drawn upon to dissolve any structuralist sense altogether although Hall seems to contest this reading of his work when he critiques post-colonial theory for its disavowal of the economic (1996b).

<sup>20</sup> Clearly, Quijano’s framework places wage labour at the center: the task is to understand how other forms of labour circulate around it, like the solar system around the sun. I prefer Althusser’s framework, which evacuates the system of a center and leaves overdetermination in its place. I understand Althusser’s invocation of the “economic” in the last instance as an insistence upon the need to construct the basis upon which to identify and challenge dominant power.

Thinking through coloniality and its overdetermination gives us a way to consider transnational divisions of labour, and their articulation through particular places and socially marked bodies, as a dynamic, contingent process, rather than an essential section (as in the factory frame, see footnote 2) or a fixed core-periphery relation (as in the new international division of labour). Massey's long-term engagement with regions and places as constituted by uneven relations is helpful in this regard (1995 [1984]). Massey analyzes spatial divisions of labour not as the distribution of types of jobs – e.g., low-wage assembly in “peripheral” regions and R&D in “core” ones – but rather produced through the intersection of intra-firm hierarchies and regional social relations. Much contemporary research draws on the former as the determining factor, investing the exigencies of the labour process with an agency that determines industry location.<sup>21</sup> Instead, the task is to understand the relationship between capitalist production, work, embodied subjects and place. Here, Massey's work on place and regions is invaluable. Regions, she argues, are themselves produced by complex, multi-layered social histories, and overdetermined by their integration in multiple space-times of accumulation (1994).<sup>22</sup> Places and regions are a process not a thing; their enrolment into (often multiple) circuits of capital accumulation, is part of, but not reducible to, that process (Ibid).

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<sup>21</sup> Massey's attention to firm hierarchies, and the implications of those hierarchies for types of employment and labour struggle in particular places, minimally resembles the early work of world-systems “commodity chains,” especially with the emphasis of the latter on “chain governance” (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994). The key distinction is the way in which Massey theorizes paid work as a set of relations, producing a geographical theory of divisions of labour as opposed to commodity chains, which, while a powerful heuristic for understanding the spatial ordering of production, fails to theorize space beyond a narrow formulation of “embeddedness” in the sense of Granovetter.

<sup>22</sup> For Massey's reflections on Althusserian Marxism and its importance to her early work, see “Reflections on Debates over a Decade” (1994a: 349-353).

Spatial divisions of labour, then, are not given by a pattern of types of employment and the presence of particular sectors in a given region; rather, they must be interrogated as dynamic sets of relations that bring together structures of livelihood and dynamic firm hierarchies to produce place. For example, a region may be in the midst of both a new boom in low-wage exports and a slow and uneven decline in national agro-industrial production, reworking the geography of the region itself and the subjects that are enrolled in the capitalist labour process. These two kinds of accumulation, co-present and heterotemporal, will likely produce spatial and social forms of unevenness in different ways. The accumulation strategies are heterotemporal because each one is not presumed to be in a sequential relation with the other; their different moments do not amount to a total historical change from domestic agro-industry to export-oriented production, i.e., the sequential story of “development.” These heterotemporal strategies will be shaped by previous rounds of accumulation and exclusion from capitalist circuits of production: for example, the region may receive large influxes of remittances from distant migrants and unregulated commerce may be a deeply institutionalized practice of livelihood. These diverse livelihood strategies and the social construction of identities in relation to them will shape subjectivities of capitalist wage labour in place. The articulation of racialized and gendered hierarchies with work and livelihood activities, and the boundary between wage and non-wage work, will be reworked through this process, as heterotemporal accumulation strategies intersect with places that have long been shaped by capitalist inclusion and exclusion. This process produces subjectivities that cannot be understood through the lens of a single labour process.<sup>23</sup> Which bodies do

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<sup>23</sup> I suggest that they be considered through the lens of “embodied negotiations” in Chapter 4.

what kind of work and where, and how this activity is valued within relations of wage labour *and* in the negotiation of the boundary between wage and non-wage labour as well as unpaid work will be contingently reproduced through these multiple relations.

Massey proposed spatial divisions of labour in the context of deindustrialization in the United Kingdom. She examined spatial divisions of labour exclusively with respect to wage labour and intra-national regional formations.<sup>24</sup> Particularly because of the latter, I believe, her industrial framework has largely been abandoned in the burgeoning literature in geography and cognate disciplines on global production, although her conception of place that clearly emerges from this early work continues to be influential. Why reintroduce spatial divisions of labour here? My argument is that in order to understand relations of power across places that concatenate different forms of unevenness, what is required is a theory of connection that resists concretizing uneven sociospatial relations as static ones, and necessitates a constant interrogation of the dynamic basis of domination and exploitation within and between places and subjects. The focus of Massey's early framework on wage labour need not limit us here. In fact, her examination of wage labour as the contingent grouping of sets of particular relations allows for consideration of how those relations are created through fixing boundaries between wage and non-wage work. Her ontology of place and regions as process demonstrates that the disposition of her early work towards regions within the nation-state was not a form of irremediable methodological nationalism. It is the combination of relatively open structures and a continual attention to how power is reworked within

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<sup>24</sup> Writing in the context of deindustrial debates of the 1970s, Massey adopted the broadest definition of industry as an attempt to de-center industry as "manufacturing," defining "industry" as "all economic activity, all forms of paid employment" (1994: 11).

these structures that lends the possibility for a recuperation of spatial divisions of labour for a transnational analysis of production.

#### *6. Studying Displacements: Ethnography and Location*

*Global Displacements* draws together these theoretical insights together with critical ethnography to rethink the trajectories of transnational industries. The framework I have set out in the previous pages suggests that the work of connecting socially marked bodies, circuits of capitalist production, and diverse places must be seen as an iterative process. This process remakes uneven geographies in particular and contingent ways, ways that are obfuscated by a sequentialist understanding of industrialization as an outward movement from industrial heartlands in the global North to new industrializers in the global South. The concept of displacements emerges out of my study of the restructuring of the global apparel industry in the circum-Caribbean. The latter serves as a lens through which to explore the reordering of production across uneven geographies that also must be produced. The industry is particularly apposite to my project to bring together feminist and postcolonial theory to rethink spatial divisions of labour in a transnational framework. To begin with, despite the sector's protean geographies, garment and textile production is frequently marshalled into a temporal understanding of derivative (late, peripheral, or both) industrialization, anchored by a Eurocentric reading of English industrial history. Moreover, the reorganization of garment and textile production in the Americas in the 1980s was heralded as developmental, signalling an apparent diversification of exports from Mexico and the circum-Caribbean as factories

moved to the macro-region to produce for the US (and Canadian) market. This shift saw an increase in women's participation in regulated labour markets,<sup>25</sup> the latter due in part to the incorporation of women as a majority of the workforce in this and similar "labour-intensive" exports. In academic and popular discourses, apparel was one of the main industries drawn upon to stabilize the Third World factory frame.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in the broadest of terms, garment and textile production is permeated at all levels by women's waged labour in factories, and their paid labour as homeworkers, and determined by the gendered politics of production and consumption, making the industry, as McRobbie has famously argued, "a feminist issue" (1997). For this reason, anti-racist feminists, including myself, have long endeavoured to forge connections and solidarities across its complex gendered and racialized geographies (e.g., Hale and Wills 2005).

I chose to study the industry through extended fieldwork based in one of the most successful producer regions in the circum-Caribbean called the Cibao, in the north of the Dominican Republic (DR). Santiago de los Caballeros (henceforth, Santiago), the regional capital of the Cibao and the second largest city in the country, is the site of the country's largest trade zone and the center of regional subcontracting networks, dedicated in large part to garment export production. The Cibao and the DR were transformed by this boom in employment and investment in the garment sector. Together with tourism, the garment sector and the trade zones that supported it came to be considered, until recently, as pillars of the country's "modern" economy, facilitating a move away from

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<sup>25</sup> As noted, there are important intra-Caribbean differences here (see footnote 17). The Spanish-speaking Caribbean follows gendered labour patterns closer to Latin America than the English-speaking Caribbean.

<sup>26</sup> The most prominent texts that discuss the sector in the region from very different perspectives include Safa (1995), chapters 5 and 10 in Gereffi and Korzeniewicz (1994), Gereffi and Bair (2001), Fernandez-Kelly (1983), and Salzinger (2003). Froebel et al.'s landmark study (1980) focuses on the garment and textile industry in Germany and outsourcing to that country's production "periphery." For a comprehensive review of the contemporary garment literature in geography and cognate disciplines, see Reimer (2009).

dependence on so-called traditional exports, especially sugar. My study focuses on the garment sector's employment crisis as imports to the US garment market were further deregulated, thereby placing the region in competition with an expanded number of producers across diverse and intensified uneven geographies of production.<sup>27</sup>

Through my research on industry restructuring in the Cibao, I seek to understand how the meaning of value was being reshaped in relation to changing patterns of production, and how these changes were producing places as well as racialized and gendered labour. While the impetus for the project is derived from postcolonial/feminist theory, the present text results from weaving between these theoretical concerns and ethnographic encounters with workers, managers, and owners whose lives shaped and were shaped by shifting spatial divisions of labour in Santiago and the Cibao. I initiated most of these encounters as formal interactions through observations of planned events, attendance of a training course, and by conducting semi-structured interviews. Over time, these spilled over into factory visits and observations, invitations to homes, and on-going conversations, as I placed myself within different social relations being reworked through changing spatial divisions of labour related to the contemporary process of export restructuring in the Dominican Republic.<sup>28</sup>

Ethnography has undergone a process of intense critique, not least from postcolonial, feminist, and deconstructionist scholars.<sup>29</sup> As a colonial method of knowledge production, ethnography has been a tool to produce the colonized Other as a

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<sup>27</sup> I explain the changing dynamics of competition in the US garment market in Chapter 2. One important regulatory change was the expiry of global garment quotas in 2005, formerly regulated through an agreement called the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA).

<sup>28</sup> I describe these activities in more detail in Appendix I on Method.

<sup>29</sup> One of my reasons for not rejecting the term "ethnography" is precisely because it carries with it not only its colonial legacy but also the weight of its postcolonial critique. To use the term means that one must also engage with this history.

knowable, bounded, and governable object (i.e., the “ethnos”). Postcolonial and feminist critiques of ethnography have been fleshed out in numerous texts and I do not propose to revisit them here.<sup>30</sup> Rather, my interest is in explicating the usefulness of ethnographic methods as a means to rethink categories and positivist divisions in the social sciences, or what I understand as critical ethnography. If ethnography has something in common with deconstruction, it is an interest in complicating taken for granted dualisms like theory and method, and subject and object. Deconstruction highlights the impossibility of the bounded Subject as the origin of knowledge. Although ethnography historically reinforced the Western knowing Subject, its forms of knowledge production in fact undermine this notion, making the practice so very ripe for critique by a deconstructionist epistemology. In the wake of such critiques, feminist and postcolonial scholars have undertaken critical ethnographic work in ways that attempt to refuse colonial knowledge production, albeit understanding that such an ethical and political refusal is an on-going, fraught practice rather than an accomplishable act.

*Global Displacements*, then, has emerged from my ethnographic encounters with differently positioned subjects, together with a process of reading and writing that seeks to interrogate the categories through which workers, managers and owners communicated their experiences and those that structure dominant frameworks in the social sciences.

The project began with a simple shift in empirical focus, from the boom of new export

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<sup>30</sup> The lines between postcolonial and feminist thinking are far from hard and fast. See for example, Visweswaran (1994), Stacey (1988) and Chatterjee (2002) drawing on feminist politics. Spivak, especially her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a), is perhaps the most broadly influential amongst scholar who claim a feminist and/or postcolonial perspective, especially those who claim some connection to neo-Marxist thought. Foundational critiques in anthropology include the edited collection by Asad (1973) and the monograph by Fabian (1983). For recent examples of authors who read the postcolonial moment as grounding a rejection of ethnography as an ethico-political imperative, see Ismail (2005) and Wainwright (2008). For an alternative perspective that seeks to recuperate both postcolonial questions of representation and ethnography, see Gidwani (2008).



factories to their decline. In retrospect, I recognize that I wanted to *expose the reality* of factory closures and their effects on workers and communities *as a way to disrupt teleological understandings and diffusionist geographies* of global production. As I became more deeply involved with the project and the forms of livelihood that circulated through Santiago and beyond, I realized that the experiences that workers, managers and the un- and underemployed were sharing with me did not fit into this singular dimension. To begin with, there is no underlying reality of exclusion and decline that is *masked by* industrial restructuring and narratives of progress. Progress narratives and uneven geographies of inclusion/exclusion are, in fact, deeply imbricated. What struck me immediately when I began interviewing workers and managers, for example, was the pervasiveness of an understanding that the export garment model was part of a quickly retreating past. It is not that all my informants agreed with this framing of space-time, but all constructed their thoughts and opinions about work and livelihood in Santiago in relation to this dominant narrative. My ethnographic work, then, became a way not to disrupt or disable this hegemonic understanding of development through revealing a more authentic reality but to dig deeply into everyday narratives and practices in order to understand how “accumulation in series” is produced as a dominant logic of sociospatial change.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Here, I have benefited from the insights of Ferguson (1999), one of the few studies I found of contemporary deindustrial processes in the global South (in his case, the Zambian Copperbelt). Ferguson engages with his informants categorical understandings of modern and traditional, and suggestively argues that “[m]odernization theory had become a local tongue, and sociological terminology and folk classifications had become disconcertingly intermingled in informants’ intimate personal narratives...that which once presented itself as *explicans* was beginning to make itself visible as *explicandum*.”

In the pages that follow, I seek to understand three inter-related sociospatial locations<sup>32</sup>: those of garment firms, the Cibao region, and garment workers. I discuss the discourses and practices of garment firms reworking their positions in what I call the transnational garment and textile assemblage. In studying Santiago-based garment capital, I sought to understand how firms situated themselves in relation to hierarchies of value and how firm managers and owners presented the forces and discourses that firms appeared to be reacting against. Finding answers to these queries involved studying the strategies of firms to negotiate a politics of value by changing their production structures, through engaging in intense lobbying and publicity efforts to create conditions for their profitability, and by shutting down – permitting owners to shift their capital elsewhere. It also involved collecting and interpreting government and development discourses that were seeking to reposition Dominican production and the garment sector. Second, I wanted to understand the particular location of the region known as the Cibao, not as a bounded territory but as a regional/territorial identity and process. The garment boom reconfigured the position of the Cibao with respect to other regions in the DR, to Haiti, and to the US. What were the historical and contemporary conditions of possibility for this regional spatial division of labour? How did trajectories of accumulation, dispossession, and exclusion shape the prospects for reworking the region's accumulation strategy in the face of declining profits in garment exports? How were these efforts related to the politics of racialized and gendered labour? Third, I studied the positioning of women and men who circulated through garment production as part of their

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<sup>32</sup> I use the term “location” to mean an intersecting set of relations (Massey 1994). I understand location to be inseparable from positioning within social and spatial relations. Locations – of subjects, entities (like firms), regions, and the researcher – are always constituted through connections that produce position through hierarchical relations (Sheppard 2002).

geographically variegated livelihood strategies. How did workers and former workers situate themselves within the unstable employment structures of wage labour? How were their livelihood strategies shaped by the geographies of production, factory flight, migration and racialized and gendered labour? Thus, these three locations – firms integrated in production assemblages, regional positioning, and embodied labour geographies – constitute three inter-related approaches to my study of displacements.

The study and delineation of these locations as sets of relations that are also objects of my inquiry is inseparable from epistemological questions concerning the politics of my location as a researcher.<sup>33</sup> Because the project involved “mobile positioning” (Marcus 1998), I negotiated different relations of power depending on my engagements with subjects across intersecting hierarchies of race, class, gender and national provenance. I interviewed and spent time with workers, union organizers, managers, trade zone sector representatives and development policymakers. These encounters were determined by my position as a young, female researcher, racialized as white, from a US university. Managers and owners were well aware of, and highly sensitive about, criticisms of labour abuse in the garment industry. The US labour movement has long supported Dominican union federations in their efforts to organize the industry. My own previous involvement in the North American anti-sweatshop movement heightened my awareness of these tensions. On three occasions, managers mused about the status of my research and whether or not I might be infiltrating their businesses to expose them to the US consuming public. In time, I was able to gain more

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<sup>33</sup> See Rich (2001 [1985]), Haraway (1991) and Mohanty (2003). On a rethinking of the “field” in fieldwork drawing upon a feminist politics of location, see Katz (1994).

unsupervised access, but managers' and owners' suspicions about my intentions never fully dissipated.

While these suspicions conditioned my work, two predicaments of my mobile positioning arose – with the industry association, on the one hand, and with lower-level managers and workers, on the other – that contributed significantly to my understanding of the politics surrounding the industry's location *and* those of a multi-sited study. I spent the first four months in Santiago based at the employers' association in the main trade zone. The director graciously hosted me, provided office space, facilitated interviews with owners and managers, and shared candid reflections about the sector. She was an invaluable resource. After I collected information on firms, I left the office and began to spend time in working-class neighbourhoods near the trade zone. Nevertheless, I continued to drop by the association office every few weeks. On one of these visits, I mentioned that I was interviewing unemployed workers about their livelihood strategies after garment work. Following that conversation, the director began to request my support in recruiting unemployed workers to speak about their predicaments in the local and national press. These requests signalled the employer association's dilemma: garment owners in the Cibao had been most effective in resisting union formation. Atomized labour relations meant that there were no effective voices to organize and represent workers' interests during the industry's employment decline, a moment when a narrow definition of worker interests could shore up owners' efforts to gain government support for the sector. I had no intention of supporting the sector's lobbying efforts and thus could not fulfill the director's request. I was candid about why I would not facilitate contact with the former workers who were participating in my

research. My relationship with the director was much more distant thereafter, but the exchange helped me to understand the precariousness of owners' claims to be a fundamental part of the Dominican economy.

I found that mobile positioning layered on top of the relationship of unequal power inherent in "participant observation" of any kind. As Clifford argues, "participant observation is a kind of hermeneutic freedom to circle inside and outside social situations" (1997: 23). If we disentangle participation from observation, and from the attendant contradictions that the phrase "participant observer" too easily neutralizes as an academic norm, "participant observation" is better understood as a kind of license held by the researcher to accrue social debts that are, from the outset, irremediable within the space-time of research encounters. In a project that is multi-sited, the performance of this circulation, and its attendant privilege to defer responsibility (in time and space) is even more acute. While I could justify refusing the trade zone association director's attempts to challenge my research "license" by requesting collaboration in industry lobbying efforts, it was more difficult when workers and lower-level managers challenged my license from their positions as unemployed men and women or low-paid professionals. These challenges came in the form of requests for loans and visa sponsorship from three workers who were central to my ability to carry out interviews with laid-off operators, and requests for job information and to circulate résumés from two production engineers. Again, these interactions were important for understanding the dynamics of livelihood in the DR and my position as a North American. I came to understand that these requests were driven both by the material needs of people who faced job loss, as well as by the complexities of living in remittance-driven economies where emigration and links to

distant friends and relatives in the global North are critical for livelihood in the fullest sense of material provision and social status. My notes also reveal that, over time, and after exhausting (from my perspective) different avenues to address these requests,<sup>34</sup> I started to use my mobility as researcher to manage these relationships passively. While workers and engineers had in effect refused my license to defer relationships of responsibility for the purposes of research, I increasingly limited my relationships and interactions through my own movement between research sites.

Relatively unfettered mobility is a particular marker of whiteness and class privilege in the context of uneven geographies that are sustained by the relative immobility of low-wage and non-waged workers, especially those of colour. I would argue that mobile positioning carries with it an inherent politics of location: an intensification of race and class privilege through an increase in the relative immobility of research participants in relation to ever more mobile researchers.<sup>35</sup> While I benefited from the multiple perspectives that mobile positioning provided, this foreclosed feminist research practices to increase collaboration and accountability in knowledge production (Nagar and Geiger 2007). Despite these limitations, my effort in writing this project as a

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<sup>34</sup> These included the individualistic practices like lending money, providing information about visas, and inventing my marital status. For two months, I supported a short series of organizing meetings between workers I was interviewing and the only labour rights NGO in the city. This introduced a new set of very complex relations into the research, especially tensions between my own, the NGO's and workers' expectations of a collaboration. When it became clear the extent to which my initiative was the driving force of this interaction, I desisted as I recognized the limitations of my temporary location in Santiago.

<sup>35</sup> My position is in contrast to Marcus' celebration of multi-sited ethnography and mobile positioning as inherently a way to produce situated knowledge (1998: 98). By linking whiteness, class privilege and mobile research, I am not suggesting that this is simply a problem of researchers racialized as white who conduct research with research subjects of colour. Need it be stated that researchers are neither all racialized as white (although many are) nor do they inhabit a middle class position (although many do). More importantly, power hierarchies are not reducible to the presence or absence of an identity. The problem is one of relative privilege, and how this privilege is exacerbated by mobile positioning. The association to whiteness recognizes the articulation of race and class privilege that continues to lend mobility the character of "universality" as "whiteness," and the material practices of racial profiling that limit the mobility of subjects who are socially marked as "non-white."

critical dialogue between deconstruction and ethnography represents an attempt to open up new spaces for *praxis*. Shifting knowledge production towards critical geographies of disinvestment holds the promise of imagining connections of solidarity and action in new ways. It also, I believe, destabilizes established practices of solidarity linked through but extending far beyond academia (for example, those associated with voluntary consumption-based regulation). While my efforts to forge a critical ethnographic practice are caught within persistent power differentials of knowledge production between North and South, I nevertheless put forth *Displacements* as one attempt to destabilize hierarchies of power that are given form and force in part by the production relations studied here.

## 7. Chapter Outline

In the chapters that follow, I flesh out the displacements associated with the differing locations of firms, workers and regions. Chapter 2, “The Dominican Republic and the US-oriented Garment and Textile Assemblage,” situates the rapid growth and relative stability of the export garment industry in the Dominican Republic. The DR’s garment export business emerged at the confluence of inter-elite regional rivalries, US trade and military policies, and post-WWII multilateral protectionism. I propose an understanding of these production relations as an assemblage, rather than a chain or network, and provide the reader with an account of how this assemblage is formed through macro-regional, national and sub-national dynamics of accumulation and disinvestment, inseparable from the geopolitical context of the late Cold War. I posit the

Dominican export garment sector, consolidated by provincial industrialists in the northern Cibao region, as an effect of the assemblage's protean geographies drawing upon and remaking uneven spatial divisions of labour in the circum-Caribbean.

Chapter 3, "Unpacking Displacements – Gender, Industrial Restructuring and Discourses of Development," analyzes the apparent conflict between garment exporters and state and development policy officials as the garment industry in the Dominican Republic faced a profit crisis. Central to this contest between a fraction of capital and the state over the structure of surplus value extraction is the coloniality of gender: the construction of feminized labour as non-waged in the last instance. I juxtapose the practices and narratives of the Dominican garment sector's gendered exclusion of workers in the labour process with the gendered discourses of the World Bank in its analysis of export restructuring. In the case of firms, I draw on ethnographic work to detail a new paradigm of flexibility that has led to a slow process of masculinization of the sector's workforce. In the case of development discourses, I analyze the resignification of trade zones in World Bank texts on the Dominican economy through the structure of gender, a process that transforms export manufacturing from a marker of progress to a burden on the development of the Dominican economy. My analysis of the practices of the state and capital surrounding export restructuring through a gendered perspective reveals that the coloniality of gender naturalizes shifts in capitalist accumulation away from assembly labour and underwrites sequentialist narratives of industrialization.

The focus on displacements as the reworking of capitalist accumulation drawing upon coloniality in different ways is presented from the vantage point of unemployed



workers in Chapter 4, titled “Embodied Negotiations – Livelihoods after Trade Zones in the Cibao.” Through ethnographic work with women and men retrenched from a large garment factory, the chapter explores workers’ efforts to position themselves as subjects in Santiago and their hometowns in relation to non- or lesser subject positions. These embodied negotiations are determined by workers’ raced and gendered bodies as well as raced and gendered constructions of labour in transnationalized rural and urban spaces. The experiences of former garment workers suggest that the forging of modern subject positions takes place as much through participation in wage labour as through practices of navigating the shifting boundary between wage and non-wage work. The complex subject positions that result are not reducible to the movements of capital; through acts of corporeal positioning, the un- and underemployed iteratively reproduce spatial divisions of labour.

Chapter 5, “Reworking Coloniality through the Haitian-Dominican Border,” tells the story of the emergence of the northern border between the DR and Haiti as a site of transnational capital accumulation. I focus on the establishment of a border trade zone in the town of Ouanaminthe (Haiti) by a Santiago-based garment firm producing garments for the US market. Changes in transnational capital, state power, and complex politics contesting neoliberalism and state development intersect in the border area to produce this new geography of sociospatial unevenness. Far from a sequential expansion of the wage relation, I explore the displacements that make this division of labour possible. Through the detailed study of the politics that surrounded the trade zone project, I argue that the coloniality of power is reworked through the making of new spaces of accumulation. By attending to struggles over these spaces, new geographies emerge as

contingent processes to produce unevenness with highly varied, and often unstable, outcomes.

## **Chapter 2: The Dominican Republic and the US-oriented Garment and Textile Assemblage**

### *1. Introduction*

When President Reagan came to power in 1981, he faced two seemingly unrelated challenges. On the one hand, textile and garment protectionists in the US were growing steadily more belligerent. The US had registered its most significant manufacturing trade deficit since 1917 and manufacturers were boosting their campaign to reverse trade benefits granted to South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong during the period of post-WWII reconstruction. The three Asian countries together represented more than eighty percent of textile and apparel imports (Rosen 2002: 121). On the other hand, growing revolutionary movements and their success in taking state power in Central America and the Caribbean were creating anti-imperialist and socialist alternatives in what the US, since Theodore Roosevelt, had considered its backyard. Over the course of the 1980s, these two challenges would be twinned: the Administration would appease textile industrial protectionists and renew US hegemony in the circum-Caribbean through the subordinate incorporation of offshore firms in garment piece-assembly for the US market. Over the next two decades, garment and textile production for the US market would become macro-regionalized, linking the US, Mexico and the circum-Caribbean, together with Asian, US, Mexican and circum-Caribbean capital and hundreds of thousands of Mexican and circum-Caribbean workers.

The emergence of a macro-regional industry reveals the complex nature of transnational state and firm relations and the layering of multilateral, macro-regional and national regulation together with firm practices, geopolitics, and livelihood strategies. Scholars have mobilized the metaphors of “chains” or “networks” to approximate the morphology of these complex relations. The enrolment of both conceptions in sequentialist thinking, however, requires the reconsideration of their use. The term “chain” (e.g., Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994) designates a series of abstract economic actors (i.e., raw material producers, textile firms, design firms, contractors and retailers) and the market-based power relations between them, under-theorizing the protean geographies of these relations. One result is that the framework can easily come to reinforce, rather than interrogate, the development ideologies that are fixed to garment and textiles.<sup>1</sup> Networks, on the other hand, while taking into account a broader set of actors (most crucially, the state), reduce power and positionality to a logic of inclusion (Sheppard 2002). This logic is easily mapped on to a development discourse that largely studies inclusion in production networks and equates this inclusion with a developmental imperative (Henderson, Dicken, Hess, Coe, and Yeung 2002). With respect to both “chains” and “networks,” the conditions of possibility of linking *and* de-linking that are central to the reworking of production geographies and place are at best marginal, and at worst anathema, to the analysis.

Here, I borrow the term “assemblage” from poststructuralist theory to conceptualize the morphology of the relations of production, regulation and livelihood

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<sup>1</sup> See Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon (2005) and Kaplinsky (2000).

that constitute the global garment industry.<sup>2</sup> An assemblage is necessarily territorial but its territoriality is always in process. Thus, the particular sociospatial positioning of places is always already the production of place through the mechanisms of inclusion-and-exclusion, or what I call displacements, from circuits of capital accumulation. The exclusion of places and subjects is immanent to the assemblage and part of the production of place through iterative and relational processes of accumulation and disinvestment. Moreover, the notion of an assemblage connects that which is incorporated (coded as) capitalist with that which escapes this process (lines of flight). Thus, there is a basic indeterminacy that defines the immanent exclusions of capital: these exclusions can serve as a terrain for new capitalist formations,<sup>3</sup> and they may also constitute spaces of contestation and resistance.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I provide an abbreviated account of the globalization of garment and textile production in the post-WWII period, focusing on the formation of a macro-regional assemblage oriented towards the US market, and situating the transformation of the Dominican Republic within it. I begin by explaining the development of multi-lateral trade policies that organized the global garment trade, inadvertently diversifying garment and textile production in the global South as European, US and East Asian firms sought

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<sup>2</sup> The term is widely used in science studies to signal the contingent linking up of a heterogeneous set of practices, technologies, politics and actors (see Ong and Collier 2005). Here, I am drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's extensive discussion of machinic assemblages and the capitalist axiomatic in *A Thousand Plateaus*, especially chapter 12 (1227: Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine) and chapter 13 (7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture).

<sup>3</sup> Consider, for example, the trend in capitalist development policy to incorporate the so-called informal sector and "own-account workers" as objects of development and sites of capitalist accumulation (see Kamat 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze and Guattari write:

[W]hen we talk about 'undecidable propositions,' we are not referring to the uncertainty of the results, which is necessarily a part of every system. We are referring, on the contrary, to the coexistence and inseparability of that which the system conjugates, and that which never ceases to escape it following lines of flight that are themselves connectable. (1987 [1980]: 473)

to avoid quantitative restrictions on imports imposed on producer countries. This highly managed system of trade facilitated the transnationalization of garment production, an opportunity seized upon by President Reagan and subsequent administrations in the US to integrate Caribbean and Mexican workers into a transnational garment and textile production assemblage. The outcomes of garment and textile out-sourcing in the circum-Caribbean have been highly uneven and the rest of the chapter seeks to explain why and how the Dominican Republic, and, in particular, the northern region of the country called the Cibao, successfully consolidated garment production for two decades.

## *2. Multilateral trade regulation: textile and garments as exceptions to GATT*

Garment and textile industries have served as hinges both to advance and retard multi-lateral trade liberalization guided by the ideology of free trade in the post-WWII period. The regulatory apparatus linked to the trade in garment and textiles began to take shape in the wake of Japan's postwar recovery and its accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), culminating twenty years later in a broad framework for quota-managed trade called the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA). Beginning with voluntary export restraints (VERs) that Japan accepted as a condition of its entry into GATT in 1956, the garment and textile regulatory apparatus was continually renewed and expanded as firms relocated and rearranged the structure of their production to avoid quantitative restrictions while benefiting from lower wage rates in the global South and in Eastern Europe.

The emergence of export textile and garment producers in East Asia created a broad consensus amongst core-capitalist countries for restrictions on textile imports (Underhill 1998). The VERs placed on Japanese textile exports served as a precedent both to the durability of quantitative restrictions and their ineffectiveness in stemming imports to OECD markets. In the early years of Japanese integration into GATT, European countries, led by the UK and US cotton textile lobbies, were unwilling to liberalize their textile trade with the emerging industrial power. VERs proved largely futile nonetheless, as producers in Hong Kong quickly emerged to fill the gap in US and European textile imports opened up by the restrictions on Japan. Over the course of the 1960s, VERs expanded into a series of arrangements negotiated to manage first textile and then garment imports to GATT-member states with large markets and significant domestic production. The first framework was a one-year agreement, known as the Short-term Arrangement, regulating sixty-four categories of cotton textile and clothing products beginning in 1961. This agreement was then extended under the Long-term Arrangement in 1962, an extension spearheaded by the cotton textile lobby in the US (Rosen 2002).

While cotton products were the main object of quota-managed trade in the 1960s, and thus cotton textile and garment producers in the EEC and the US were the main drivers of protection, a broader coalition emerged in the 1970s to impose quotas on producers of man-made fibres, especially from Japan, who were supplying the “polyester revolution” of the decade (Ibid.). The net increases in imports were due to combined demand and supply factors. The growth in clothing demand in high-wage countries associated with changing styles and more informal forms of dress was not being met by domestic producers in the US and Europe, leading to a growth in net imports and,

subsequently, a growing clamour for trade protection from domestic producers (Underhill 1998: 159).

These factors came together in the consecration of the MFA in 1974, a modular form of regulation that provided the appearance of multilateralism in a relatively short document that set out general “rules of the game” while, in effect, serving as a platform for the continuous negotiation of highly specific bilateral agreements between importing countries of the OECD and low-wage producers of the global South. Bilateral quota negotiations were triggered by certain levels of imports to US and European markets from a given country. Quotas were product- and country-specific, capping annual increases at six percent. The MFA set out the principle of expanded trade in textiles while also enshrining the notion of “market disruption,” a concept that included the perceived threat of import surges. Importers invoked “market disruption” as a premise to impose more restrictive bilateral conditions (Ibid; Aggarwal 1985).<sup>5</sup> The MFA was renewed four times over the next twenty years, while maintaining the formally temporary character of the agreement (hence an “arrangement”). As quotas expanded to new exporters, production expanded to countries without quota restrictions.<sup>6</sup> By the early 1980s, more than one hundred countries were exporting to the US market, making garment and textile the most “global” of manufacturing industries (Rosen 2002).

The trajectory of multilateral protection was mediated and ultimately transformed by the changing structure of textile and, especially, garment firms, in addition to the

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<sup>5</sup> The concept was introduced to GATT with the support of US officials in 1960, allowing importers to impose restraints on imports based on import levels without domestic firms having to demonstrate harm by imports (Aggarwal 1985: 174 and chronology; definition is reprinted on page 211).

<sup>6</sup> Between 1974 and 1990, bilateral agreements were signed between 54 countries. The US established quotas with 34 countries covering 80 percent of garment and textile imports from non-OECD countries (Cline 1990 in Heron 2006, p. 273).



emergent power of retailers (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994; Rosen 2002). Re-importation by transnational firms through “outward processing traffic” (OPT) took place under special quota categories that obligated exporters to use US and European fabrics.<sup>7</sup> In addition, although the MFA limited competition with low-wage countries, competitive pressures amongst OECD countries were also intense and contributed to increasing intra-industry and intra-firm trade.<sup>8</sup> The significant transnationalization of the industry through OPT and foreign direct investment created the conditions for dismantling the multilateral quota system during the Uruguay round in 1994 (Underhill 1998). Signatories to the newly formed World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to a phase-out of quotas over a ten-year period (1995 to 2005) under the Agreement on Textile and Clothing (ATC). The phase-out of quotas was seen as a concession to countries in the global South and Eastern Europe, won in part through their acceptance of new trade disciplines like intellectual property and investment measures as part of the multilateral trade agenda (Ibid.).

### *3. The formation of a macro-regional textile and garment assemblage*

While countries and territories of the circum-Caribbean have adopted strategies to promote industrial production through foreign direct investment since the late 1940s, it was not until the 1980s that these strategies intersected with shifting competitive interests structuring the US garment and textile market. The conjuncture led to a considerable

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<sup>7</sup> According to Aggarwal, the special quota category for OPT was introduced by the EEC in the renegotiation of the MFA in 1981 and faced opposition from US interests (181).

<sup>8</sup> Heron emphasizes the singular character of the MFA in world trade as an arrangement that expressly discriminated against non-OECD countries (2006: 273).

boom in manufacturing production and employment in circum-Caribbean countries. While the literature on global production of the 1980s and 1990s largely treated the garment boom in the region as evidence of “globalization” and an expanding frontier of wage labour (see Introduction), what becomes clear upon careful analysis of the specific trajectories of garment transnationalization is the highly volatile and uneven incorporation of circum-Caribbean workers as part of a reworked US-oriented garment and textile production assemblage. The macro-regionalization of the industry incorporated some producers in certain countries for a decade or a decade and a half (e.g., those in Haiti, Barbados and Jamaica), while others, like the Dominican Republic, sustained garment production for nearly three decades. Quota management at the multilateral level set the regulatory framework that provided for the garment and apparel assemblage to expand to the circum-Caribbean in the 1980s, since constraints on Asian production created a “supply gap” that could be filled by these proximate producers (Rosen 2002). In addition to US foreign direct investment and OPT, East Asian producers established outsourcing platforms in the circum-Caribbean in order to benefit from high quotas and low tariffs for OPT production (Green 1998).

The post-WWII trajectory of industrial promotion strategies in the circum-Caribbean can be traced to Puerto Rico’s Operation Bootstrap and its dissemination through the plan’s intellectual authors and implementers.<sup>9</sup> Incentives passed in 1947 prompted the growth of low-wage manufacturing in Puerto Rico. Garment production on the island comprised between one-quarter and one-third of manufacturing jobs from the

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<sup>9</sup> The creators of the program became key experts in export promotion strategies not only in the Caribbean but also in East Asia (see World Bank 1992). The Caribbean Basin Initiative, discussed below, was premised on similar assumptions and incentives.

mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, largely employing women workers (Safa 1995: 65).

Development economist W. Arthur Lewis advocated the Puerto Rican model for the macro-region. Lewis became a principal advocate for industrialization through export-orientation rather than the predominant trend in the middle of the century in Latin America to promote import-substituting industries (1949; 1954). English-speaking Caribbean countries passed legislation modeled on Puerto Rico during the 1950s and the 1960s, but local firms generally failed to compete in export markets (Heron 2004: 41).

In the 1970s, the combination of revolutionary movements, dependency critiques in the English Caribbean, and the detrimental effects of the oil shocks on insular Caribbean countries led to the election of democratic socialist governments in Jamaica and Guyana, and the seizing of power by a Marxist-Leninist party in Grenada. Leftist movements were also challenging the predominant structures of dependent capitalism in Central America. By the end of the decade, however, efforts to forge non-capitalist state-centered alternatives in the insular Caribbean were collapsing and by the beginning the 1980s, these alternatives seemed completely out of reach, most profoundly marked by the bitter internecine struggle and execution of Maurice Bishop in Grenada, followed by the invasion of US marines in 1983.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Maurice Bishop led the Marxist-Leninist and Black Power-inspired New Jewel Movement (NJM) in a popular insurrection against Grenada's ruling party, widely seen as corrupt, and successfully took state power in a bloodless coup in 1979. Bishop's skill as an orator and active leadership in Third Worldist efforts through the Non-Aligned Movement and the alliance of English-speaking Caribbean countries (called CARICOM) lent the Grenadian revolution a high international profile. In 1983, NJM suffered a debilitating split between Bishop and his government's Deputy Prime Minister, Bernard Coard, leading to Bishop's execution along with a handful of key union and government leaders and about one hundred supporters. The split and massacre provided a pretext for a US invasion that overthrew the government. See works by poet and author Dionne Brand, especially *A Map to the Door of No Return* (2002), for a postcolonial engagement with these events.

The 1970s yielded different fortunes for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, however, a dynamic that was crucial to their early positioning as garment exporters. In Haiti, power was transferred under the repressive dictatorship of Francois Duvalier to his son, Jean-Claude, or ‘Baby Doc,’ upon his father’s death in 1971. In contrast to his father, Jean-Claude Duvalier embraced the export-oriented model and by 1972, 150 export assembly firms were operating in the Haitian capital, a number that nearly doubled during the next five years (Trouillot 1990: 201-3). Through OPT production in garments and other light assembly, Haiti outpaced other countries in the region in its proportion of manufacturing exports, reaching fifty-eight percent of the country’s total exports by 1980 (Bulmer-Thomas 2003: 320).<sup>11</sup> In the Dominican Republic, José Joaquin Balaguer, the close ally and successor of former Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, was largely antagonistic towards export manufacturing and vigorously promoted import-substitution (Moya Pons 1992). Nevertheless, for reasons explained more fully below, three trade zones were established in the Dominican Republic during the decade although their output was significantly dwarfed by neighbouring Haiti.

Neocolonial interventions in the circum-Caribbean took their toll not only on revolutionary movements and governments in the circum-Caribbean, but also on the legitimacy of the Reagan Administration. In the context of costly military interventions and faltering US hegemony, the Reagan Administration recuperated the geographical category of the “Caribbean Basin” from the archives of Manifest Destiny and enacted the

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<sup>11</sup> For 1980, Bulmer-Thomas lists manufactured exports as a percentage of total exports for key export-promoting Latin American countries as follows: Brazil (37.2%), Colombia (19.7%), Dominican Republic (23.6%), Haiti (58.6%), Mexico (31.1%) (Ibid: 320). Haiti’s high percentage may be an indicator more of dependence on manufactured exports than high output, perhaps related to a decline of Haitian agricultural exports.

country's most wide-sweeping Caribbean-related legislation of the post-WWII period.<sup>12</sup>

The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), as the legislative package was called, encompassed a diverse set of trade, development and military policies to serve US geopolitical and economic goals. Nearly one-third of the \$350 million in funds appropriated by Congress under CBI was destined for military aid to El Salvador; the remainder was earmarked for “economic revitalization” in the rest of the region (Heron 2004: 44-45). In addition to the oil crisis, the circum-Caribbean was dramatically impacted by the contraction of US sugar import quotas at the end of the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Thus the trade component of the CBI, known as the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA), was aimed at promoting so-called “non-traditional exports,” in particular for the insular Caribbean, diversifying sources of foreign exchange away from sugar.<sup>14</sup> The CBERA, passed in 1983, granted duty-free access to non-competing imports from twenty-two countries in the region. Almost all the goods granted duty-free access under the program were already guaranteed similar treatment under the multi-lateral General System of Preferences (GSP); significantly, garment and textile products were excluded. Nevertheless, Congress appropriated considerable funds under the Act to promote and secure US foreign direct investment for the production of non-competing goods.

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<sup>12</sup> While Green (1994) writes that the Caribbean Basin was a newly invented geographical category, recent arguments forwarded by Grandin (2006) suggest that Reaganite policies drew upon the ideological legacies of US imperialism in the circum-Caribbean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most relevant ideologue from this era, Alfred T. Mahan, theorized the Caribbean in terms not dissimilar to the geopolitical imaginary that underpinned the CBI. See Rodriguez (1999) for a comprehensive review of Mahan's geopolitical imaginary of the Caribbean.

<sup>13</sup> US sugar import quotas were restricted in tandem with increased domestic sugar production (beet and cane). Between 1981 and 1987, US imports of circum-Caribbean sugar decreased from 1.6 to 0.3 million tons. Sugar consumption in the US declined due to the proliferation of sugar substitutes (high fructose corn syrup and synthetic sweeteners) while US domestic sugar production increased (by 15 percent between 1981 and 1989). See Messina and Seale (1993).

<sup>14</sup> Pantojas-Garcia argues that the economic component of CBI had many similarities with Operation Bootstrap but US policymakers intentionally downplayed these because of the abysmal condition of Puerto Rico's economy at the time CBI was being debated (1985; 1990).

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) was the main agent and promoter of the export promotion program under CBERA and focused primarily on attracting investment for the production of winter fruits and vegetables (Raynolds 1994). While not the target of aid and formally excluded from CBERA, apparel exports continued to grow from the region. With new quota categories for OPT (see footnote 3), US garment manufacturers had already initiated extensive outward processing, taking advantage of a provision of the US tariff code (subheading 807), initially used by US auto makers in Canada, that allowed for duty payment only on the “value added” – essentially, labour – on goods that were assembled from US components (Rosen 2002). By 1986, the Reagan Administration recognized the potential to satisfy US textile protectionists and serve the country’s geopolitical interests by promoting apparel exports from the Caribbean region. The US Administration implemented an enhanced “production sharing” model in 1987, guaranteeing high quotas for OPT garments made of US woven or knit cloth sewn in countries that were party to the CBI. The new provisions in the Multi-Fibre Arrangement creating special quota categories for OPT production allowed this macro-regional arrangement to fall within the parameters of multilateral trade. Limited tariffs on re-importation of OPT textiles combined with export incentives passed by circum-Caribbean governments led to a rapid boom in garment production that displaced production from East Asia (including China) over the course of the next decade. Whereas in 1987, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea represented 56 percent of the import share in the US market, relative to 8 percent from CBI countries and 2 percent from Mexico, by 1998, CBI countries and Mexico represented 22 percent and 15 percent respectively (see Table 1). In fact, by the late 1990s, so much production

had moved to the macro-region that large Asian producers were not filling their country quotas under the MFA (Underhill 1998: 221).

Source	1987 (millions of square meters)	Import Share (%)	1998 (millions of square meters)	Import Share (%)	Change 1987-1998 (%)
NICs, China	3,040	56	2,853	22	-6
ASEAN	709	13	1,469	11	107
South Asia	547	10	1,858	14	240
CBI	436	8	3,066	24	603
Mexico	134	2	1,985	15	1381
All other	593	11	1,655	13	179
Total apparel imports	5,459	100	12,886	100	136

Table 2.1: United States Apparel Imports by Macro-region.

Source: American Apparel Manufacturers Association (1999) in Heron (2004), p. 93.

This large-scale transfer of production was facilitated through the movement of hundreds of East Asian and US firms to set up production facilities in CBI countries, the expansion of the number of countries involved in the trade, and the feminization of factory work. While four countries (Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica) represented eighty percent of OPT exports to the US in the 1980s, by the mid-1990s, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, and, more significantly, Mexico became major sites of garment production. The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) not only bolstered Mexican production, but, more importantly,

eliminated tariffs on garments produced with textiles from anywhere in the NAFTA region (Mexico, the US and Canada) (Heron 2006). Whereas Mexico's existing textile base was thereby provisionally incorporated into the macro-regional assemblage, CBI producers were still required to use US textiles to qualify for "value-added" tariffs (Bair and Dussel Peters 2006). Intra-regional competition also stiffened on the basis of currency values. Competitive currency devaluations had been central to the incorporation of CBI producers in the 1980s, but circum-Caribbean currencies steadily appreciated with respect to the US dollar during the 1990s, while the devaluation of the Mexican peso in December 1994 and January 1995 effectively cut hourly wages in the Mexican *maquila* sector by 50 percent (Heron 2006: 270). The highly politicized debate surrounding the collateral impacts of NAFTA on circum-Caribbean garment producers led to the passage of a weak form of "NAFTA-parity" in 2000, dubbed the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA). The new legislation extended duty-free treatment to "local value added" – i.e., labour – but failed to allow circum-Caribbean producers to use textiles from Mexican, Canadian or circum-Caribbean producers (Ibid.). By the time the legislation was passed, the phasing out of global quotas was imminent and predictions for the circum-Caribbean were ominous. In the absence of a "supply gap" created by the quota system, many experts assumed that little garment production would remain in the region, and many were sceptical of the prospects of developing a competitive textile base in the region, prohibited through the hitherto export regulatory regime under CBI.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> As is well known, the outward processing model protected US textile mills throughout the 1980s and 1990s. By the time of my study, the Dominican sector had specialized in casual pants, in particular, and bottoms generally (shorts, jeans, skirts), products produced from woven materials. Six US mills were supplying the Dominican sector but the woven material for casual pants (twill) was supplied primarily by three mills, two of which went into receivership in 2005 and 2006. Woven (or broad) mills are generally



The confluence of factors that led to the circum-Caribbean garment boom were woven through and reworked by particular uneven geographies. In the remainder of the chapter, I provide a brief history of how the garment and textile assemblage intersected with particular places and class fractions in the Dominican Republic. Similar to neighbouring states, the garment export industry contributed to a significant transformation in the DR in the face of oil shocks, the sugar export crisis, and declining US sugar quotas. Of all the producers in the circum-Caribbean, however, those in the DR negotiated and sustained a relatively stable position within the macro-regional garment and textile assemblage. As more circum-Caribbean producers entered into the export garment business, this stability was maintained through regional disinvestment in the country's eastern region and the consolidation of the industry in the northern Cibao region.

#### *4. The decline of sugar exports and import-substitution in the Dominican Republic*

In the last decade of his thirty-one year dictatorship, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo promoted capital accumulation and national development through import-substitution industrialization, subsidizing agro-industries and forming a small non-agricultural

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more capital intensive than knit mills, the latter material used to make lighter, less durable garments like t-shirts and underwear. While failing to attract woven mills, two multinationals, US-based HanesBrand and Quebec-based Gildan, as well as the Santiago-based firm Dominican Textile, set up large knit mills in the country between 2004 and 2005. The three firms were producing knit cloth wholly or in part for sewing in Haiti. Dominican Textile's company president claimed that all knit assembly would soon be outsourced to Haiti. Author interviews with Levi's country manager, October 26, 2006; PVH regional manager, February 7, 2007; Company President, Dominican Textile, December 5, 2005. On Gildan and Hanesbrand, "Instalarán fábricas de tela," *Hoy*, September 29, 2004. [Mills to be opened.]

industrial sector while expanding his sugar empire (Betances 1995; Moya Pons 1990; Turits 2003) (see also Chapter 4). Although the size of the industrial sector doubled under Trujillo, the sector's contribution to employment and capital investment was dwarfed by the sugar economy, including related agro-industries, which dominated economic activity in the country (Moya Pons 1992; Tables 4 and 5). Following his assassination in 1961, Trujillo's assets were transferred to the state, converting sixty percent of all manufacturing and agro-industrial activities into state-owned enterprises, including the sugar industry (Ibid: 79). The next four years were wracked by political and economic turmoil as various class fractions struggled to consolidate power. The US intervened on several occasions, backing political forces that would guarantee foreign capital interests. In 1965, the ruling government faced a popular armed revolt organized by the exiled leaders of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), the party that had won the first democratic elections in the country two years earlier, only to be ousted seven months later after adopting a social democratic constitution.<sup>16</sup> After five days of armed struggle, the US intervened directly to repress the Constitutionals (those seeking a return of the PRD and recognition of the 1963 constitution), deploying thousands of marines to the country. The invasion turned into an eighteen-month occupation that

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<sup>16</sup> Hoetnik argues that the PRD led by famed dissident and liberal intellectual Juan Bosch was elected because it offered institutional continuity in the state and military bureaucracies built by the Trujillo regime under the slogan "*borrón y cuenta nueva*" (let bygones be bygones) in the face of efforts by traditional elites to recapture the state apparatus after Trujillo's assassination (2000: 217). As Hoetnik and several other scholars emphasize (see Turits 2003, p. 303, fn. 4 for a list), the Dominican *ancien regime* was practically non-existent following the exodus of elites from the island of Hispaniola after the Haitian revolution. Those seeking "restoration" following Trujillo's assassination were associated with merchant capital of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and organized under the political party called the Unión Cívica Nacional (Hoetnik 2000: 217). The absence of an established planter class precisely facilitated Trujillo's rise to power by building a popular peasant base through widespread land reform in the first two decades of his regime before turning into a sugar magnate during his fateful final period (Turits 2003). I address some of these complexities of class conflict and class fractions in Chapter 4.

ended with the US backing Balaguer as the country's President. Balaguer, Trujillo's closest ally, governed the country over the next twelve years (1966-1978) and for another ten years during a second mandate more than a decade later (1986-1996).

Despite US pressure on the Dominican government to adopt liberal market policies, abandon ISI, and follow the export model pioneered in Puerto Rico, President Balaguer proved to be adept at minimally satisfying US officials while pursuing his own economic agenda (a skill used to explain his subsequent election in the late 1980s after a wrenching period of neoliberal reforms) (Schrank 2003a). A good case in point was the adoption of the country's first significant industrial incentives law, Law 299, in 1968 (Moya Pons 1992). The legislation was a compromise between the US agenda for export-promotion and Balaguer's political priorities. President Balaguer consolidated his political position by protecting import-substituting industries behind high tariff walls, allowing him to garner customs revenue to curry favour with ISI elites and stimulate national demand through public sector spending. Under the incentives law, ISI firms received tax and tariff reductions on inputs as well as subsidized credit (known as Category C incentives) in exchange for commitments to generate employment, while export-oriented firms received tax and tariff exemptions (or Category A incentives) with the commitment to locate in free trade zones and generate employment (Abreu and Cocco 1989). Import-competing incentives were granted three times more frequently than those for export, and disproportionately to firms located in the capital city, Santo Domingo. Six hundred and ten of the 773 industries granted incentives under the import substitution category of Law 299 between 1968 and 1983 (compared to only 240 for export) were located in Santo Domingo (Moya Pons 1992: 410). Critics called Balaguer's industrial

policy “anarchic” because fiscal incentives and other forms of protection were extended to regime clients outside of any planning with respect to the types of technology and products to be promoted as import-substituting (Ceara Hatton, et al. 1985: 15).

While conceding to export promotion through Law 299, on paper at least, Balaguer resisted adjusting budget priorities to US dictates and devaluing the Dominican peso, pegged to the dollar (Schrank 2003a). The Dominican peso continued to be traded at par with the US dollar in the official market while its value fluctuated in a parallel market that began to function following the end of the US occupation in 1966.<sup>17</sup> Without currency liberalization, the fortunes of labour-intensive export industries would prove to be modest.

By the end of the 1970s, the Dominican Republic, like other insular Caribbean countries reeling from oil shocks and petrodollar debt, was facing twin crises related to sugar production: on the one hand, sugar prices were declining sharply on the world market; on the other hand, the US was shrinking sugar import quotas in response to domestic producers (see footnote 9). The two factors aggravated the state’s fiscal crisis and weakened the position of the Balaguer Administration. In particular, President Balaguer lost the support of ISI industrialists as falling state revenues led to the curtailment of government subsidies to that sector; his administration also came under increasing criticism for fostering corruption in the civilian and military bureaucracies (Betances 1995).

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<sup>17</sup> In the parallel market, which served many including the early trade zone producers and the tourist sector (although not officially), the dollar traded for about 1.26 pesos in 1980 (Isa, Ceara, and Cuello 2003: 29; Willmore 1995: 529-30).

In 1978, Balaguer's party was defeated by its erstwhile challenger, the PRD. The new government pledged economic policies to benefit its working and middle class constituencies as well as democratic reform of the state bureaucracy (Espinal 1995). Despite repeated campaign promises for pro-poor and middle class economic policies, however, when the second PRD administration led by Jorge Blanco came to power in 1982, the government acceded to IMF monetarist demands in the face of a balance of payments crisis. Under pressure to reduce fiscal and current account deficits, the Blanco Administration signed an agreement with the IMF in 1983 to reduce public spending, restrain the money supply, implement a sales tax and, most controversially, liberalize the Dominican peso (Ibid.). Unofficial currency devaluation in the early months of 1984 triggered inflation, aggravated by the lifting of price controls. The government announced a package of austerity measures, including official peso devaluation, on the day before Easter.<sup>18</sup> When stores re-opened after the holiday, the prices of basic foodstuffs like bread, eggs, and plantains, a staple, had risen by 30 to 50 percent (Artiles-Gil 2002). The price spikes ignited the accumulated frustration of urban popular sectors, exploding nation-wide into what came to be known as *la poblada*, or the April riots. Neighbourhood associations and the Communist Party organized mass opposition while groups and individuals looted stores and burned offices of the PRD (Ibid.). The uprising was unsuccessful in reversing structural adjustment policies and had decidedly negative

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<sup>18</sup> The 1984 devaluation began with the government selling currency on the parallel market (Artiles-Gil 2002). In January of 1985, the government officially yielded to the parallel market by liberalizing the currency for all transactions, sending the value of the peso to 3.26 pesos for 1 USD according to the Dominican Central Bank. Isa et al (2003), calculate that the peso lost an average of 21% annually throughout the 1980s (2003). By the end of 1990, after a second major devaluation, the peso was trading at 11.3 per US dollar. Dominican manufacturing wages, calculated to be 12% of average US manufacturing wages prior to the 1985 devaluation, subsequently fell to just 5% of the average US manufacturing wage (Mortimore, Duthoo, and Guerrero 1995).

consequences on popular movement organizing during the years of neoliberal reform to follow (see Artiles-Gil 2002). The uprising was strategic for the business community, however, who used it to raise the spectre of “another Cuba” in negotiations for export incentives and financing with the Reagan Administration (Artiles-Gil 2002; Schrank 2000: 77).

##### *5. Provincial industrialism, trade zones, and the garment boom in the Dominican Republic*

The combination of currency devaluation, firm practices, and the changing macro-regional regulatory apparatus led to a swift and dramatic transformation of Dominican exports as the country became a main production center of the US-oriented garment and textile assemblage. Over the course of the 1980s, the contribution of agricultural commodities and metals to exports would decline from 90 percent to less than 50 percent as trade zone exports dramatically increased, growing by 240 percent in the latter half of the decade (CNZFE 1999). The shift in exports had a significant effect on employment. By 1990, the World Bank estimated that the DR alone represented one-fifth of all employment in trade zones worldwide, compared to 71 percent in Asia and 7 percent in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean (1992: 15). By 1992, the garment sector represented 73 percent of all Dominican trade zone jobs and 49 percent of trade

zone exports by value (Mortimore, et al. 1995: 28-9) as the country became the sixth largest supplier to the US apparel market.<sup>19</sup>

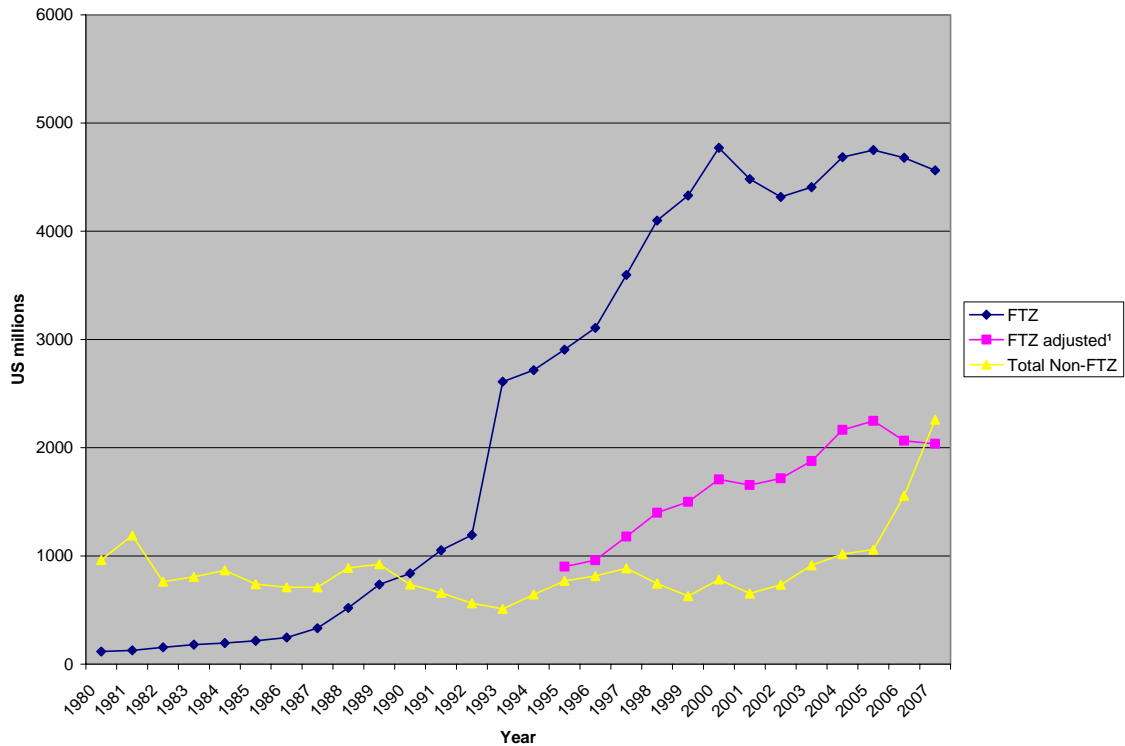


Figure 2.1: Dominican Republic Exports, 1980-2007. Source: All data from the Boletín Mensual, Banco Central de la República Dominicana, various issues except FTZ exports from 1980-1994 from CNZFE published report (1998). (Non-FTZ exports exclude goods acquired in port.)

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted amounts subtract FTZ imports. 1999 value of 'FTZ adjusted' is estimated by author.

The swift rise of Dominican trade zones and manufactured exports is attributed to well-organized business elites of the northern Cibao region and their counterparts in the declining sugar mill towns of the southeast who had established the infrastructure for export processing in the decade before structural adjustment and the passage of CBI.

<sup>19</sup> Sixth behind China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines by square meter equivalent in 1990 (Calculate from Major Shippers Reports from the US Office of Textiles and Apparel [OTEXA], <http://otexa.ita.doc.gov/>, accessed February 3, 2008).

These provincial elites had sought incentives from the Balaguer Administration for export manufacturing, largely due to their exclusion from state subsidies for import-substitution, subsidies that had been heavily concentrated amongst the industrial elite based in the capital city of Santo Domingo (Moya Pons 1992; Schrank 2000; 2003b). The first trade zone was established in 1969 in the southeast by the US-based transnational Gulf & Western with large holdings in the Dominican sugar industry in La Romana. The second was established three years later in nearby San Pedro Macorís, also in the southeast, with support from the state industrial promotions agency. Both zones were founded with the express purpose of absorbing male workers laid off from the sugar mills (Abreu et al. 1989; Schrank 2003b).

Industrialists in the northern Cibao region opted for a trade zone strategy in an attempt to resuscitate economic activity in a region largely dedicated to domestic agriculture and secondary exports of tobacco, coffee and cacao. The Cibao had not fared well during the period of transition following the end of Trujillo dictatorship. Whereas Trujillo had promoted Cibaëño agricultural production and agro-industry to supply the sugar economy based in the southeast, Balaguer largely abandoned this strategy leading to significant declines in agro-industrial production and high rates of out-migration. The concentration of ISI industries in Santo Domingo further exacerbated out-migration (see Chapter 4). With financing from the Dominican government and US development aid, and 200,000 square metres donated by the municipality, elites from the northern Cibao region organized into the Association for Development established the DR's third trade zone in the city of Santiago in 1973 (Santana 1994).



Prior to structural adjustment and CBI, the country's three trade zones employed around 20,000 workers, leaving the zones' considerable capacity for new installations unused (Abreu and Cocco 1989: 142). This capacity would be filled and easily exceeded once structural adjustment and the new trade regime took hold. Trade zone employment quadrupled between 1985 and 1988 (Ibid.). After the passage of CBTPA in 1987, dozens more trade zones were established, mostly located within these two provincial regions, effectively de-centering industrial production in the country. Employment continued to expand reaching, 130,000 by 1990 (CNZFE 1999: 21). Trade zones in the capital city were established at the end of the 1980s, when *capitaleño* investors began to switch their industrial strategy from ISI (Abreu and Cocco 1989: 68). Yet these investors sought a different category of "high-tech" FTZ. This distinction was codified in the revised industrial incentives law (8-90), although, in practice, sectoral differences between *capitaleño* and provincial zones were not initially reducible either to levels of investment nor intensity of technology use (see Schrank 2003b: 102).

The initial boom and spectacular growth of the Dominican garment sector began to wane in the mid-1990s as other producers from the circum-Caribbean and Mexico entered into competition for US market share. Predictions of the effects of intensified competition were dire (Matthews 2002; Mortimore 1999), but the results of changing regulatory and competitive conditions were mediated by localized trajectories of accumulation and disinvestment in the sub-regions of the country. While the total number of firms and workers began to decline by the late 1990s, garment production consolidated in the northern Cibao region and employment rebounded (see Figure 1).

Garment production in the southeast depended more on foreign owners whose investments were largely motivated by market access and thus more vulnerable to factory flight with changing trade regulations. Dominican ownership, more prevalent in the north, proved to be more stable during this period. Although sector specific ownership data are unavailable, 42 percent of all trade zone firms were locally owned in the Cibao in comparison to 20 percent in the southeast and 13 percent in zones in the capital (Schrank 2008).<sup>20</sup>

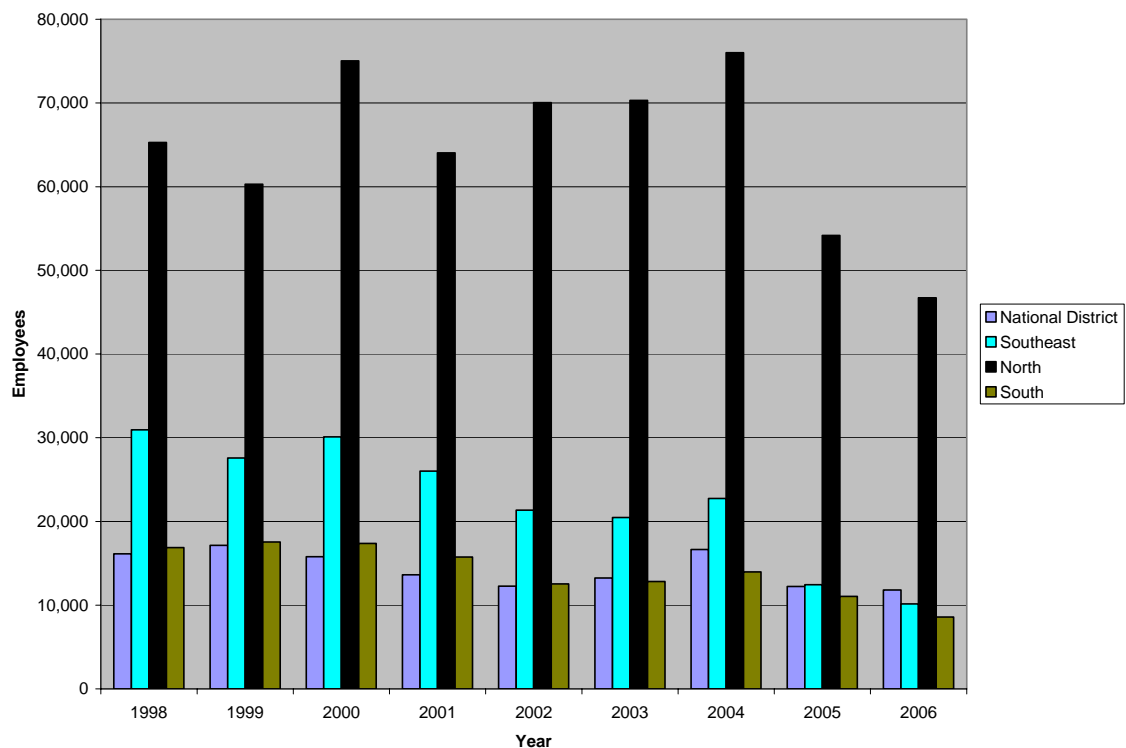


Figure 2.2: Trade Zone Employment Change by Region, Garment and Textile Sector, Dominican Republic. Source: CNZFE, Unpublished Data (on-file with author). Aggregate regional employment figures published by CNZFE in annual reports, available at <http://www.cnzfe.gov.do/>.

<sup>20</sup> The directors of two regional trade zone associations stated that about half of the garment firms in the north were locally owned compared to one-third in La Romana and San Pedro. Interview with Executive Director, Asociación de Empresas de Zona Franca de La Romana, October 19, 2006. Interview with Executive Director, Asociación de Industrias Zona Franca Santiago, October 25, 2006.

In addition to regional consolidation, increasing competition led to consolidation of production in a number of large, increasingly capital-intensive firms. The Santiago trade zone had served as an incubator for a handful of Dominican managers with close ties to regional fractions of capital and moneyed Dominicans in New York (Guarnizo 1993; Schrank 2003b). These managers started joint venture firms or their own garment factories in the late 1980s, when capital requirements were relatively small, and grew over the course of a decade to become large producers, constituting an important political force for US market access in the country.<sup>21</sup> These firms' growth was aided by the formation of sourcing relationships with lead buyers. One of the most commonly mentioned was Levi's, which began to source large volumes of casual pants assembly in the Cibao in the late 1980s.<sup>22</sup> Buyers in the same product category followed suit and by the late 1990s, the casual pants boom in the Cibao was so pervasive that garment industry insiders nicknamed the country *la isla de los Dockers* (or Docker's Island), after the popular Levi's brand. Due in part to this production specialization and key sourcing relationships, by the end of the 1990s, 70 percent of garment employment was concentrated in the Cibao, with casual pants representing 32 percent of all garment exports (see figure 2).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The political power of garment industrialists and their influence on the passage of the US-Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) is discussed in Werner and Bair (2009). For a complementary perspective on the importance of business networks formed during the CBI period to consolidate DR-CAFTA, see Ronald Cox (2008).

<sup>22</sup> The multilateral agreement to eliminate quotas (ATC) set out their elimination in three stages. The most heavily protected quota categories (including casual pants) were eliminated last, in 2005, in part explaining the product concentration in the Cibao (Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt 2003).

<sup>23</sup> In 2000, the DR exported three quarters of a billion USD in casual pants (HTS 347 and 348) out of a total of 2.45 billion USD (OTEXA, accessed February 3, 2008). CNZFE figures calculated from unpublished

Part of the consolidation process (which I discuss more in-depth in Chapter 3) included the transfer of functions of the labour process from the US to the Dominican Republic, as the circum-Caribbean gained marginally more access to the US market with the passage of the aforementioned “NAFTA parity.” Firm transformations were limited to a handful of lead firms, however, who combined large sewing workforces with new labour process functions like industrial cutting, laundries, and product development. By the beginning of the 2000s, three Dominican-owned, Santiago-based firms had consolidated between 15 and 20 percent of the country’s export garment workforce.

While subsequent chapters focus on the country’s northern region, examining the contours of the shifting garment and textile assemblage and the production of place in Santiago, the Cibao and the northern region’s border with Haiti, this brief history of the Dominican garment boom demonstrates the significance of provincial industrialism in constituting the garment and textile assemblage. From the vantage point of accumulation, Schrank has done extensive work comparing the two subregions. In line with Brenner’s work on the agrarian roots of provincial industrialism, he concludes that the success of the Cibao in consolidating large firms and a degree of capital intensification is due to the developmental inclinations of the “tobacco culture” of the north (Schrank 2008). Schrank argues that plantation sugar production in the southeast, largely US-owned and controlled for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and associated with widespread dispossession, can explain the failure of this subnational region to develop a more resilient group of trade zone industrialists. His argument is a variation on a theme in Dominican studies of capitalist class conflict, explored extensively by Moya Pons

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data from CNZFE. Aggregate figures for all sectors available in CNZFE annual reports, online at <http://www.cnzfe.gov.do/>. Accessed February 24, 2008.

(1992) in his analysis of the rearticulation of these conflicts in the formation of competing ISI and export industrial class fractions in the post-Trujillo period. It also bears relation to an even more enduring debate in Caribbean studies on the comparative political economies of plantation versus smallholding exports and the outcomes for class formation (see Mintz 1974; Ortiz 1995 [1947]).

From the perspective of garment disinvestment and trade zone employment decline, however, it is less convincing to draw direct conclusions about divergent regional political economies from patterns of trade zone investment. While Schrank's application of Brenner's thesis attempts to shed light on the rise of regional export clusters with differential characteristics, the swift decline of the sector in both sub-regions should give one pause with respect to these claims. Certainly, garment employment was higher, local ownership more prevalent, and capital intensification more pronounced in the trade zones of the Cibao, and I have argued that transformations with the onset of heightened competition in the mid-1990s were effected through a shift in the center of the Dominican garment industry to the northern Cibao region. The moment of garment consolidation in the north lasted less than a decade, however. With the expiration of MFA quotas in 2005, both regions suffered proportionately similar declines as the industry overall shed 55 percent of its workforce (CNZFE 2007). More research is needed to understand how capital formed through the robust and capital-concentrating twenty-five year export garment trade in the Dominican Republic drew upon existing uneven regional geographies, and whether these were exacerbated or mitigated during

this period.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, any analysis of regional difference must account not only for differences in capitalist class fractions but also for related differences in relations between capital and labour. Local ownership seems to have been a factor in retarding unionization in the north where union organizing efforts were successfully stifled in contrast to the southeast where nine collective bargaining agreements were still in existence in the early 2000s, organized and negotiated in the wake of early 1990s labour law reforms.<sup>25</sup> While “union-free” environments were likely a proximate factor in attracting garment production, the difference in industrial relations indicates deeper variations in capital and labour relations in the two regions.

## *6. Conclusions*

Coalescing competitive pressures in the US market, the global quota regime, and late Cold War geopolitics in the circum-Caribbean created the conditions for the reorganization of garment and textile production through a macro-regional assemblage. The spatio-temporal character of accumulation, firm transformation and disaccumulation lend this macro-regional assemblage a dynamic and spatially fragmented form. While

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<sup>24</sup> My hesitation with regards to Schrank’s application of Brenner’s thesis on the origins of capitalism in England to the DR stems in part from the process of class formation in the latter which was highly exogenous. The regional entrepreneurs in the garment sector come almost entirely from Levantine and Spanish families who immigrated to the Cibao at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Merchant and middlemen traders of European and Levantine descent were integrated into regional exports of tobacco, cacao and coffee in the Cibao in the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century while the sugar industry was resuscitated after three centuries of abandonment in the southeast beginning in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by US and Cuban entrepreneurs. While plantation economies and dispossession in the east may have hindered the rise of a strong “local” entrepreneurial class, I do not think that either agrarian formation – peasant or plantation – can adequately explain the discrepancy. Quijano’s argument with respect to enduring colonial hierarchies in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Latin American and Caribbean states is more compelling to understand how European and Levantine immigrants became integrated into the upper segments of a race-class hierarchy organized around constructions of whiteness and Eurocentric privilege.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Maribel Bautista, National Union Center (CNUS), July 13, 2006.

twenty-two countries were incorporated through Reaganite strategic trade policy, the space-times of garment accumulation were highly variegated. The Haitian factory boom in Port-au-Prince that preceded CBI barely survived it, collapsing in the mid-1980s as democratic movements and their repression, followed by an embargo, led to factory flight. The English Caribbean, in particular Jamaica and Barbados, was also integrated into the trade zone model of the 1980s, but experienced precipitous disinvestment in the 1990s (although to my knowledge no studies have examined the spatial transformations related to these deindustrializing processes).

By contrast, the incorporation of firms and workers in the Dominican Republic into the shifting garment and textile assemblage is remarkable for its relative stability. The exclusion of provincial industrialists from state-promoted ISI created the possibility for their promotion of regional trade zones. These zones de-centered industrial production during the 1980s and 1990s and triggered the reconsolidation of a fraction of capital dedicated to this highly particular model of accumulation through managed market access to the US. As new localities in the circum-Caribbean and Mexico were incorporated in the assemblage as producers, disinvestment in the Dominican Republic was experienced through a weakening of the sector in the southeast and its consolidation in the north. Finally, as the assemblage continued to re-territorialize and the US market increasingly opened to Asian producers, Dominican trade zones in the country's northern region experienced precipitous job loss and declines in manufacturing output.

The trajectories of the garment and textile assemblage are illustrative of the way socio-spatial divisions of labour are constituted by displacements, complex mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that create places and constitute subjects of accumulation. In

the chapters that follow, I explore the geographies of displacements that articulate with the garment industry, the Cibao, and the livelihoods of workers linked to garment production. These geographies both underwrite and are effaced by discourses of sequentialist production, discourses that are productive of displacements. The sociospatial locations that I explore – firms, the region, and workers -- offer different perspectives on the contingent rearticulation of uneven geographies, the connections between incorporation into and expulsion from relations of capitalist commodity production and how these processes relate to overdetermined structures of social difference. We turn first to a study of Santiago-based garment firms and development discourses, to explore the gendered forms of displacement that underwrote struggles to restructure the basis of profit-making in the country.



## Chapter 3: Unpacking Displacements – Gender, Industrial Restructuring, and Discourses of Development

### 1. Introduction

In the hollowness of a shuttered factory in the Santiago FTZ, the owner and founder of the largest garment firm in the Dominican Republic addressed a forum of export industrialists and their allies in government flanked by a small crowd of about one hundred hand-picked managers and the press. The factory's emptiness echoed the absence of garment operators who made up 85 percent of the workforce and were excluded from these sanctioned spaces of debate on the industry's crisis. Standing before the audience, the owner held up an industrial spool of thread and a printed t-shirt and said the following:

I created 14,000 jobs. I have 11,000 jobs left and we are all fighting for those 11,000 jobs and maybe a few more... We have to continue to improve our internal processes and continue to convince from the President of the Republic to many government bureaucrats to our legislators that we are not a footloose company. We are not a low tech company as some state officials who want to deride the sector make us out to be. We are not a company that can exchange sewing machines for computers from one day to the next. We have a population of employees from the age of twenty-five on who will neither become efficient with computers nor will they learn perfect English to work at a call centre.... For those who say that we are, are the past, there are companies who are buying this [thread] in the world market to make a product like this [t-shirt]. A *muchacha* [young woman] from Gurabo designed this. Another *muchacho* [young guy] sells it in New York, goes to New York and sells the product... this one is Donna Karan. This polo shirt, we did the cloth, the weaving, the dyeing, the marking, the cutting – the sewing – and this, yes, you could say is low technology, a government excuse to say that it is low technology – but the girl who designed it, the guy who marketed it, the one who printed the design, designed the components which were all bought locally – the labels, packaging. This is not low

technology. When you hear people of authority saying that we are going to disappear because we don't have technology, it's simply not true. This [t-shirt] is high technology.<sup>1</sup>

As the sector faced a profit crisis, it offered the high-tech t-shirt as the solution for itself and the country. The owner advanced a vision of an industry that would sustain low-wage assembly jobs while signifying the sector's "value" through the work of cosmopolitan employees: the young woman designer from Gurabo – a town-turned-Santiago suburb now host to the trade zone model's winners on its prestigious hillsides and working class rural migrants on its margins – and her co-worker, a jet-setting transnational vendor who moves fluidly between Santiago and the pinnacle of the "global" apparel market in New York.

In its discourse and intense lobbying activities, the garment sector was defending itself against another vision of a high-tech path for the country advanced by government officials and development policy makers. For these actors, the imperative of progress could only be achieved if the Dominican Republic abandoned its position in the garment and textile assemblage (concretized in the country's numerous trade zones) and moved towards "new" services like call centers. In the government's high profile National Competitiveness Plan launched in 2006, for example, garment and textile production was presented as a stage that would have to be overcome in an inexorable march toward global competitiveness. The authors of the plan asserted that as one of the "countries of 'late industrialization,' [the DR] cannot commit the mistake of arriving late again to the era of knowledge" (2005: 1). Competitiveness in the US market would depend on export industries making "the successful transition from assembly (first generation) to value-

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<sup>1</sup> Encuentro con legisladores, Santiago textile training centre, Santiago FTZ. October 30, 2006.

added manufacturers (second generation)... to *mentefactura* or *menteobra* [mind-facturing or mind-labour]” (Ibid: 31).

The state and the garment sector, in other words, were involved in an apparent, although by no means irresolvable, conflict between advancing the “high-tech t-shirt” versus “mind-facturing.” This was, on the surface, a conflict over the constitutive parts of profit-making. In its discourse, the export garment sector advocated a low ratio of relative-to-absolute surplus value extraction<sup>2</sup> in the Dominican Republic: national accumulation premised upon thousands of assembly workers combined with a small number of young urbanites whose talents and cultural capital as transnational subjects could “add value” and create profit from garments. The development discourse of the government and multilateral aid agencies, in particular the World Bank, projected the need for a much higher ratio of relative/absolute surplus value. For the Bank, as we shall see, the body of assembly labour would have to be expelled in order to create a high-tech, knowledge economy. In essence, the debate was over how to structure surplus value extraction and, by extension, which fractions of capital would control the profits of capitalist production.

In their struggle over the component parts of accumulation, garment capital and state and development agencies marshalled apparel production into teleological sequences of development. In this chapter, I elaborate how these sequential narratives were produced through a complex mechanism of inclusion and exclusion constituted by

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<sup>2</sup> Marx designates that surplus value extracted from labour based on the length of the working day as absolute surplus value, while that extracted based on the “curtailment of the necessary labour time” (i.e., increases in productivity and the attendant fall in the value of labour-power), relative surplus value (see 1976: 432). I discuss this distinction as it relates to the “new” international division of labour, as theorized by Harvey (1989), in the introduction.

displacements: a mechanism that recombines subjects marked by race, gender, class and nation to reorder social and spatial divisions of labour and recuperate profits. It is a mechanism motored by its overdetermined relationship with the coloniality of power, that is, the history and geography of sociospatial divisions of labour that determines their reorganization in both structured and contingent ways. My analysis will focus explicitly on the meaning and material structure of sex/gender difference, keeping in mind that this structure of difference is part of the coloniality of power articulating race, class and nation. Through detailed analysis of firm-level practices and development texts, I will discuss how this conflict between capital and the state was driven by the abstraction of hierarchical gender difference and the expulsion of labour made feminine.

I will proceed in two main parts, unpacking the displacements that underwrite the garment sector's developmental imperative, on the one hand, and that of the World Bank on the other. Section two dissects the mechanisms of displacement that constitute the industry's restructuring through a detailed analysis of labour process changes in the Dominican Republic in relation to the transnational garment and textile assemblage. I analyze both the changing geographies of the labour process and the reworking of gender and skill on the assembly line as a new paradigm of flexibility took hold in the industry. Overall, we will see how gendered forms of inclusion and exclusion structured the possibilities of reworking the extraction of surplus value in the export garment sector. Section three brings the analysis of displacements to bear upon the texts of the World Bank and its evaluation of Dominican trade zones. The dualisms of sex/gender and "the developing economy" worked together to naturalize the expulsion of low-wage assembly

labour as an imperative of development. In the conclusion, I will draw on the dimensions of displacements explored in the chapter to discuss the employment collapse in the trade zones in Santiago and the Cibao.

## *2. The space-time of firm restructuring: Reproducing Gender in the Garment Sector*

The early trade zone boom in the Dominican Republic drew women into the regulated wage labour force. With the growth of FTZs, women's participation in wage labour in the DR increased from 25 percent in 1970 to 38 percent in 1990 (Safa 1995). Between 1992 and 2002, however, at the same time that the industry consolidated in the northern region, women's participation in trade zone labour waned. Over the decade, the proportion of female employees declined from 61 percent of total trade zone employment to 53 percent (PNUD 2005). The decline in women's employment coincided with the diversification of trade zone production into other sectors like ceramics, medical supplies and shoes, sectors that discriminated against women operators while employing fewer workers overall. But the garment sector underwent its own gendered form of restructuring and it is this process that I focus on here, drawing upon interviews with managers and participant observation in firms.<sup>3</sup> (See Appendix I on Method for a more complete discussion.)

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<sup>3</sup> Given the purpose of this chapter – to compare gendered practices and discourses between firms and development policy as part of industrial restructuring – my observations are firm-centered. I do not take into account how shifts in households and the labour market surely shaped workforce participation in Santiago although I do consider these dynamics in terms of retrenchment in the following chapter. See Peck (1996) for a discussion of spatial divisions of labour and the framework's omission of labour markets. Labour law and policy is another factor that I do not take into account here. The Dominican labour code was substantially reformed in 1992 and offered increased protection and paid leave time for maternity, a change that likely influenced hiring decisions. I choose to analyze the particular politics I observed in

In the Dominican firms<sup>4</sup> where I concentrated my research, the number of female and male sewing operators was nearly equivalent. Managers of these firms attributed this parity to the provenance of the firms' owners. They claimed that no significant shifts in gender had occurred in the garment sector in and around Santiago, where there were more locally-owned firms relative to the other garment production pole in the southeast, because Dominican firms did not privilege female operators as preferred workers. For example, when I asked the minority partner of a large Dominican firm in the Santiago FTZ if there had been a defeminization of the workforce, he responded that "...here, there has always been, except for US companies that looked for female labour, here it has always been between 35 and 50 percent men in the companies owned locally, not the international ones."<sup>5</sup> This response was typical amongst managers of Dominican firms. An increase in Dominican ownership may well have coincided with a growing incorporation of men into the garment sector. In the Santiago trade zone, over the course of the 1980s as more Dominicans started or took over garment firms, garment employment increased overall relative to other sectors in the zone (principally cigar production) and so too did the proportion of male workers in the garment sector. While men made up 38 percent of the garment workforce in the Santiago trade zone in 1986, by 1990, they represented 45 percent (see Table 1). By 2004, 55 percent of the nearly 38,000 workers in Santiago's garment factories were men.<sup>6</sup>

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firms while acknowledging that there are a host of factors that contribute to transformations in the gendering of work.

<sup>4</sup> I use pseudonyms for all local firms that participated in my study. Wherever possible, I refer to informants from the sector by position; in cases where this is stylistically awkward, I have used pseudonyms.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sales and Administrative Director, minority investor, IA, Santiago FTZ, July 6, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Corporación Zona Franca Industrial de Santiago, Inc. Memoria, 2005. Santiago de los Caballeros, República Dominicana.

Table 3.1: Santiago Trade Zone, Garment Sector by Sex, Various Years

	1983/84	1987	1989	1993	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Women	3704	8869	14768	14516	15210	10871	14581	14075	11607
Men	2172	5961	11604	13050	14040	11316	15088	16150	13471
% TZ total	57.6	67.4	76	70	65	58	75.7	75	72

Source: Corporación Zona Franca Industrial de Santiago, Annual Reports, Various Years

The relationship between domestic ownership and the composition of the workforce cannot be reduced to a causal one, however, for an implicit gendered value of labour is inherent in the minority partner's response and remains unexplained. As we saw in the argument for high-tech t-shirts, Dominican trade zone firms were at pains to distance themselves from the perception that they were "footloose" or "low-tech" companies. By associating a majority female workforce with foreign firms, Dominican managers and owners were both invoking a gendered norm – i.e., women workers as devalued labour – and employing this norm to mark their own firms as "more advanced." What remains unexplained is how the norm itself is produced, and, consequently, how shifts in the gender composition of the workforce intersected with transformations in the sector as the export garment boom consolidated in the north of the country and firms attempted to shift their position within the macro-regional garment and textile assemblage.

In the rest of this section, I show how the restructuring of the garment sector drew upon cultural constructions of gender to rework the basis of capital accumulation. Firms seeking to alter their position in global supply chains do not simply expand to contain new functions but rather reorganize their production by mobilizing cultural discourses of value that have effect through the coloniality of power. Restructuring in the garment sector was highly uneven: as particular assembly firms developed the capacity to carry out more parts of the labour process, the structure of the industry and the position of

firms within it changed. The “Dominican” industry, as chapter 2 made clear, was part of a macro-regional assemblage, the contours of which were also changing.

Transformations did not mark a clear transition from one firm type to another but a reworking of firms and contracting networks as a handful of lead enterprises came to occupy key supplier positions in the garment and textile assemblage. Similarly, the re-gendering of parts of the labour process did not represent a total transition from a female assembly workforce to a more technology-intensive industry predominated by male workers. The labour requirements of garment production are difficult to rationalize through technological change and associated ideologies of masculinity; nevertheless, in the Dominican Republic, women’s participation in the garment sector gradually decreased. Largely drawing on participant observation, I propose that this decline was due to two factors: first, the domestication, or the transfer of functions from the US to the DR, of new parts of the garment labour process, labour functions that were culturally constructed as masculine, and second, a reworking of the meaning of gender and skill in garment making.

*a. Gender and labour process geographies*

Whereas assembly firms in the circum-Caribbean throughout the 1980s received pre-cut pieces bundled for sewing from Miami or Tampa, in the mid-1990s, changing trade regulations combined with demands of US brand marketers and retailers led to the transformation of a small number of firms. These firms began to incorporate so-called



“pre-” and “post-production” departments.<sup>7</sup> This reworking of the division of labour in the apparel and textile assemblage in the circum-Caribbean and Mexico became associated with an idea called “full package” production. Full package production requires suppliers to manage more of the production chain. The term encompasses and does not distinguish between the nature of these linkages, whether they are made through vertical integration or by reworking nodes in contracting networks.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the term does not tell us much about the geographies of this process, whether backward and forward linkages are created regionally or whether suppliers become coordinators of geographically extensive supply networks. In the circum-Caribbean, there is wide variation in what is meant by “full package” production. In Mexico, for example, where a national textile base exists, export firms began to develop sourcing networks for woven

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<sup>7</sup> In the DR, this process was largely achieved through vertical integration rather than contracting to suppliers: while many informants mentioned the ideal of establishing product development services for all Santiago firms, for example, intense competition foreclosed this possibility. One informant, a leading representative of the Dominican trade zone sector, explained that there were few to no suppliers to outsource to; if you wanted a supplier, you had to create the firm yourself. He claimed there was a total lack of trust between the three large firms and they would sooner trust a foreign company than trust one another. Author Interview, Santo Domingo, November 3, 2006. This statement was perhaps slightly overstated but intense competition and a lack of cooperation between the lead firms was largely confirmed in my informal conversations with firm owners. It was also evident in my observations of the private trade zones belonging to DCD and Dominican Textile where suppliers of components, for example, were capitalized by the main enterprise which remained either as part owner or principal buyer.

<sup>8</sup> Based largely on Gary Gereffi’s careful and extensive empirical work on the global garment trade (e.g., Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon 2005; Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994), the literature around firm upgrading (of which “full package” is one example) is part of applied commodity chain (or value chain) analysis, an important paradigm in development policy. The travels of value chain analysis from Marxist world-systems critique to mainstream development analytic are partially traced by Bair (2008). See my discussion of networks, chains and assemblages in chapter 2 for a critique of “chain” metaphors in global production studies. For a good summary of the mechanics of “full package” production in Mexico and Honduras, its relation to the garment regulatory apparatus, and the outcomes in Mexico after NAFTA, see Bair and Dussel Peters (2006). It must be emphasized that the debate is *null* with respect to East Asian firms which were always “full package” (I am grateful to John Pickles for this observation). Thus, it is the particular geographies of the US-oriented garment and textile assemblage described in chapter 2 that underpin the debate around export upgrading in this sector. I would also suggest that this debate substitutes for substantive discussion of industrial policy.

and knit materials produced in Mexico, while in Honduras, foreign textile mills vertically integrated garment production into their operations (Bair and Dussel Peters 2006).

A combination of vertical integration and contracting within both Cibaeño and macro-regional supply networks dominated the processes of firm restructuring in the Dominican Republic. Three broad types of firms emerged: strict OPT assembly, assembly plus components and cutting (known as cut, make and trim), and full package (see Table 2).

<b>Assembly (Outward-Processing)</b>	<b>Cut-Make-Trim (CMT)</b>	<b>Full Package</b>
Sewing	Industrial cutting	Sourcing fabric
	Sewing	Sourcing trims
	Simple finishes (e.g., steam press)	Product development – design, pattern-making and sample-making
	Labels and packaging	Marking and grading patterns
		Sewing
		Finishes – laundry, press, baking, “destruction”
		Inspection and auditing

Table 3.2: Firm Typology, Export Garment Sector, Dominican Republic  
Source: Constructed from author’s notes.

The most significant difference that I found between so-called full package firms and other producers in the Dominican Republic was access to credit in order to source fabric, by far the largest cost of garment production.<sup>9</sup> An estimate of the difference in capital requirements can be garnered from the following example: the owner of a medium-sized firm required \$180,000 of operating capital to assemble 11,000 dozen

<sup>9</sup> Informants consistently estimated the cost of cloth to represent around 60 percent of the cost of the garment (Author interviews with General Manager, Sol Textile, August 1, 2006; Plant engineer, Lucy Manufacturing; and Operations Head of Wovens, Dominican Textile, December 5, 2006.)

shirts per week, while as a full package operation he required \$2.5 million in operating capital to produce 9,000 dozen.<sup>10</sup> The necessary sums of capital were accessible to a restricted number of Dominican garment firm owners, principally those with ties to domestic fractions of capital and long-term relationships with brand marketers. For example, Sun Fashion, one of the four full package firms where I conducted participant observation, was bought from its Tampa-based owners by Dominican investors from the national cement industry.<sup>11</sup> Three Santiago-based companies and one firm in the nearby town of La Vega transformed their operations in part through a long-term relationship with the US-brand Levi's: the brand offered credit and the transfer of technology, improvements that were repaid with finished apparel. In most cases, these transformations were incorporated into large mass assembly operations. The three largest full package firms employed between 5,000 and 14,000 workers each.<sup>12</sup> By the early 2000s, these three Santiago-based companies – Dominican Textile, DCD, and IA – directly employed between one-fifth and one-quarter of the country's export garment

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<sup>10</sup> Author interview with President and General Manager, Textil Dominicana, Esperanza, November 6, 2006. The purpose of the example is to demonstrate the substantial difference in required capital not the veracity of the owners' estimation to which I cannot attest.

<sup>11</sup> The company was owned by a Dominican holding company that also bought the assembly and finishing firm (CMT) Caribbean Apparel. Sun Fashion was started in Tampa in 1983. Its US owner sold the business to the holding company in 2003. The latter moved the cutting room to Santiago leaving only the warehouse in Tampa with two employees and began to set up a product development department. Sun Fashion's long-time supplier, Caribbean Apparel, was also bought out by the same Dominican owners and both companies were located in the Santiago trade zone (Author interview with General Manager, Caribbean Apparel, August 2, 2006 and General Manager, Sun Fashion, September 20, 2006.)

<sup>12</sup> I found only one firm that offered full package services exclusively, outsourcing all production. The firm was started by a return Dominican migrant from New York, a veteran (if not the "father") of the Santiago export garment sector. The firm sourced textiles and cut materials for pants production. Assembly was outsourced to 11 firms at the peak of operations in 2004. The firm closed down in 2007. (Interview with General Manager, ULP, October 24, 2006.)

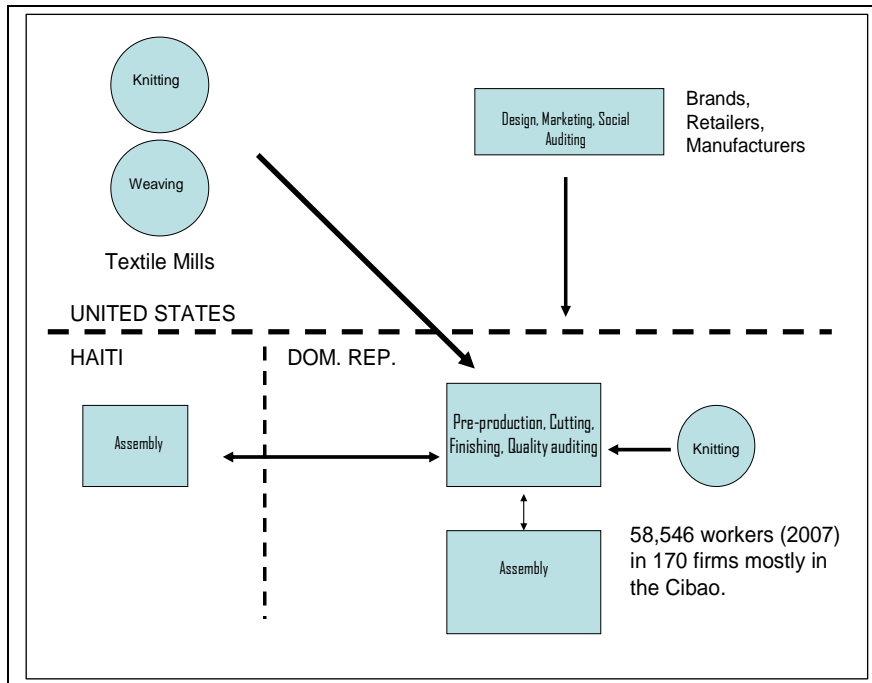
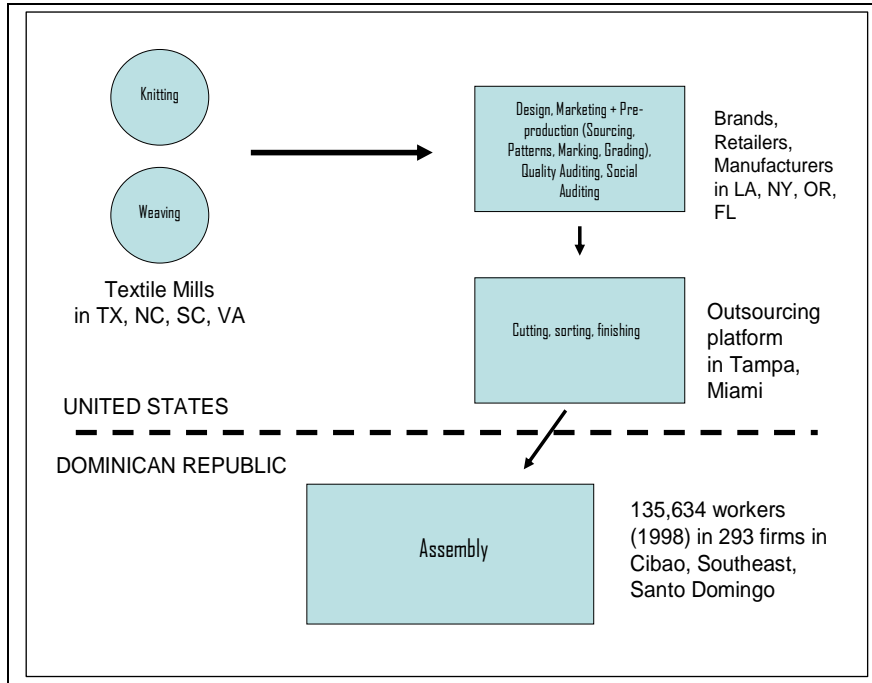
workforce in addition to utilizing large subcontracting networks of assembly firms mostly in the Cibao.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to credit, firm restructuring involved shifting geographies of production through the transfer of new functions of the labour process (see Figures 1a and 1b).

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<sup>13</sup> Numbers calculated based on unpublished employment figures from the three firms relative to the government figures for total garment employment published by CNZFE.

Figures 3.1a and 3.1b: Labour Process Functions in the Garment and Textile Assemblage, 1990s and 2000s



Firms moved industrial cuttings rooms from Miami and Tampa to Santiago. Mechanized cutting in the DR employed male workers commensurate with ideologies of mechanization and masculinized labour.<sup>14</sup> Finishing operations, including industrial laundries, also tended to employ exclusively male workers. The work of baking, washing, pressing, ironing, blowing, sanding and destroying pants and jeans was low-paid and physically demanding. Not especially mechanized, the perception of hard physical work and the use of industrial chemicals contributed to the gendering of this labour as male. Finishing was also an important potential source of profits for firms because while buyers paid for components and cloth at cost, the price of this new labour-intensive function offered the possibility of extracting a surplus.<sup>15</sup>

While the incorporation of new parts of the labour process gendered as masculine contributed to an absolute increase in the number of male workers in the industry, the uneven shifting of some garment firms from assembly to “full package” implied another aspect of gendering: the feminization of engineering. The role of the engineer in assembly production is to arrange sewing operations by calculating and distributing what are called “standard allowable minutes” on the assembly line.<sup>16</sup> This work continued but “full package” firms incorporated other skills under the role of the engineer. Engineers became responsible for sourcing and managing supplies and for translating minor

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<sup>14</sup> The mechanization of cutting in the garment industry transformed this work into a relatively better paid, masculinized position employing almost exclusively men. This gendering appears to cross borders as this function moves. See Fernández-Kelly for a brief discussion (1983: 11).

<sup>15</sup> One informant argued that while finishing had been a source of profits, at the time of our interview, increasing costs for water and especially electricity were making the industrial laundry a drain on his operation. (Interview with Head of Apparel, DCD, November 16, 2006.)

<sup>16</sup> The price per minute takes into account time of the operator, the cost of the machine (in revolutions per minute), and the stitches per inch. The price also varies depending on the length of the run: mass orders of the same style allow operators to increase efficiency and the factory to lower the assembly price. Depending on the garment and the length of the run, the assembly price in the DR ranged between 6 and 10 US cents per minute. (Notes from an Industrial Engineer, March 20, 2007.)

changes in design requested by buyers (also called clients) into production. The head of the wovens department (i.e., all production of garments from woven materials) at Dominican Textile explained that as buyers retreated from managing and auditing their suppliers' production, the company "changed from being a manufacturer to becoming a company of services. [The buyers] don't want to search, they want to receive."<sup>17</sup> With this transformation, the number of employees in Dominican Textile dedicated to client services – a designation that included sourcing material and components, placing orders in the plants, and managing mid-run changes – nearly tripled. Only one man at the firm had been successful in this position, the division head explained. After him, she continued, "no guy has lasted because the work requires a level of detail and managing coordination... it's that men have a lot of good qualities but at the level of details..." As the quote suggests, the shift from calculating assembly time to translating buyers' requests into different parts of the labour process was perceived to be "detail work" central to transforming assembly firms into so-called "client services" operations. It is not that the work was feminized because female engineers performed it but rather that these so-called production services were feminized, a fact that consequently led to the placing of women in these jobs.<sup>18</sup>

Class differences and gender conflicts that resulted from women directing production were evident in the experiences of the three female engineers in production services whose work I observed most closely. For example, the wovens department head

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Head of woven's division, Dominican Textile, December 5, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Labour market factors – the growing gender disparity in university education in the Dominican Republic (and much of the Caribbean) – are also determining here (PNUD 2008).

at Dominican Textile explained her nervousness about taking on a position that involved overseeing production:

When they told me [about the job], I said to them, are you sure you want a woman in this position? I never thought that they would give this job to a woman. I have men under me, and a production plant because the cutting plant reports to me... I had never had the opportunity to run a plant at the operations level before. I like it. My boss says that I was born a woman but I think like a man.

The quote suggests the desired hybridity of these new engineers on the part of their superiors: feminized in their attention to detail, their coordination skills, and their ability to translate buyers requests, while being encouraged to “be manly” when dealing with their male subordinates in the labour process. Class differences underlay these relations between the service-oriented firm and its manufacturing functions. Few of the “full package” engineers that I spent time with had direct production experience and they entered the industrial system through college-related internships (called *pasantías*). My key informants claimed a middle class background, and two were from families long established in Santiago. In contrast, the production engineers that they supervised often had direct production experience; some had started as operators while they completed their technical degrees. Knowledge of English was another marker of distinction between the service-oriented engineers who were bilingual, and the production engineers who were not.

The reconfigured geographies of the labour process described in this section were constituted through new forms of hierarchical inclusions and exclusions in the garment industry. As a small number of firms representing a substantial portion of employment reworked their position in the transnational garment and textile assemblage, masculinized



positions associated with the highly automated labour of industrial cutting and the multiple processes related to garment finishing expanded. At the same time, a new hierarchy of engineering emerged, creating limited positions for middle class engineers, feminized positions that incorporated women into mid-level management. Cultural discourses of skill, physical labour, mechanization and customer service contributed to shifting the gender composition of the workforce, largely through an expansion of the parts of the labour process in the Dominican Republic and exclusionary gender constructions associated with them. As we will see in the next section, the displacement inherent in this expansion – particularly the exclusion of female workers from new labour process functions – was coupled with another form of displacement: gender was reworked in assembly, building upon and reproducing a cultural discourse that associated skilled sewing with masculinity.

*b. Reworking Flexibility: The Politics of Gender and Skill in the export garment sector*

If the vision of the high-tech t-shirt depended on domesticating new parts of the labour process, it also continued to rely on a substantial proportion of assembly labour.<sup>19</sup> Yet, the cultural construction of this labour was itself changing as firms attempted to rework their positions in the garment and textile assemblage. Key to repositioning the Dominican industry was a change in the notion of flexibility. The flexible labour of the 1980s – high turnover, non-union, ‘unskilled’ – that was gendered as feminine was being

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<sup>19</sup> Although an imperfect proxy, the government calculates that direct production workers in trade zones across sectors make up 85% of employment (CNZFE 2003: 37).

partially replaced as firms were seeking to rationalize production by employing so-called multifunctional operators – those who could perform multiple operations on garments. The narrative around this shift in flexibility was related to the structural position of circum-Caribbean producers in an increasingly competitive global garment trade (see chapter 2). As large, continuous orders moved towards high volume, lower wage producers in Asia, Dominican firms were increasingly being offered low-volume orders to replenish shelves in North American stores in the middle of fashion seasons.<sup>20</sup> To stay competitive, firm managers and industry analysts constantly emphasized the need for Dominican firms to develop the capacity to handle both smaller orders and a larger number of styles.

The new paradigm of flexibility continued to rely upon atomized labour relations and employment that ebbed and flowed with fluctuations in production. The difference rested in managers' expectations that workers have skills and training in multiple operations. The possibilities of acquiring this new flexibility, as we will see, were gendered through multiple practices resting on the basic premise that workers were responsible for their own flexibilization. While the industrial system provided instruction in a single operation, the new paradigm of flexibility rested largely upon worker self-training through informal, highly gendered channels. In this section, I will discuss two of these channels. First, workers' self-training depended on their mobility on the factory floor in order to move between machines on breaks, before or after their shift, or during

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<sup>20</sup> One particularly candid owner called replenishment work *borróna*, literally the crumbs offered to the Dominican industry while the stable, high volume work went to Asia. Replenishment work was also particularly susceptible to declines in consumer demand. Although I do not have an accurate estimate of the difference in profit margins by size of order, it is reasonable to argue that the difference was sizeable enough to have contributed to the massive wave of closures that swept the country's garment sector after the expiry of global quotas.

other moments of suspended production. These informal opportunities for training relied on the power of male supervisors and reinforced gendered ideas of skill as well as gendered perceptions of worker willingness to become flexibilized operators. Second, the link between gender and skilled sewing was overdetermined by cultural perceptions of skilled sewing in non-industrial settings. “Upgraded” firms, those undertaking more than simple assembly, increasingly relied on skilled tailors to fill the most skilled sewing positions; the participation of tailors in the industrial system reinforced the association of women’s non-industrial labour with unskilled sewing. In the descriptions that follow, I will trace these two channels of flexibilization and how they reworked gender in garment assembly, accounting in part for why, by the late 1990s, men in the Santiago trade zone “sat down at the [sewing] machine.”<sup>21</sup>

At the top of the sewing skill hierarchy in the industry were sewers in newly formed product development departments producing product samples. Sample rooms were small-sized production facilities central to firm restructuring: second to the ability to source textiles (i.e., credit), sample rooms, and the broader product development departments of which they form part, were considered the most important departments to develop in order to participate in the garment and apparel assemblage as “full package” enterprises.<sup>22</sup> Whereas US-based brands and retailers had previously provided all the specifications for a given design, buyers began to outsource this labour to suppliers in the circum-Caribbean. To work as direct contractors for US buyers, firms required departments that could translate a design sketch into an industrial pattern, grade the

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<sup>21</sup> This is a phrase I heard when I asked informants about the high numbers of men on assembly lines.

<sup>22</sup> Author interviews with Head of Wovens, Dominican Textile, Matanzas, December 5, 2006 and industry spokesperson, Santo Domingo, November 3, 2006.

pattern according to sizes, source (if not produce) fabric and components, and create fit, preproduction and sized samples. Sample rooms were established in the late 1990s in a handful of full package firms in Santiago and provide a unique window into the gender politics of skill in sewing.

The three sample rooms I studied were run by production-services engineers, all women, ultimately responsible for sending samples to buyers made to the latter's specifications. The sample room consisted of mini assembly lines or modules with seven to eight operators. Each module usually worked on two styles per day, making four or five pairs of pants or shirts per style. Work in the sample room was careful, diligent and tedious. Every seam was sewn and then carefully examined. The labour of assembly was broken up by crafting, correcting, and sometimes, hand stitching. Margins between seam and hemline were measured over and over again. An enlarged diagram of the inch with its parts labelled ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc.) was sometimes posted on the wall or pasted to some machines, next to a prayer or another personal marker, to aid those sewers who learned their trade in local workshops or at home (and therefore in centimetres) or those from the industrial system who were not previously responsible for measurements. Mistakes were corrected by carefully removing already sewn seams and running them again, measuring, inspecting and counting to make sure the right number of stitches was sewn per inch. These were salaried employees placed between industrial production and artisan craft.

Of the men who made up eighty-five percent of sample room operators, nearly one-half were tailors while the other sewers, men and women, had worked their way up

within the industrial system. Marcos worked through lunch in a small sample room at Sun Fashion in the Santiago trade zone.<sup>23</sup> Sun Fashion was a “pre-production” firm (see footnote 11). The company employed around 80 people in its “front end” factory and between 900 and 1200 people in an assembly and finishing firm called Antilles, under the same ownership, itself divided into two plants both located a short two blocks away (inside the FTZ). Pausing every twenty seconds or so as he carefully stitched the waistband of a beltline for \$16 casual pants for Wal-mart, Marcos filled in his story. He was born sewing, he explained, the son of a tailor from a regional town called Esperanza about an hour from Santiago. Although he did not like the work, his father had insisted he learn the trade. Marcos began to work as a tailor when he lost his job in the public sector because he was not “good at politics.” When an entrepreneur from his hometown returned from Puerto Rico to start a garment business at the beginning of the boom in the late 1980s, he sought out Marcos who was living in Santiago by then. Marcos began in the quality department and then decided to work for one of the assembly firm’s clients, two US investors who were starting Sun Fashion’s operations in the Dominican Republic. The company had since moved three times, changed ownership and gone through at least two rounds of significant lay offs. Marcos was retrenched four years ago and had just returned three weeks before our conversation after working in a small workshop with another tailor in a nearby neighbourhood.

Marcos’ story was similar to other skilled sewers I spoke with in sample rooms who moved between workshops and trade zone factories depending on the ebb and flow

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<sup>23</sup> Observations conducted between January 25 and February 1, 2007. Additional details on the firm were provided in interviews with the General Manager of Sun Fashion, October 20, 2006 and the General Manager of Caribbean Apparel, August 2, 2006.

of the export business. Their knowledge of a trade eased periods of retrenchment, although the lack of stable electricity, especially in working class neighbourhoods, undermined their possibilities to forge livelihoods in workshops. While working in trade zones, they continued to do custom work on the side, oftentimes for managers, to supplement their income. The few women in the sample rooms had trained themselves in trade zone factories over ten, twenty and even thirty years. Carla, one of four women of the twenty-eight “sewing technicians” (as they were called) in the sample room of Dominican Textile, had worked for the firm for 14 years.<sup>24</sup> She started working in inspection, a low paying position occupied almost exclusively by women. When she had a child with her husband, a quality supervisor in the same plant, she requested an operator position because inspectors are among the last to leave the plant and she found this difficult with the new demands that childcare placed on her time. Initially, her boss encouraged her to come in on Saturdays to learn other operations but, because of her childcare responsibilities, she declined. Instead, Carla used small breaks during the workday to learn to make the “J” operation on pants (i.e., the stitch in front of the fly) and then learned to sew pockets. Her husband supported her in this, providing the space and time for her to move to different machines and learn new operations.

Those men in the sample rooms who were not trained as tailors had also worked their way up within the industrial system. Some had trained themselves by moving between factories during the apparel boom, learning a new operation at every new job. Many learned during breaks inside the plant. Their mobility between and within plants was a key factor for their self-training, a mobility that was apparently more constrained

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<sup>24</sup> Participant observation, Dominican Textile Sample Room, February 12-15, 2007.

for women as evidenced by their absence in sewing positions that required multiple operations. Managers who ran sample rooms generally faulted women operators for not learning more operations. “They simply lack *chispa* (or spark),” explained one sample room manager.<sup>25</sup> Women like Carla were perceived to be exceptions. When I asked her why so few women were in the sample room, Carla reflected a similar perception as the sample room manager, explaining that women remained more dedicated to their homes than to paid work, a condition that “makes the country go backwards.” Both narratives reinforced the notion that skill was a matter of individual initiative and will, independent of gendered hierarchies of labour in the workplace and household.

The relative process of gendering in sample rooms sheds light on the growing inclusion of men on garment assembly lines in the trade zone. Multiple operations were valued with higher pay grades but few formal training opportunities existed. Indeed, the largest pants producer in the trade zone had implemented a pay scale indexed to the number of operations that workers could perform; under the system, workers were also penalized when they refused to move operations. Cultural explanations of the dearth of women operators who could fulfill the new paradigm of flexibility dominated in the discourses around skill and industrial “upgrading.” The director of the trade zone association explained the barriers for women to become flexible operators in the following way:

The limits of women to train themselves [exist] for domestic and cultural reasons. This includes the attitude that ‘I operate this machine and I’m satisfied with that because it’s what I do. I don’t want to sacrifice time with my kids’ and all these cultural questions that impede that multifunctional operators are women.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> IA sample room, Author interview, November 8, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Interview, July 27, 2006. The emphasis on multiple operations was another aspect of “upgrading” associated with modular production systems. The extent to which these changes were actually occurring on

The cultural construction of women as unwilling to flexibilize their labour combined with the gendered politics of mobility on the factory floor. To move within the plant in order to train oneself, workers had to negotiate gender politics on the shop floor, including those with their line supervisors, a position that was almost entirely filled by men. “Self-training” then was linked to power and male privilege in multiple ways and the result was a thorough masculinization of skilled sewing, both in sample rooms and on the assembly line. In addition to sample room sewers, the position of a utility, i.e., a worker who can fill in for any operation, was filled almost entirely by men. As firms adapted to new demands for shorter orders and multiple styles, the new imperative of flexibilized labour increasingly masculinized the labour of industrial sewing.

In addition to the dynamics of gender privilege and self-training, linked to gendered ideas of social reproduction (e.g., that women prioritize their role as mother over that of worker), the presence of tailors as part of industrial “upgrading” in restructured firms suggests that craft traditions remain salient for industrial production. Like many trades, garment-making was male dominated; women’s production of clothes was often associated with unpaid, domestic labour, and limited to clothes for women and especially children. In the craft tradition, the gendering of sewing also extends from the garment itself: the labour of producing men’s clothes, especially pants and shirts, is considered more skilled and thus also codes those who make men’s clothes, tailors, as more skilled. One sample room tailor demonstrated this “fact” on a pair of US-brand

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factory floors is unclear. Dominican Textile was the only firm I was aware of that had transformed its pay grade scale in several plants in Santiago to adjust the pay grade according to how many operations a worker could perform. [Interview with Operations Head of Wovens, Dominican Textile, Santiago, December 5, 2006.]



pants by showing the various stitches that were exclusive to men's bottom garments (pants, shorts, etc.). The work of tailors constructed skill in contradistinction to the labour of seamstresses, often employed to make adjustments to ready-made garments or simple garments associated with a feminized domestic realm.<sup>27</sup> The perception of male workers as "more trainable" for sewing positions that required knowledge of multiple operations reinscribed this notion of gender and skill associated with craft garment production. The construction of male sewing as skilled in relation to the notion of women's sewing as unskilled thus inhered within the industrial process.

We can draw several conclusions from the process of firm restructuring in the Dominican Republic in relation to the macro-regional garment and textile assemblage. The reworking of gender in the export garment sector consisted of multiple elements. The absolute increase in the number of men was related to the domestication of new functions of the labour process, in particular, industrial cutting and finishing. The increasing withdrawal of US buyers from operational control of the production process implied in so-called full package production created the feminized labour of client services, one that largely incorporated female engineers. Finally, a new gender paradigm of labour flexibilization valued sewing operators for their ability to train themselves in multiple

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<sup>27</sup> The history of trade and craft production in the Dominican Republic prior to Trujillo's efforts to promote industry is written by Moya Pons (1990; 1992) although a gender perspective is not included in these texts. Moya Pons specifically mentions the prevalence of workshops producing men's clothes in Santiago, La Vega, and Puerto Plata when commodity prices collapsed during the Great Depression, shrinking the capacity of Dominicans to buy imported manufactured goods (1990: 544-5). In another passage, based on oral history, he describes the putting out system of garment production almost entirely through homework, suggesting women's long involvement in garment production (Ibid: 553-4). Here, I draw primarily upon conversations with informants while undertaking participant observation in pattern-making classes and sample rooms in Santiago. Lawson (1995: 428) finds similar dynamics in the Ecuadorian garment trade. For a detailed history of the gender politics of craft and industrial garment production in France and the problematic of gender and labour history in Europe, see Scott (1999 [1988]). For a brief discussion of the fraught project to fill in silences on gender in Latin American labour history with analogies to experiences of women and industrialization in Europe and the United States, see Fernandez-Kelly (chapter 4) and Safa (1995: chapter 2).

operations within an industrial system that formally provided training in just one. The gendered mobility of workers on the shopfloor, the cultural construction of female workers as resistant to the new paradigm through norms of women's domestic labour, and received gendered hierarchies in the craft tradition combined to masculinize the labour of sewers in restructured garment firms.

Despite the decline in the proportion of women in the garment sector, female employment in trade zones continued to represent a much larger proportion of women's regulated wage labour: trade zone workers comprised 13 percent of the female wage workforce, outnumbering men whose trade zone labour represented 4 percent of the male workforce (PNUD 2005). Garment industry restructuring and diversification of trade zone exports coincided with official unemployment rates for women three times that of men in Santiago (and four times that of men in the rural Cibao), and their over-representation in the unregulated workforce (Itzigsohn 2000; PNUD 2008).

While forms of masculinization of the industry enrolled more men in the sector, the reworking of gender indicates a slow process of exclusion of women workers from the industry over the course of the 1990s and 2000s. The gendered mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion constituted the displacements of the garment sector's restructuring. The high-tech t-shirt and associated notions of firm transitions to so-called full package production were sustained through coloniality: the cultural construction of gendered labour that legitimized the changing paradigm of labour's (non)value. This gendered politics of labour provided reason and meaning to the changing composition of

the garment sector's workforce, naturalizing its transformation and making it possible to associate the restructuring of firms with the industry's developmental discourse.

### *3. Gendering the Dual Economy: From Assembly to "Mind-facturing"*

While the garment sector drew upon the high-tech t-shirt to defend its contribution to Dominican development, the sector's position was being eroded by the shifting hegemonic project of the state. This change was intimately tied to a reworking of the Washington Consensus, the set of development policies most closely associated with neoliberalism in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s and early 1990s. Export garment production grew out of this policy consensus, one that produced the circum-Caribbean as a site of natural comparative advantage in low-wage labour (see chapter 2). Currency devaluations, market access through outward-processing, and the trade zone regime had all contributed to transforming the geography and composition of the Dominican workforce and the country's export base under neoliberalism. In fact, neoliberal proponents cited the DR's implementation of Consensus-type policy measures and its strong record of growth as evidence of the doctrine's success (Kuczynski and Williamson 2003).

By the 2000s, however, a new set of policies were taking hold, emerging again from Washington. In the Dominican Republic, the garment sector faced a new development discourse that constructed low-wage assembly as necessarily part of the country's past: both apparel production and the trade zone regulatory framework that had

facilitated the boom were being recast as a stage that the country would have to overcome in order to “move forward” to sectors constructed as “knowledge intensive,” summarized by the new term *mentefactura* in the government’s booster discourse. In this section, I analyze the structures of meaning that facilitated the reworking of trade zones and development in the DR. Through my analysis, I explore how the structure of gender, articulated with coloniality, constituted another valence of displacements: the inclusion-exclusion mechanism that rationalized a shifting of capitalist accumulation away from assembly production. In contrast to garment industrialists, state and development discourses drew upon the structure of gender in an effort to affect this more radical shift in the structure of profit making. To examine the displacements effected through state discourses, I analyze World Bank texts using a deconstructive approach, tracing the production of the Dominican Republic as a dual economy and how this dualism is related and reproduced through the structure of gender.

In deconstructing “the Dominican economy,” we find a set of calculative practices, Foucauldian inscription devices, to “put in place a new politics of calculation” (Mitchell 2002: 8). The politics and practices of calculation invent “the economy” as a bounded object made commensurable with the limit-territory of the nation-state and the object of development policy. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the invention of the economy as an object of development has been carried out through calculative practices that inscribe it as a “dual economy:” two distinct, bounded and hierarchically ordered parts continually recuperated to demonstrate the “failure” of market capitalism (and thus the need for development policy) at the same time as grounding capitalism as a natural

and inevitable process (see Escobar 1995). Development economist W. Arthur Lewis, ideologue of the early “industrialization by invitation” models in the Caribbean, instantiated “the dual economy” as a figure of development economics. Lewis argued that the market, a universal, natural Entity, could not materialize without targeted intervention:

Even in a very highly developed economy, the tendency for capital to flow evenly through the economy is very weak. In a backward economy, it hardly exists. Inevitably what one gets are very heavily developed patches of the economy, surrounded by economic darkness (Lewis 1954: 148).

This dual economy discourse that founds the naturalness of the market can be understood through the figure of the supplement. The supplement, described by Derrida, signifies an anterior default or lack that is both the condition of possibility and impossibility of Presence, Nature, the Market, or Man (Derrida 1997 [1974]). The self-evidence of these concepts in Western epistemology is constructed through the supplement: that without which the Natural Entity simultaneously *cannot exist* and that which permits the *existence* of the Entity as seemingly natural. Man cannot exist without Woman; the Market cannot exist as natural without Man (i.e., planning, the State, Development). Both exterior to and the condition of possibility for a self-actualizing Entity, the supplement also exists in a relationship of danger to the concept that it grounds. The danger rests in the possibility that the supplement takes on a force of its own, corrupting or overwhelming Nature; thus, the supplement must be kept at bay in order for Nature or the Market to become. It is through this relationship that the naturalness of the market and its relationship to

development as its supplement are reproduced; failures of market capitalism are reconfigured as objects of capitalist development.

In what follows, I draw on the World Bank's analysis of the Dominican Republic to explore the relationship between dual economies, gender and the seemingly natural expulsion of assembly labour as an imperative of development. I explore the way in which the binary structure of sex-gender – the masculine and feminine as the mind and body respectively – is hinged to the discourse of dual economy. In mobilizing the notion of the supplement, I do not wish to assert that the structures of market/development, mind/body, and masculine/feminine are simply analogical. Reading value relations through the multiple discontinuities (or displacements as I propose) that naturalize a sequentialist trajectory like the high-tech t-shirt and *mentefactura* does not mean reducing the complex structure of difference to essentialized, parallel hierarchies. As Marxist literary theorist Gayatri Spivak explains, “[n]o doubt there are general morphological similarities between centralized sign-formations.” She continues:

But in order to see in those similarities the structural essence of the formations thus analogized, it is necessary to exclude the fields of force that make them heterogeneous, indeed discontinuous... It is to exclude those relationships between the ego/phallus and money that are attributive and supportive and not analogical. (Spivak 1988b: 157).

As we saw clearly in the examples of labour process restructuring, it is not that the predominant associations of the Market with Nature, or of Man with Labour are parallel structures of domination. The burden of my analysis, and the notion of coloniality as a complex totality, is to understand how these come together in a particular conjuncture to create the effect of naturalized progress. The conjuncture that I am

analyzing here is one that I am loosely calling the post-Washington Consensus, wherein trade zones and assembly work were resignified as burdens to capitalist development. We will see how the figure of the trade zone in the Dominican Republic served as an inscription device to produce the social formation, the Dominican Republic, as a dual economy, and thus an object of capitalist development. Over the course of a decade, the relationship between the two parts of the economy – “trade zones” and “the domestic sector” – was transformed. The former shifted from mind to body, from progress to burden, and the structure of gender was marshalled to expel the feminized body of labour as an imperative of capitalist development.

Writing in the wake of the lost decade of the 1980s, the World Bank characterized tourism and trade zones as the two sectors that had withstood the vicissitudes of the tumultuous period of stagnant and shrinking economic activity in the wake of the macro-region’s debt crisis:

The Dominican Republic has a strongly dualistic economy – a highly protected domestic sector which has deteriorated sharply since the early 1980s and a non-traditional, export-oriented, private-sector-led sector [tourism and FTZs] which has continued to perform well even during adverse periods. The contribution [of FTZs and tourism]... attests to the high potential of the Dominican economy to compete in external markets. (1995: 1)

The metaphor of dual economy was sustained by the notion of a domestic economy equivalent to a hermetic space of “traditional” production and a burdensome public sector in contrast to a market sector that was both resilient and dynamic. One could list the obfuscations performed by the dualism: for example, the deep integration between so-

called traditional production of sugar and nickel and export markets; the currency devaluations of the 1980s and 1990s and their effective “cheapening” of Dominican labour favouring foreign investment in labour-intensive products; and, as explained in chapter 2, the highly regulated form of the US garment market in which Dominican FTZ exports were competing so well. Yet, while such elisions are important, the crucial aspect of the dual economy discourse is not what it hides *per se* but rather its effect. The Bank’s discourse produced the notion that the enclave sectors were measures of the Dominican economy’s *potential*, a potential constrained by the “low productivity and anaemic growth” (ibid: ii) of its domestic part. This policy discourse succeeded in positioning trade zones (along with tourism) as the positive polarity of a binary dualism. The authors argued that in order to realize its potential, the so-called domestic sector “must emulate the two enclave sectors” (Ibid: ii). “To achieve this goal,” they concluded, “[the country] will require a stable macro framework coupled with a deepening of recent structural reforms...” (Ibid: 3).<sup>28</sup> These policy prescriptions included privatization of public utilities, liberalization of investment, tariff reductions, and downsizing the state bureaucracy; in other words, the so-called hard core of roll back neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002).

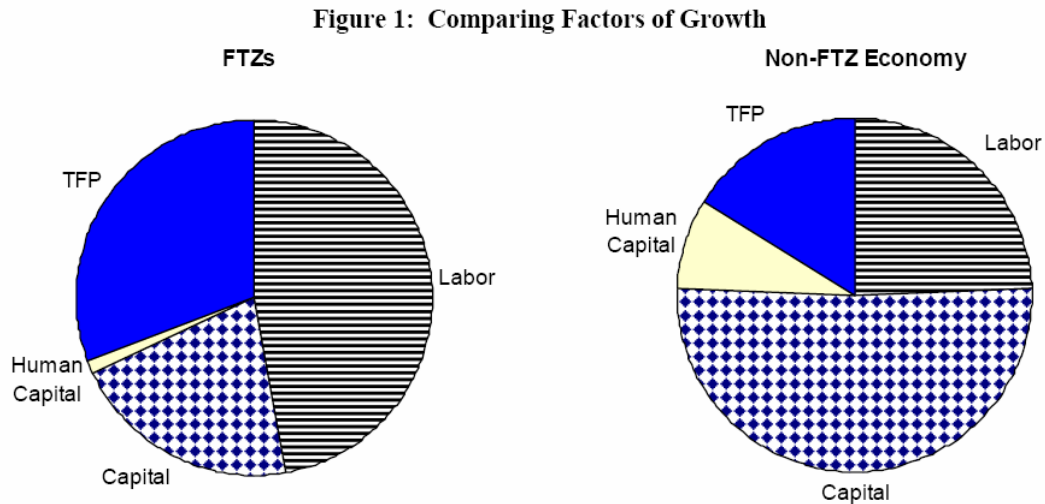
A decade later, the dual economy discourse was still persistent and the accounting techniques to inscribe the dualism were even more robust. By 2006, the characteristic of dualism was now conceptualized as two distinct concept-spaces: the FTZ economy and the “non-FTZ economy” (see Image 1).

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<sup>28</sup> The authors placed great emphasis on emulation and argued against policies that would integrate trade zones and tourism through linkages to domestic producers. The rationale for their argument (emulation over integration) was the small size of the enclaves; the logic, however, underpinned their argument for the core policy prescriptions of the “roll back” phase of neoliberalization.



Image 3.1: Dominican Republic as Dual Economy



Source: World Bank staff estimates

Source: World Bank Country Economic Memo, 2006, p. vi.

The differences between the two were made evident through constructing isolated and comparable measures of their component parts: productivity, labour, human capital, and capital. By showing differences between these measurements, for example, the predominance of “unskilled” labour in trade zones versus so-called human capital in “the non-trade zone economy,” the Bank asserted the nonintegrated and bounded nature of FTZs and “the rest of the economy.” On the one hand, the Bank’s findings with respect to the dualism differed little from the decade before. The authors argued that FTZs benefited “from the dynamism stemming from competition and integration with external markets...[While] the domestic economy, by contrast, [followed] a traditional model of capital accumulation and import substitution, and thus [was] unable to compete

globally”(2006: vi). On the other hand, the Bank’s conclusions differed markedly from the previous decade’s policy directives. The enclaves were no longer windows onto market potential but rather burdens to “the rest of the economy.” The Bank asserted:

...[T]he strategy of FTZ-based export promotion and the all-inclusive enclave tourism model effectively inhibited more efficient domestic production and the positive interaction between export and domestic production, thereby reducing the potential growth pay-off from trade openness. (Ibid: x)

The shift in the Bank’s evaluation was consistent with post-Washington Consensus policies that moved away from negative liberalism associated with freeing markets from the burdens of the state to an emphasis upon creating positive conditions for the functioning of markets through a pliable notion of governance (Craig and Porter 2006). In this context, free trade zones as spaces of market dynamism were re-signified as burdens upon market development within (“the rest of”) the Dominican economy. The territorial unevenness diagnosed through the Bank’s dual economy accounting now indexed the poor functioning of trade zones to distribute the gains of liberalization throughout the economy. How did this shift occur?

The dual economy discourse constructed by the Bank in the mid-1990s rested on the notion that FTZs were circumscribed spaces where the fetters of the free market were loosened, allowing for the latter’s natural development. Trade zones, as I have mentioned, thereby acted as a kind of window into the potential for a “market economy” that could be created through emulating the strategies of the enclave sectors, cutting more fetters and freeing the market. In this way, trade zones were portrayed as resilient contributors to an economy in crisis: the authors characterized the economic performance

of the country in the 1970s and 1980s as poor, with average growth of 2 percent a year and an overall decline in GDP per capita over the same period. The constraint on realizing the potential for markets demonstrated by FTZs and tourism was inscribed in the so-called domestic sector, where an overburdened state weighed down the natural market that lay smothered beneath.

By the mid-2000s, however, the potential of trade zones as an intervention to foment market liberalism was being reworked: rather than jump-starting a market economy or indexing its (lost) potential, trade zones were represented as hindering the realization of market liberalism in the Dominican Republic. To put it succinctly, trade zones had themselves become fetters upon the natural development of markets. The Bank now characterized the Dominican Republic as having “strong growth outcomes,” well above the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. The high growth of the 1990s was projected back onto the previous decades. The Bank thus described the country as benefiting from “[r]obust long-run growth tempered by several short-lived crises” since the 1970s (2006: 13). While foreign investment in trade zones demonstrated the potential of markets a decade earlier, in the high-growth narrative of the mid-2000s, the Bank argued that the channelling of foreign investment into trade zones was a constraint on the functioning of markets. Recast in the new story of robust and sustained economic growth, the Bank concluded that trade zones had failed to contribute substantially to the country’s economic success. In fact, FTZs, the Bank asserted, were “likely to have constrained growth potential” (Ibid: 20). This failure was not due to the small size of

FTZs, which would have been closer to the argument for emulation of the 1990s, but rather to the existence of FTZs themselves which were a hindrance to market formation.

Re-signifying trade zones from market potential to market burden, the market could be recuperated as a foundation for development even as the shortcomings of liberalization strategies of the 1980s and 1990s were critiqued by their erstwhile proponents. The structure of gender, and the relationship of supplementarity between the dominant term and its ineluctable, albeit subordinate, Other gave meaning and force to this shift. In the market-potential story of the mid-1990s, FTZs and tourism were sectors that promised growth and development for the poor:

The performance of tourism and FTZs—two labour intensive, export-oriented sectors—indicates the potential impact of outward-oriented growth on employment and poverty. Since wages are the main source of income for the poor, the link between poverty and labour-intensive growth is clear and direct. (1995: 28)

In the new narrative of the 2000s, FTZs, planned spaces of market economy, were now dangers to the market. The relationship of supplementarity was given force through the coloniality of gender, that is, the notion of women's labour as fundamentally non-waged. The World Bank argument that FTZs had distorted the natural market mechanisms of investment drew upon this structure of coloniality as evidence:

[E]ven though FTZs created thousands of jobs, employing lots of women in low-skilled work *who might have otherwise been out of the labour force* or engaged in even lower-paying activities, the spillovers to the rest of the economy would have been greater under higher investment in technology and skills to support higher value-added production. (2006: viii-ix, emphasis added)

The former poverty-reducing benefits of employment for women in trade zones were reworked as evidence of a kind of market distortion trapping capital in spaces of “low-value,” signified by the labour of female wage workers.<sup>29</sup> In this discourse, the incorporation of women workers into trade zones served as an original sin not only in the expansion of the wage relation to non-waged subjects (the original sin of primitive accumulation as described by Marx), but in the way in which this initial mechanism of capitalist expansion could be recuperated as a resource for justifying *ex post facto* the limits of hard core liberalization strategies of the 1980s and 1990s.

My argument in this section is that the inscription of economic dualism marshals gendered structures of meaning in order to produce sequentialist narratives of development. “Dual economy” discourses draw upon gendered structures of meaning, naturalizing the Market and its supplement, development policy, as the condition of possibility and impossibility of the becoming natural of the Market. The relationship of supplementarity sets up a play between the market and development that allows for the recuperation of the latter at the precise limit or failure of the former. But this structure of meaning clearly exists through the on-going reproduction of feminized labour as supplemental to capitalist markets. In the case of “global production,” the coloniality of gender not only underwrote the hyper-exploitation of early labour-intensive export strategies; this structure of domination is central to naturalizing shifts in capitalist accumulation away from assembly labour in general. To renew Dominican accumulation

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<sup>29</sup> In juxtaposing the two quotes, my point is not that the Bank had shifted its discursive and policy position from poverty-reduction to competitive liberalization. In fact, in the post-Washington Consensus, the shift apparently moves in the opposite direction: from competitive liberalization to poverty-reduction. However, what is evident in the Dominican case is that mass employment in the development policy discourses of the 2000s disappears and is replaced by an ephemeral idea of knowledge-intensive production while poverty reduction is not linked to jobs but rather to the discourses of governance and security.

in the wake of declining profits in the export garment sector, the structure of gender naturalized the expulsion of assembly labour. Ironically, this expulsion through the coloniality of gender took place irrespective of the gendered bodies that were actually reproduced as wage-less subjects. Although women operators were progressively excluded from the labour force in trade zones in the decade prior to the advent of the “knowledge economy” discourse in the Dominican Republic, the imperative of sequential development towards *mentefactura* rested upon a feminized body of labour whose disposability was constructed as necessary to secure the country’s progress.

#### *4. Conclusion: Gendered Displacements in Santiago and the Cibao*

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, a handful of Dominican firms, representing a significant proportion of trade zone employment, restructured their enterprises in order to position themselves in the circum-Caribbean garment and textile assemblage as providers of multiple services and as agents of a new paradigm of flexibilized labour. Seen from the trade zones in and around Santiago, this restructuring masculinized garment work and led to the slow exclusion of women workers in a new sewing-skill hierarchy in production, while incorporating university-educated women in mid-level management positions. This restructuring secured the basis of accumulation in garment exports for a small number of consolidated firms. As trade regulations continued to unfold, and the final import quotas for the US market were eliminated, many garment producers were either unable or unwilling to transform their firms to meet the

new exigencies of their US buyers (for full package services, for example) or to accept eroding profit-rates. The result, for Santiago and the Cibao, was the swift exit of garment jobs. As garment industrialists lobbied around a vision of the industry materialized in the high-tech t-shirt in that empty factory in the fall of 2006, employment in the garment firms in the Santiago trade zone plummeted. By 2007, after the closure of the largest firm in the trade zone, just over 17,000 jobs were left in the park, less than half of the more than 43,000 jobs that the trade zone had housed three years before. Garment jobs in the export sector nationwide fell by 55 percent over the same period, amounting to the elimination of 73,000 positions in the sector.<sup>30</sup>

My purpose here has been to understand how these different displacements – concretized in labour process restructuring and assembly labour expulsion – operate through recombining the subjects of labour, marked by social difference, and uneven geographies of production. Unpacking the complex mechanism of inclusion and exclusion of displacements, we have seen that gender, in particular, is a central structure of hierarchical meaning that gives the mechanism force. On the one hand, labour process restructuring mobilized gendered forms of inclusion and exclusion to transform the trade zone workforce fundamentally, while, on the other, development discourses combined a gendered structure of dualism and the coloniality of feminized labour as non-waged to rationalize the expulsion of Dominican assembly labour. While these forms of exclusion were linked to ostensibly competing projects between fractions of capital, the coloniality

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<sup>30</sup> Consejo Nacional de Zonas Francas de Exportación, Informe Estadístico, 2007. Available online at [www.cnzfe.gov.do](http://www.cnzfe.gov.do). Accessed October 8, 2008. The Santiago trade zone corporation reports a total of 22,254 for 2007 (see CZFIS Annual Report, 2007). By 2008, total trade zone employment as reported by the government was 124,517 of which 49,735 was in garment and textile (CNZFE, Informe Estadístico 2008, Accessed August 15, 2009).

of labour and, in particular, the structure of gendered labour were central to both. Gender, as a structure of domination constituting the coloniality of power, operated to signify a present and a past of industrial production; gendered forms of inclusion and exclusion made up these reworkings of the spatial and social division of labour.

The possibility of contests over the component parts of surplus value extraction, and the representation of these contests through sequentialist narratives of development, rests on the work of displacements. Without such a dynamic play of social and spatial difference, the possibility for recuperating capitalist profit would be foreclosed. Yet there is nothing sequential about the geographies of this process: cultural constructions of labour produce gender in unique ways on the garment assembly line; development discourses that produce the expulsion of assembly labour as natural draw upon the coloniality of feminized labour at particular conjunctures. Through the work of displacements, the retrenchment of half the garment sector, male and female workers, appears as progress towards development.

While state and garment industry narratives and practices repositioned garment workers along a hierarchy of non/value, workers forged subject positions through negotiating the shifting boundary between wage and non-wage work in the Cibao. Their efforts to reproduce themselves as subjects after their retrenchment, and how these “embodied negotiations” produce and are produced by geographies of gendered and racialized labour of the region, are taken up in the next chapter.



## Chapter 4: Embodied Negotiations -- Livelihoods after Trade Zones in the Cibao



Photo 4.1: Sealed entrance to Santiago Free Trade Zone, 2007

### *1. Introduction*

At the end of 2006, one of the three largest Santiago-based garment companies, the full-package firm IA Manufacturing, announced it would be shutting down its operations, idling a considerable portion of the Santiago trade zone where eight of its factories were located. A former executive of IA described a severe crisis of liquidity brought on by the company's inexperience at managing textile inventory and fluctuations in currency value, in addition to difficulties meeting the price demands made by the

firm's main client, Levi's.<sup>1</sup> Between the shutdown of IA plants, an additional fifteen other factory closures, and the suspension of another four firms, the zone had a spectral feel. Lone security guards sat outside vacant factories, many housing machines embargoed by creditors or in the process of sale; old presses draped in shredded blue tarp sat on silent loading docks; dust-caked lunch tables stood empty next to dented lockers. On Monday and Tuesday mornings, groups of workers made almost ritual rounds in the zone looking for work at fewer and fewer factories. The sound of steam trouser presses and nostalgic *bachata* music that emanated from the few operating plants was quickly subsumed by the idled space surrounding them.

As relations that made up the macro-regional garment and textile assemblage shifted, and some buyers and producers moved garment production and capital from Santiago and the surrounding Cibao, workers faced swift retrenchment from garment jobs. In this chapter, I tell the story of global production from the threshold of the idled factory. I draw upon the experiences of former factory workers focusing on migrants from the surrounding Cibao region. If the factory frame is indeed an unstable part of a shifting production assemblage, how do workers reproduce themselves as subjects across the shifting boundary between wage and non-wage work? How are their livelihood strategies shaped by the multiple space-times of industrial and deindustrial processes, of dispossession and migration, and of shifting raced and gendered hierarchies of work intersecting through the Cibao? What are the dominant discourses of subject production that they confront? In short, shifting away from the factory as a stable frame through

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with former chief financial officer, July 21, 2007.

which to understand the production of subjects, what other processes and spaces of subject-making come to the fore?

In what follows, I explore the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion from capitalist production that constitute displacements through a study of subject production and the shifting spatial divisions of labour associated with employment collapse. I explore both dominant narratives depicting the effects of the trade zone's decline on the city of Santiago and its inhabitants as well as retrenched workers' efforts to locate themselves as embodied subjects after factory closure. My analysis draws in part upon Judith Butler's work on performative subjectivity, and the theoretical underpinnings of her work in Foucauldian analysis of discursive-material power. Butler argues that the normative subject (e.g., the heterosexual subject) is defined through marking the boundary between an apparently purified subject field and that which must be repudiated, disavowed, or rendered abject (i.e., expelled) (1993). This process of boundary-making is never complete; rather, Butler's deconstruction of subjectivity develops the notion of sex as a performative effect of the iterative practices to define the field of discourse and power as a purified Subject. Feminist geographers have criticized Butler's approach to subjectivity for evacuating space from this corporeal process, projecting space as a schematic field rather than theorizing it as a simultaneously corporeal and social process (Rose 1999). Furthermore, reading Butler and Foucault in their specific locations, postcolonial theorists have argued that their theorizations of power are centered on seemingly self-contained Western models (Cheah 1996 cited in Pratt 2004; Spivak 1988a; Stoler 1995). These weaknesses, however, need not constitute a premise to reject performative approaches; rather, they call for a consideration of how subject production intersects with

specific modalities of power materialized in differently gendered and racialized spaces (Ong 2000; Pratt 2004). While identity performance and strategies of bodily control in the workplace, and in particular, the factory floor, have been read to impute space to Butler's approach (see Pratt's [2004] discussion of Wright), as I argue in the introduction, in post-structuralist feminist work the factory floor can appear as a static frame rather than a space-time of global production.

Feminist geographies of work can better understand the space-times of production, I argue, by considering the practices of workers to navigate the shifting boundary between wage and non-wage work that dovetails with strategies of capital to reconfigure the possibilities of accumulation. Attention to this boundary de-centers the analysis of embodied production of subjects from the capitalist wage-labour process to multiple spaces of cultural, social, and economic production that exist in relation to formal workplaces like factories (Chari and Gidwani 2005). Eschewing deterministic approaches, the critical migration literature draws on social theory and ethnographic methods “[to] explore the ways in which migrants negotiate and inhabit multiple subject positions, which in turn shape their mobility decisions and experiences” (Silvey and Lawson 1999: 127; also Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003; McDowell 2008). This literature is suggestive of an understanding of the negotiation of social position by embodied subjects marked by class relations, and the abstractions of race, gender, and nation as always also a negotiation of spatial position in localities where labour is simultaneously raced, gendered and produced as national (cf. Gregory 2007).

In recounting and interpreting former garment workers' narratives and experiences, I discuss their practices as ways of positioning their working bodies to create

spatial and social distance from non- or lesser subject positions. These practices are part of an on-going process of subject-making in relation to gendered and racialized hierarchies of labour that are constituted through transnationalized rural and urban places in the Cibao region. I term these practices ‘embodied negotiations.’ I suggest that embodied negotiations are a form of subject production that does not simply occur in space but is dynamically articulated with, and is part of remaking, spatial divisions of labour. This chapter, then, offers another perspective on displacements from the sociospatial location of former garment workers. Although my point of departure is the exclusion of subjects from the wage relation, through accounts of embodied negotiations I suggest that the proximate movements of capital (e.g., factory flight) do not solely determine geographies of labour. Articulations of race, gender, class, and nation are not only a resource for reworking capitalist accumulation (the focus of the last chapter); these articulations are drawn upon and shaped by the movements of migrants and workers who navigate, forge and are limited by gendered and racialized spaces in their efforts to reproduce themselves materially and socially.

In order to research livelihood strategies following the collapse of employment at the Santiago trade zone, I conducted multi-sited fieldwork for six months with laid-off garment workers following Ferguson’s method of revisit ethnography used to study displaced miners (1999), and adjusting my method and approach in the context of a weakly organized,<sup>2</sup> mixed-gender factory workforce. I focused my study on workers

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<sup>2</sup> Union formation requires twenty workers to sign a legal request; there is no limit to the number of unions in a workplace. Collective bargaining requires fifty percent plus one of the workforce to be affiliated to a single union. In 2003, before the downturn, nine out of 531 trade zone firms had collective agreements. Until 2009, no collective agreement had ever been signed in a trade zone in the Cibao region, however.

retrenched from IA, primarily a jeans and casual pants producer.<sup>3</sup> My relationship to workers was facilitated by two union federations, each with an affiliate union at IA. In the weeks prior to IA's closure, I was invited to observe union meetings as workers made decisions about demands for severance and shared information related to the firm. Consequently, my key informants were union activists who facilitated relationships with their former co-workers, both former union members and non-union workers. My interviews and repeat visits with former garment workers from IA took place in two urban neighbourhoods next to the Santiago trade zone and in three small towns, or *campos* (see below), where migrants had returned (see Annex 1 on method).

The chapter is organized in six sections. Section two details the patterns of labour and capital flows in the sub-national region known as the Cibao where the export garment

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The presence of multiple unions in a single firm greatly reduces the possibility for achieving the majority needed for collective bargaining.

<sup>3</sup> When the owner of IA saw the business opportunities offered by the trade zones in 1986, I was told by his business partner that he mortgaged his home to start a small factory specializing in leather products in the Santiago FTZ. Within a couple of years, the company switched to garment production. Levi's became IA's main client in 1990, the same year that the brand opened up a permanent sourcing office in Santiago. Shortly after, IA bought another shoe factory in the trade zone and converted it to textile assembly. In 1993, Levi's financed part of the equipment for IA to open an industrial laundry, to be repaid through subsequent contracts. IA grew rapidly. By 1994, IA employed around 5,000 workers. Although working for a variety of customers, Levi's represented about 80 percent of IA's business and never dropped to less than 50 percent of the firm's orders even as the business slowed in the 2000s. Phase 3 of the Santiago trade zone was largely built around this expanding firm, while it simultaneously expanded its subcontracting network to factories within the trade zone and to other zones nearby. With the impending passage of new trade incentives in the US, the company bought and soon transferred a cutting facility from Miami to Santiago (see Chapter 2). The company also took over two other factories in nearby towns, moving one of the businesses to Santiago. Market volatility was managed through frequent lay offs. Despite these fluctuations, the overall rise in employment was considerable: the average number of employees was 8,200 in 2002, 9,200 in 2003, and 9,500 in 2004. Employment peaked in 2004 in relationship to a devaluation of the Dominican peso following a major financial crisis. Employment declined from its 2004 peak as the country began to feel the effect of the quota phase-out and as the currency stabilized following the signing of an IMF agreement. [Interview with chief financial officer, July 21, 2007; Interview with Company Director and Investor, July 27, 2006; unpublished company employment data received January 31, 2007.] On November 30, 2006, the local press reported that the company would give severance pay to its 7,000 remaining employees in December (a regular practice, although technically illegal), and would rehire 3,000 workers at the beginning of the new year. The owner denied any possibility that the factory would close. The company announced its definitive closure two months later, paying outstanding severance to workers who had been hired back in January. (See *La Información*, Front page, November 30, 2006; *El Caribe*, February 17, 2007.)

sector was centered and where the sending communities I studied were located. I undertake a stylized history of the Cibao's positioning in relationship to capital accumulation, state making and national identity as a way to understand the spaces that are negotiated by retrenched trade zone workers. Section three discusses discourses of criminality and rural return in Santiago after the trade zone's employment declined; I draw on elite narratives, studies of worker retrenchment, and observations of a community leader to explore the abject positions foregrounded by these narratives. Sections four and five focus on rural return from the perspective of migrant workers let go from IA, negotiating their under- and unemployment in Santiago in relation to abject subject positions in their hometowns. Men's and women's narratives and practices suggest that the cultural politics of labour shaped their embodied negotiations in different ways. While men negotiated a racialized politics of labour that devalued their work in rural areas, women expressed the impossibility of return as the impossibility of finding paid labour in rural hometowns. The chapter concludes by arguing that the embodied negotiations of workers are part of the making of spatial divisions of labour.

## *2. Regional places: El campo, the Cibao, and the coloniality of labour*

*El campo* is a polysemic term with more than eighteen meanings in the *Real Academia Española*. In its use in the Dominican Republic, *el campo* can refer to rural areas or the countryside (*el campo*), a person's natal home in a rural area (*mi/su campo*), and a cultivated field (*un campo*). The last two meanings indicate the inseparability of family

dwellings and agricultural production. Yesenia<sup>4</sup>, a former trade zone worker, described the meaning of *el campo* to me primarily in terms of the location of her family: “*El campo, la casa materna, la casa donde uno nació. El campo de origen, donde tu familia, tu papá y tu mamá.*” [“*El campo, one’s maternal house, the house where one was born, el campo of origin, where your family (is), your father and your mother.*”] Other interviewees also used the term to distinguish themselves from other migrants that they claimed were from places that were ‘more *campo*’ than their own places of origin, referring to the perception of rural places as isolated or lacking certain markers of progress (e.g., a gas station or a restaurant).

The rich symbolic valence of the term *campo* – as origin, as the indivisibility of production and reproduction, and as ‘non-modern’ – indicates the changing position of the countryside in the heterotemporal trajectories of modernity and nation- and state-making in the Dominican Republic. One aspect of this heterotemporality that I focus on here is the economic and symbolic position of the Cibao region as paradigmatic of *el campo* in the Dominican context. The region’s historic and contemporary positioning with respect to the Dominican national and state project, transnational capital, and inter- and transnational labour shapes workers’ embodied negotiations after trade zones. Yet, workers’ livelihood strategies do not take place against the backdrop of the region’s articulated raced and gendered hierarchies of labour; rather, their strategies are dynamically related with them, and in turn, with these hierarchies’ materialization in place. It is through an understanding of how the region is produced through migration,

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<sup>4</sup> I use pseudonyms for names of people and *campos* in the text.



capital accumulation, and state- and nation-making that I frame the possibilities for livelihood expressed in workers' narratives and practices that I discuss below.

The Cibao has predominated as the symbolic centre of the Dominican *campo* through the unevenness of nation- and state-making in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the period, the Dominican Republic was unconsolidated as a national territory. Regional *caudillos* controlled many rural locales, areas that remained disconnected politically from the numerically small urban classes in Santiago and Santo Domingo.<sup>5</sup> Swidden agriculture together with pastoral grazing and collection predominated in what was largely an open frontier. The country had been relatively isolated from neo-colonial designs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as European and US capital isolated the island of Hispaniola in the wake of the Haitian revolution and the exodus of the island's elites to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere. For this reason, the country was relatively free from the influence of well-established landed elites, a factor that would prove invaluable for the project of state-making through settling a peasantry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Turits 2003).

Traders and investors began to seek their fortunes in the DR again by the 1860s (Baud 1995; San Miguel 1997b). Tobacco production for European export expanded and flourished in the Cibao region and became closely associated with a distinctly regional identity (Hoetnik 1980).<sup>6</sup> By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, European and Levantine

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<sup>5</sup> By the 1920s, a mere 30,000 people lived in Santo Domingo, the first city established by Cristobal Colón in the Americas four centuries earlier; just over 15,000 people resided in Santiago and agriculture covered a small fraction of the country's landmass (Turits 2003: 16; Santana 1994: 67).

<sup>6</sup> Hoetnik (1980) discusses the question of the agrarian structure associated with tobacco cultivation and claims that the crop inherently promoted democratic and stable social structures. Hoetnik argues that the relatively equal distribution of land in the Cibao under tobacco cultivation is not due to the crop per se but the context within which tobacco commercialization was established: "The circumstances of the rise of

immigrants inserted themselves into mercantile niches of tobacco, coffee and cacao in the north while US entrepreneurs began to exploit the country's south eastern frontier for sugar production. While some Dominican pastoralists and swidden agriculturalists participated in seasonal harvest work on sugar plantations in the southeast, as export prices and wages declined at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, migrant workers, initially from the Leeward Islands and then from Haiti, made up the bulk of the sugar workforce as Dominican pastoralists and agriculturalists refused work on the plantations (Turits 2003). The failure of capital (inseparable from this refusal) to incorporate Dominican labour on plantations is attributable to two main factors: an attenuated process of enclosure in the Dominican Republic and the introduction of a migrant labour system with Haiti. I will entertain each of these in turn.

Dominican elites at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, citing the ravages of the plantation economy in Cuba, advocated an alternative modernity for the Dominican Republic. Their vision was based on constituting a settled peasantry as a means to obviate the moral and political hazards of "wage slavery" and rapid urbanization (Ibid.). The state project that would develop under the thirty-one year dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo would initially take up this vision by distributing and titling land to settle and govern the country's population. Thus, while land dispossession in the form of enclosures for the plantation economy was common in the southeast, Dominican rural

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tobacco cultivation occurred in a historic situation in which neither landed property nor urban commercial functions had been monopolized" (12, my translation).

labour, concentrated in the northern region of the country, was not massively separated from its means of production in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

The Cibao emerged as a key geographical category for this alternative modernity. The region was the only one with considerable agricultural production organized in small and medium plots, producing primarily tobacco (as well as coffee and cacao) for export. Liberal reformers, many of them from Santiago, held up the male surplus-producing peasant of the Cibao as the ideal citizen of a modern nation-state.<sup>8</sup> Capital accumulation in the Cibao, in contrast to the plantation region of the southeast, transformed the region symbolically into the locus of “*dominicanidad*” (Yunen 1985: 104). This notion constructed the region as quasi-developmental through the ability of its local elites (based in Santiago) and productive peasants to mitigate the pernicious influence of foreign capital and thus preserve an authentic Dominican national identity (Ibid.).

Second, and not unrelated, the US parallel occupations of Haiti (1912 – 1926) and the DR (1916-1924)<sup>9</sup> established a pattern of migrant labour that would endure for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Haitians emigrated in high numbers from the more densely populated and settled western third of the island, propelled by land seizures for US capital interests,

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<sup>7</sup> The sugar enclaves expanded rapidly at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, growing six-fold in territory between 1905 and 1925, dispossessing many land-users. By Caribbean standards, however, the plantation economy was small, occupying 10 percent of the country’s landmass by 1940 (Turits 2003: 78).

<sup>8</sup> An example of the reformist discourse cited by Turits is an editorial in Santiago’s newspaper, *La Información*, by Rafael César Tolentino, a middle class Santiaguero and leading nationalist: “We have to take to *el monte* [the untamed wilderness] with ploughs and machetes as our weapons. Our state of poverty is the product of our mistaken orientation, of not seeing the salvation of our Country in the only place it can be found: in the countryside” (79).

<sup>9</sup> The extent to which the Dominican Republic was an independent territory was not entirely clear for the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A decade before the relatively short direct occupation of 1916, the US had taken control of the country’s customs when the German government threatened to intervene directly after a private New York-based corporation (the Santo Domingo Improvement Company) that had purchased Dominican debt issued national bonds that were insolvent (Grandin 2006: 26). Thus the main source of state revenue, customs, was administered by the US until 1940 and 55 percent of receipts were garnered to service the DR’s foreign debt (Turits 2003: 64).

a deep agrarian crisis, and an aggressive labour recruitment campaign to supply workers to US sugar concerns in the DR as well as in Cuba (Castor 1971). In the Dominican Republic, Haitians were incorporated into the lowest rung of the sociospatial division of labour as seasonal and resident plantation labour.

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo took power in 1931 via the nascent national military established by the US. Lacking both a popular base and US government support (initially), the dictator consolidated his power by constituting the Dominican peasantry through mass property-making via land distribution and subject-formation, the latter through anti-Haitianism and a productivist ideology that tied citizenship to settled agricultural cultivation (San Miguel 1999; Turits 2003). Trujillo drew upon the elite vision of an alternative agrarian modernity, incorporating its key ideologues into his government as the state undertook the most extensive land distribution in Latin America and the Caribbean at the time.<sup>10</sup>

The making of the Dominican peasantry constituted the Dominican surplus-producing peasant through coercion and consent parallel to the expulsion and extinction of a racialized Other, the Haitian peasant. The state imposed harsh penalties on Dominican men who failed to cultivate a minimum of 10 *tareas* of land (or 5/8 of a hectare)<sup>11</sup> and invigorated a system of forced labour instituted under the US occupation to build irrigation canals and roads (San Miguel 1999). The regime did not operate through

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<sup>10</sup> At the height of the distribution campaign (1935-1940), cropland increased by 47 percent through forest clearing; by the middle of the century, excluding colonization projects in the border region and regularization of squatted land, 31 percent of rural producers were transformed into small property owners holding titles to 10 percent of occupied land on relatively small plots (average 2.1 hectares) (Turits 2003: 96).

<sup>11</sup> Turits argues that although neither state discourse nor the law itself specified the sex of vagrants, in practice, the law applied only to men. Female vagrancy was governed by a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century police statute that defined female vagrants as those women leading an “idle, loose and scandalous life” (2003: 93).

coercion alone, however. The Trujillo state offered a sort of Faustian bargain to rural dwellers: the possibility for cultivators to secure access to land in the face of growing commercial pressures that were eroding their livelihood practices in exchange for relinquishing the basis of these practices in the form of common land and usufruct rights (San Miguel 1997b). The regime was intensely repressive towards political opponents and those unwilling to perform the role of the new national subject: the peasant cultivator (Turits 2003).

State violence crystallized in a different form, however, in its efforts to eliminate Haitians from the Dominican peasantry. While Haitian migrant labour was positioned squarely as hyperexploitable plantation labour in the southeast, under Trujillo, the possibility of independent producers of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic became impossible. The formation of the peasantry as *Dominican* reinscribed Haitian peasants and peasants of Haitian descent as disposable life, leading to the 1937 ethnic cleansing of the Dominican border region. By the end of the six-day campaign, state forces had massacred between 15,000 to 20,000 people identified by the former as “Haitian” (Derby 1994; Turits 2002). The ideological justification of the massacre was constructed after the fact. The victims and survivors who had lived in and cultivated the fluid frontier region in the northern Cibao for several generations became symbols of a slow and insidious colonization that Trujillo’s regime had halted (Turits 2003). Thus, as Dominican pastoralists and agriculturalists were settled and made property-holders through *minifundios*, Haitians were dispossessed and eliminated from the Dominican *campo*. For much of the twentieth century, Haitians would be almost exclusively located in the sugar plantations of the country’s enclave export sector, with their movements –

including recruitment, isolated settlement, and periodic mass deportation -- managed by the Dominican state (Martinez 1995).

The deferral of mass peasant dispossession in the Dominican Republic was relatively short-lived, however. By the 1950s, as sugar prices boomed in the post-war period, Trujillo took over sugar production, doubling the area under cultivation and tripling output (Turits 2003). The Dominicanization of the export enclave (through Trujillo's state-backed investment) marked a break with land distribution policies and prompted substantial dispossessions largely, again, in the southeast (Ibid.). But dispossession in the Cibao was also gaining pace as the commercialization of tobacco and coffee on *minifundios* incorporated peasants into unequal market relations that led to increasing indebtedness and growing numbers of seasonal wage workers involved in regional circuits of labour migration to supplement declining farm incomes (Lozano 2001). Growing pressures on land led to the first legal restrictions on rural-to-urban migration in 1953 (Ibid: 168). Parallel to the nationalization of the sugar industry, the regime turned from peasant production to import-substitution, a transformation that led to growing agro-industries in the Cibao, again dispossessing smallholders and increasing the numbers of sharecroppers (Lozano 2001; San Miguel 1997b).

By 1960, after a short post-war boom, the price of sugar dropped precipitously and Trujillo's power was weakened. With the dictator's assassination and the overthrow of his regime the following year, the slow turn away from smallholder production and domestic agriculture only accelerated as state subsidized credit and non-pecuniary assistance for rural production declined (Betances 1995; Dore y Cabral 1981). The early 1960s were socially tumultuous as various fractions of capital as well urban and rural

labour sought to advance their contradictory interests, long held at bay by the dictatorship. A substantial boost to the urban minimum wage and a loosening of state control led to mass out-migration from Dominican *campos* especially from the Cibao where half the country's population was concentrated (Lozano 2001). Rural migrants to Santiago were predominantly from the surrounding agricultural region, while migrants from the central Cibao (including Santiago and larger towns) comprised a large proportion of flows to Santo Domingo (Ramírez, Santana, de Moya, and Tactuk 1988: 183). As a result, the capital city's growth far outpaced that of Santiago (Santana 1994: 41).<sup>12</sup> All told, the Cibao experienced net migration outflows on the order of a quarter million people annually by the late 1970s and early 1980s (Santana 1994: 121). Immigration to Santiago during this period was surpassed by outflows from Santiago and the surrounding central Cibao. Over the course of the decade, the number of minifundios declined rapidly and the amount of land held by large property owners increased by one-third (Lozano 2001: 86).

In addition to the capital city, rural migrants were destined for the US State instability in the post-Trujillo period and US fears of "another Cuba" led to a pro-active US immigration policy towards Dominicans, distributing thousands of visas to political dissidents and economic migrants (Castro and Boswell 2002). While the land- and capital-poor moved to Dominican cities, a substantial proportion of smallholding peasants left for New York. Cibao *campos* in particular were radically transnationalized

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<sup>12</sup> The ratio of population between Santo Domingo and Santiago increased from 2 in 1935, to 3.2 in 1950 to 4.1 in 1981. This trend in urban primacy was typical for the region. For more on urbanization trends in a comparative framework, see Portes, Dore Cabral and Landolt (1997).

in the 1970s, as smallholders leveraged their property for credit to secure their emigration (Georges 1990; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

The 1970s saw an intensification of unequal accumulation between and within urban and rural settings. On the one hand, rapid urbanization and a restricted wage sector led to “informalization” of the urban labour market (Lozano 1993).<sup>13</sup> As wage relations extended to more of the workforce, including women, so too did underemployment, unemployment and precarious forms of “self-employment” (i.e., in most cases, informal services). By the late 1970s, as the ISI regime floundered and the sugar crisis deepened (see Chapter 2), a second profound shift occurred. The sociospatial divisions of agrarian labour and the related racialization of work instituted at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were reconstituted in urban and rural spaces. Haitians were incorporated widely into the non-sugar agrarian economy in the Cibao, working as seasonal and permanent labour in coffee and rice production, widely integrating into Cibaeno agricultural production for the first time (Lozano 2001: 283-295). Analysis of labour market data shows mass out-migration from Cibao *campos* beginning in the 1960s while the incorporation of Haitian agricultural labour did not take place until the 1970s, and high rates of Dominican rural male under- and unemployment were persistent (Dore y Cabral 1981; Lozano 2001). These findings contest the functionalist thesis that Haitians replaced Dominican agricultural workers because the latter emigrated (Grasmuck 1982). Yet, as I hope the rest of this chapter makes clear, these observations are also insufficient to capture the social and cultural process of transnationalization of Cibaeno *campos*. In particular,

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<sup>13</sup> The urban population tripled between 1961 and 1980 from just under one million urban inhabitants to almost three million, representing 50 percent of the population (Lozano 2001: 162).



practices of self-making and distinction in the *campo* are tied up with creating social distance from Haitian workers who live and work there.

Although no in-depth studies exist to my knowledge tracing the transformation of Cibaeño *campos* with respect to the incorporation of Haitian agricultural workers,<sup>14</sup> several studies trace the profound effects of emigration on gender relations in Cibao *campos*. Female migration in the 1980s increased markedly, constituting nearly half the migrant stream from the Cibao (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Remittance incomes and production strategies of land-holding households with members who had emigrated increased class polarization in Cibaeño *campos* and hastened the pace of rural proletarianization (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Ravelo and del Rosario 1986). The gender ideology restricting women's activities to the home and patio, following the white/*mestizo* elite patriarchal ideal, was reinforced in remittance receiving households as well (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). In these households, the restriction of women to unpaid household and informal home-based labour increased the social standing of families. Simultaneously, growing numbers of women from land- and/or capital-poor households, those less likely to migrate internationally, sought paid work as domestic workers (often in the households of emigrant women) in urban and rural areas, as well as in trade zones (Georges 1990; Safa 1995; cf. Freeman 2002).

As we have seen in previous chapters, trade zones proliferated in secondary cities and towns in the second half of the 1980s. In fact, the manufactured export sector mildly

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<sup>14</sup> In fact, the small but growing literature on the racialization of labour in the Dominican Republic is conducted largely in urban contexts. The two most groundbreaking studies are Howard (2001) based on research primarily in Santo Domingo and Gregory (2007) based on research in and around La Romana in the southeast. A third fascinating study takes a more explicitly transnational approach, focusing ethnographic work on New York (Candelario 2007). There is also a growing literature in the humanities that explores national *cum* racial formations in the Dominican Republic. See especially Fischer (2004) and San Miguel (1997a). See also Simmons (2009), an ethnography of racial formations in Santiago.

attenuated out-migration from the Cibao region and propelled considerable population growth in Santiago (Ariza 2000; Santana 1994). This decentralization of urban growth (from the capital city) associated with trade zone expansion was due to an increase in migrants, especially young, married<sup>15</sup> and single women, moving to towns and to Santiago to work in these new factories. The participation of women as wage workers in trade zones intensified material and affective connections between rural *campos*, secondary towns and the region's largest city, Santiago. In addition to remittances, care work was stretched between *campos* and the city as Dominican women who migrated to trade zones entrusted their children to maternal or paternal grandmothers in the *campo* (Safa 1995). The change in export strategy was accompanied by transformations in household relations, in the composition of households (i.e., an increased number of women-headed households), and in structural links between low-wage formal employment and the feminization of labour informality (Ariza 2000; Ariza 2004; Itzigsohn 2000; Safa 1990; Safa 1995).

The city of Santiago had long concentrated surpluses of capital from the commercialization of tobacco, coffee and cacao from the surrounding Cibao while remaining relatively small in terms of number of inhabitants (San Miguel 1997b). As the trade zone strategy expanded with shifts in the garment and textile assemblage, the city's main trade zone grew, and additional zones were built on its periphery as well as in secondary towns such as La Vega and Esperanza. The trade zones in Santiago concentrated the bulk of employment and the executive functions of the garment business. By 1990, although the region as a whole continued to register high numbers of

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<sup>15</sup> By 'married,' I include consensual unions.

emigrants (surpassing immigrants by half a million), Santiago began to register positive migration inflows (Santana 1994). As a result, the city's population doubled over the course of the decade reaching approximately 600,000 inhabitants and concentrating a large number of trade zone jobs. By 2002, trade zones made up 35 percent of employment in the province of Santiago, including the municipality and the surrounding area, by far the highest concentration by province in the country (PNUD 2008: 258).

This brief history of the Cibao provides a sense of how coloniality structures spatial and social divisions of labour through articulated hierarchies of race, class, gender and nation. The Cibao region's symbolic position as the heartland of *dominicanidad* was inseparable from the structuring of sociospatial divisions of labour through racialized and gendered hierarchies. Under the Trujillo regime, an elite alternative modernity based upon the industrious Dominican peasant, the male figure of the nation, was produced in part through the expulsion of peasants of Haitian descent, the relegation of Haitians to low-wage plantation work, and the construction of the smallholder peasant-citizen. The transnationalization of the Cibao in the post-Trujillo period has radically transformed social relations in rural *campos* segmenting labour in new ways along racialized and gendered lines, and increasing class fragmentation. It is in the context of these transformations in the sociospatial division of labour that we now turn to the discourses and practices surrounding the decline of trade zone employment in Santiago and the livelihood strategies of retrenched garment workers.

### *3. Risky positions: discourses of trade zone unemployment and rural return in Santiago*

The collapse of trade zone employment gave rise to several discourses surrounding the livelihood activities of fired workers that constructed the latter as a moral hazard and potential danger to Santiago. As factory closures continued, an increase in informal activities was asserted and framed as a danger both to remaining trade zone producers and to social stability in the city. During the layoffs, for example, the trade zone's management reinforced the zone's perimeter, adding additional rows of cement block to the walls, replacing barbed wire with circular razor wire, and sealing two of its five entrances (see photo at the beginning of chapter).

The executive director of the Santiago trade zone association explained the need to reinforce the zone's perimeter as follows:

You would think that with the closures at the zone, the informal sector activity would go down but instead it has increased. There [the street next to a door just sealed by the trade zone administration], they sell everything. Not just food [for workers] but women, drugs, everything.<sup>16</sup>

The perception that the increase in informal activity marked a proliferation of abject subjects (i.e., drug dealers and sex workers) was linked not only to the spaces and neighbourhoods around the trade zone but to the problem of migrants seen to be out of place in the city. The mayor of Santiago, for example, declared the following:

The economic and moral problem of Santiago is that so many trade zone companies have had to close. This has brought a big problem to Santiago because [it is] a city of 750,000 inhabitants (sic), but with 65 percent of them coming from other towns, people who live in Santiago and worked in the trade zone but who haven't left regrettably... There are stands and stands on every corner... And

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<sup>16</sup> Author's notes, Association of Trade Zones of the Northern Region, January 22, 2007.

there are also some who we know are already in jail because they have turned to *delincuencia* [criminal activity].<sup>17</sup>

The mayor framed the employment crisis as largely a migrant crisis, desiring the city to be a conditional residence for migrants. Unregulated work was constructed as an exclusive activity of migrants irrespective of so-called informal workers' places of birth or the number of years they had lived in Santiago. Livelihood activities at the margins of state regulations, such as street vending, did not index a problem of urban unemployment but rather a problem of intransigent migrants whose failure to respond 'rationally' to their subject position (i.e., to migrate) constructed them as potential criminals.

A survey of 1,500 workers in four urban centers across the country, displaced from trade zones due to layoffs or factory closures, found that unemployment amongst former trade zone workers in Santiago was 20 percent, climbing to 37 percent when those who had stopped looking for work were included (USAID 2007). Women's unemployment was 24.7 percent and rose to 48 percent when women not actively looking for work were included. Of the unemployed reincorporated into the labour market as paid workers, indicators of informality, such as the presence or absence of a labour contract and business license, were high as were rates of underemployment. Thirty-five percent of workers who had found employment were working less than forty hours a week and about one-fifth of them were employed for less than ten hours (Ibid: 51).

Women were significantly overrepresented in this so-called informal sector (Ibid: 49).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Sued: Cierre de Zonas Francas ha hecho proliferar negocios informales" by H. Fernandez, *El Caribe*, August 14, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> For 2006, the national unemployment rate was 16.2 percent. In Santiago, male unemployment in 2006 was 8.5 percent versus 20.4 percent for women, a ratio that is slightly more favorable than the national figures that show female unemployment to be three times that of male unemployment (UNDP 2008: 262-

The statistics, however, obscured as much as they revealed. In a footnote to the study on strategies of retrenched trade zone workers, the authors commented on what they presumed to be a methodological deficiency: while key informants told researchers that return to *campos* was an important livelihood strategy, the method of the survey, drawing on random sampling techniques based in working class neighborhoods near trade zones, was unable to account for these return migrants (Ibid: 46).<sup>19</sup>

The impacts of both unemployment and out-migration were profoundly experienced by residents in working class neighbourhoods who described a significant exodus of migrant workers to hometowns or to tourist poles in the east. They pointed to the many *pensiones* (buildings with one-room apartments rented by the week by trade zone workers) for sale and the high numbers of residential vacancies. Santana, a 22-year resident of the Cienfuegos neighbourhood next to the trade zone in Santiago and a staff member of a local job retraining center, described the multiple livelihood strategies he observed:

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3). A general observation about the Dominican labour market repeated by most development institutions including CEPAL, the ILO, the World Bank, and the UNDP is that rapid growth (measured in GDP) of the Dominican economy has had relatively little impact on employment expansion (Sánchez-Fung 2000; Reyes 2001). Unemployment has never dipped below 12 percent, even when GDP has registered phenomenal growth rates of 10 percent. In gendered terms, economic growth has vastly expanded female unemployment (apparently not the trend, according to Standing, across low-income countries where there has been a general convergence between men and women's increasing unemployment although his figures on the Caribbean reveal higher ratios than those recorded in Latin America [1999: especially 597-9]). I cite employment figures with some ambivalence. While they indicate a widespread problem they erase a whole host of fundamental social relations such as remittances, internal and international migration, the politics of visibility and invisibility of Haitian undocumented labour, numerous other livelihood strategies that are either ignored or criminalized, and the very problem of locating "the labour market" in a terrain constituted by relative mobility and immobility. I address only a small subset of these concerns in this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> Early studies of the employment effects of the garment sector downturn noted that rural return was an important strategy in their qualitative summary. Survey research, however, was based solely on individual informants residing in urban neighbourhoods and did not include a method to gauge return migration; therefore, its extent could not be documented quantitatively (Gómez 2007; Tejada Holguin 2007).

There are some, I know a few *zoneros* [trade zone workers] who have stands to sell *chinas* [cut fruit] on the corner. Today I saw two this morning, one was a supervisor. But those are just the ones I know. There are few jobs. A big proportion has left to their place of origin, to Dajabón, to San Juan... [Before,] in order to leave the neighbourhood, you had to wake up very early because it was a terrible mess and you would see lines and lines of people. The *carros* [collective taxis] were full and you couldn't get one. Now, no, you can leave at any hour in the morning and the *carros* are empty. That's the unemployment.<sup>20</sup>

Santana described the emptiness and relative quiet of the neighbourhood, characterizing unemployment largely in terms of the absence of former residents in contrast to the mayor's complaint of out-of-place migrants in the street.

While discourses criminalizing unemployed workers point to the risky practices that women and men faced in positioning their labouring bodies after trade zones in the city, rural return was also a prospect that was conditioned by abject subject positions. Below, I explore how former garment workers who also identify as migrants negotiated the possibilities for livelihood between spaces and subject positions in the city and in their hometowns. I found that men's and women's discourses of livelihood after trade zones communicated a resistance to rural return, framed around distancing their bodies from abject subjectivities that they associated with return to their *campos*. Male migrants depicted the risk of being reinscribed as de-valued, racialized rural labour, while women migrants resisted their re-inscription in dependent household relations in their *campos*, constructing them as unpaid household labour. Discourses of rural return and observations of livelihood practices of return migrants in their hometowns suggest how the performance of modern subjectivity was constantly being negotiated in relation to these differently gendered and racialized places.

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<sup>20</sup> Author interview, Centro de la Juventud y de la Cultura, Cienfuegos, Santiago. October 17, 2006.

### 5. Race, masculinity and rural return on the threshold of unemployment

In this section, I unpack men's discourses about the possibility of rural return together with observations from follow-up visits with return male migrants in their *campos*. Men's narratives about rural return revealed how hierarchies of desirable labour were conditioned by cultural meanings of work as well as by wages (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003). Here, I focus primarily on the racialization of rural labour as a key discourse through which men constructed their resistance to rural return and foreclosed the possibility for their labour in rural areas. I place these narratives in the context of Dominican gendered and racial ideologies of labour. This discussion suggests how migratory decisions of former male garment workers following factory closure constitute an embodied negotiation of their position in raced and gendered localities.

Ramón, Nicolás and Hector are each originally from different *campos* in the central Cibao, while Monica is from a *campo* in the eastern Cibao. Monica introduced me to her male co-workers. We first spoke two weeks after the factory had closed, on the small patio in front of Monica's two-room apartment near the Santiago trade zone, which she shared with her husband, also a former IA worker, and their son. Ramón, 26, is the father of three. He worked at IA for ten years and his last position in the plant was as a *utiliti*, filling any operation needed on the production line. Ramón explained his desire to stay in the city:

I have few friends left [in the *campo*] and it's expensive to travel with my kids. Anyway, I have all the relaxation I need with them here. I don't need to go to the *campo* for that. The mentality there is different. [MTW: In what way?] In the city, everything is cleaner. You use good clothes and they are clean. In the morning, you shower and put on clean clothes



but in the *campo* you get up and put on muddy clothes from the day before and go to work... My grandmother still lives there with five of my uncles. My family had some land and used to grow cacao, coffee, plantains, oranges... Now, maybe they have a hectare or two but nothing is being cultivated. You can also study in the city while in the campo you can only finish 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I finished 7<sup>th</sup> grade before I left and took 8<sup>th</sup> grade here. I got to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school. But it was difficult because companies won't respect your school schedule. I'm not going back to the campo. I don't like the idea.<sup>21</sup>

Here, Monica decided to expand on Ramón's point: '*Era prieto y ahora es rubio.*' [He was dark and now he is blonde.] Monica used the word '*prieto*,' a disparaging term for black phenotype associated with Dominican anti-Haitianism.<sup>22</sup> Ramón agreed: '*Claro, tengo otro color.*' [Of course, I have a different colour.]

The other two men nodded in agreement. Andri, 26, continued. He had been brought to the city by his older sister after finishing grade eight. His *campo* was near La Vega where his mother still lived, whom he visited every couple of months. Although he came to Santiago to continue school, he stopped studying once his sister got him the job at IA. He worked for the next eight years, becoming a *utiliti*, like Ramón. Agreeing with Ramón's statement, he added that there was no going back to *chapeando* [clearing ground] with a machete. Hector, 36, was from Alta Mira, close to Santiago, and had worked in trade zones for fourteen years and in IA for the past eleven. His last job at the plant was in finishing, attaching cardboard labels to the beltline of pants. He had a small plot in his *campo* not far from Santiago, and traveled there frequently. He had worked with horses and livestock there, never with a machete, he emphasized, in reference to Andri's comment about manual rural labour as a kind of going backwards. The livestock

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<sup>21</sup> Author's notes, February, 17, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> For an analysis of the cultural politics of Dominican racial descriptors, see Howard (2001), Candelario (2007), and Sagás (2000).

had long been sold and he said that he could not return to working with a machete since he had never done so.

Ramón, Andri and Hector's narrative about their devalued labour in *el campo* and their assent to connecting this narrative with Monica's description of social whitening suggests that race, class and masculinity formed a lived experience of social and spatial position that was open to re-signification by the movement of their working bodies in space, a movement spawned by structural changes in capitalist accumulation but not solely determined by them. Ramón's depiction of the *campo* as a place for relaxation rather than labour created further distance between his livelihood strategy in Santiago and the possibility of return to his home village. The exchange between these former garment workers provides a partial perspective into how their class position is lived as an embodied social and spatial position cross-cut with gendered and racial ideologies of labour (cf. Hall 1980).

Historian Silvio Torres-Saillant has proposed an understanding of contemporary Dominican working class identity in relation to the colonial and postcolonial period. He argues that the distance between social blackness and phenotypic blackness permits Dominicans of colour to "step outside the sphere of their blackness, [enabling] them to remain whole" in the face of state negrophobia (1998a: 136; also 1998b). As we have seen in the Cibao, agrarian labour has been resignified in the last thirty years as work was increasingly proletarianized and as Haitian workers were incorporated in non-sugar rural production. Following Torres-Saillant, and keeping in mind the shifting sociospatial divisions of labour in the Cibao, I want to suggest that the narrative of migrant male trade zone workers, combined with practices in *el campo* that I discuss below, were part of a

daily performance of modern subjectivity in part conditioned by the struggle of Dominican working class men to resist being inscribed as socially black. Social whitening was achieved through a combination of living in urban spaces, taking on an urban look, and engaging in forms of labour socially constructed as ‘modern,’ which these workers associated with factory work. The idea of performance is implicit in the response of Ramón, suggesting that the re-signification of race through these embodied practices was itself never stable: having another colour (*tengo otro color*) is a way of expressing a temporary state – like being cold or being sleepy. With the factory’s closure, Ramón and his co-workers stood on the unstable threshold that held open the possibility of their labouring bodies being resignified as socially black.

Conversations with return male migrants in their hometowns revealed a range of activities as well as narratives about their return. Of the ten men I interviewed who had returned to their *campos* in the five months following the factory’s closure, only one was engaged full-time in farming. Some men were taking on odd jobs and subsisting on the largely reciprocal and gift economies of their home communities until they might migrate again. This was popularly referred to as *picando*, or nibbling, a way to sustain oneself without getting ahead. In rural areas, this was a decidedly masculinized livelihood form, reflecting the more restricted mobility of women in rural spaces that I discuss below.

Some former male trade zone workers had accumulated enough money, largely through severance pay, to allow them to integrate into informal commercial circuits in their *campos*, activities facilitated by rural social networks and in-flows of remittances in those small communities with a high proportion of international migrants. For example, some men acquired motorcycles and worked as *motoconchos*, or motorcycle taxis, in

their hometowns. *Motoconchos* were well suited to transport the small quantities of inputs and products associated with small-scale farming along narrow, dirt roads. Motorized transport was also a marker of social distinction, as the practice of walking in the *campo* was associated with Haitian workers who often faced discrimination by *motoconcho*, bus, and car drivers.

While unregulated work in the city had been drawn upon to re-signify unemployed workers as migrants and criminals, return migrants engaging in unregulated or illicit trading could circumvent criminalization because of their social position in their *campos*. For example, Miguel, 44, returned to his wife's *campo* where he had forged close ties during his twelve years in the Santiago trade zone, the last six in finishing at IA. He was working for a wood processing workshop in the back of his in-law's house. Miguel's income came from trading in trees and finding buyers. "It is called contraband," he explained. "If the police catch you here, you have to pay them a few hundred pesos," he continued, "but if they catch you up in the mountain, they make you plant 100 trees and charge a big fine." Like Miguel, in many cases, commercial activities existed at the margins of state regulation. The stigmatizing of Miguel's labour as informal or illegal by the state was lessened by his sociospatial position as a local in his *campo*, leading to less harsh penalties by the police.

The narratives and activities described in this section illustrate how former male trade zone workers' embodied negotiations of livelihood were linked to malleable constructions of social blackness, constructions that were associated with kinds of work and particular gendered and racial politics of labour in rural and urban places. These narratives and observations suggest that part of these workers' struggle was to find

livelihood options that positioned their working bodies on the modern end of a potentially punitive and inextricably gendered and racialized spectrum of labour. While Ramón, Andri and Hector sought to avoid the abject social position of rural labourer by staying in the city, return male migrants navigated their positions within the *campo* in multiple ways. The negotiation of social position was not guaranteed by staying in Santiago or returning to home villages; rather, gendered and racial constructions of labour intersecting in each locality constituted the spectrum that these workers negotiated.

5. *'There's no work for women there': women and rural return in La Torre, Cibao*

The embodied negotiations of former garment workers are inseparable from the gendering of productive and reproductive labour. This process of gendering and its variation across villages, towns and cities emerged as the primary narrative through which former female garment workers described their livelihood possibilities. In this section, I focus on two women from a *campo* called La Torre in the eastern Cibao (near Nagua, see Map) and their considerations of return in relation to their possibilities for sexual and economic independence. While former male garment workers negotiated the cultural politics and economic prospects for their paid labour in their *campos*, women's narratives suggest that gendered constructions of paid work in their *campos* and related household hierarchies meant that their return would reproduce them as unpaid household labour.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Women and men described their household relationships to me in heteronormative terms.

Yesenia, 26, worked for eight years in the Santiago trade zone, and spent the last five in IA as a final auditor (i.e., line inspection). Her mother cared for her four year-old son in La Torre. Yesenia's narrative about her livelihood choices revealed a negotiation between her efforts to exert control over how her body was sexualized and gendered and how she negotiated the limits to her control through migration. She shared varied reasons for not wanting to return to her *campo*, a narrative that was constantly evolving as she adapted and struggled to rework her livelihood options, and eventually, to return for what she hoped would be a temporary stay. Yesenia first explained her reasons for resisting rural return in terms of losing an urban look: "There, I eat too much and with my body type, I gain weight." Like her male counterparts, clothing and an urban look were part of Yesenia's concerns.<sup>24</sup> However, these concerns also extended to her body's shape.

Yesenia continued with her preoccupations about what she would do in her *campo*:

I am not very open to the idea of living in *el campo*. I left when I was 11, first to San Francisco [Macorís, the provincial capital] and then to Santo Domingo and then Santiago. But all the same, there's money in *el campo*, a lot of rice, farming, coffee, cacao. In Nagua [the nearest town], there's a restaurant and a car wash now. I prefer to go for brief stays, maybe 15 or 20 days. But to sit around and not work... There's no work for women there. I had a stand once where I sold chicken, salad and root vegetables. I had good clients and whenever I am back they ask if I plan to start up the business again. If I go back, I will, but I got sick working with the chickens.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A former male IA worker in La Torre reinterpreted this narrative of urban look as a disadvantage rather than as something to be desired, saying "work [in Santiago] is just for you to keep yourself looking good in the city, not for actually making money."

<sup>25</sup> Author's notes. February 18, 2007.

Yesenia's possibilities for rural return were unique amongst the women I interviewed, linked to the location of her mother's house in the center of La Torre, and what she described as a relatively dynamic economic context. La Torre was located at the crossroads of the Dominican Republic's changing accumulation model. The relative economic dynamism that Yesenia depicted was linked not only to extensive rice production in the region, but also to the predominance of remittance incomes in the community, as well as a new highway being built through the area to facilitate tourist travel. The temporary highway project, sustained remittances, and rice production expanded commercial and service activities. As I have described, however, these jobs were gendered as male. Increased commercial activity did not significantly change gender ideologies of women's mobility in small towns and villages. Yesenia negotiated these norms through a home-based business, earning an income from the increasingly commodified relations in her *campo*.

Although Yesenia earned more money from her business than in the trade zone because she did not incur many expenses,<sup>26</sup> her reluctance to return was associated both with more strict control of her income and movements by her mother, and the presence of her son's father in her *campo*. Yesenia shared considerations about her livelihood options linked with her desires to be in a relationship with a man who had money and would be her primary partner. She explained that her son's father was a receiver of significant remittances. He used the economic power associated with these funds to

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<sup>26</sup> Yesenia estimated her daily earnings through food vending at 200-300 pesos after expenses, or 1200-1800 pesos per week. Yesenia's last base wage in the factory was 1200 pesos per week. She frequently earned between 1500 and 2000 pesos per week with production bonuses. In the last two years of work, Yesenia claimed she was unable to save money because of increasing costs in Santiago. Author's notes, April, 2007.

maintain a sexual relationship with Yesenia, despite being remarried with three children. Yesenia felt ashamed by the relationship with her son's father, especially when living in La Torre, close to his wife. She was sure that if she moved back to her *campo*, the father of her son would "make [her] life difficult."

Other former female garment workers resisting rural return shared similar dilemmas about negotiating their sexual and wage independence in hometowns where paid labour for women is largely unavailable. Laya, 26, and Domingo, 38, a couple from La Torre, had both been working at IA since 2000. Laya moved to another garment export factory where she continued to work as a *taqueadora* (cross-stitching belt loops) shortly before IA closed. With the closure of IA, Domingo lost his job in finishing (pressing pants) and reluctantly returned to cultivating rice on his father's 60 *tareas* (3.75 ha). Laya remained in Santiago with their two children earning a wage largely to cover her costs of rent and childcare in the city. She was hoping to keep her job in order to accrue sufficient severance pay to buy her own house in *el campo* and set up her own business. She was clear and adamant about her strategy, despite Domingo's desire for her immediate return to his parent's house. Laya planned to work for as long as possible in Santiago in order to create a place for her paid labour in her *campo*, as well as independence from her husband and his family.

Migrant women's negotiation of their position with respect to unpaid domestic work was certainly not guaranteed by staying in Santiago: most of the women migrants I interviewed who were staying in the city were looking for paid work with little success. Most were either engaged primarily in unpaid household labour (dependent on spousal support in cases where they had partners) or working as domestic workers. Nevertheless,



these women argued that to return to their *campos* was to foreclose the possibility of their paid labour.<sup>27</sup> To stay in Santiago then was to position themselves as labouring bodies that could occupy the subject position of paid worker. The exclusion of women's paid labour in rural villages and towns was not a property of rural areas, as static or traditional; rather, as the comparison to men's rural return suggests, the gendering of labour in rural areas was an effect of the way that intimate, regional and transnational connections were woven through rural localities.

#### *6. Embodied negotiations: Coloniality and the geography of displacements*

In previous chapters, I have argued that hierarchies of social difference, what I am calling the coloniality of power, exist in an overdetermined relationship with capital accumulation. My study of displacements examines how this articulated hierarchy of race, gender, class, and nation serves as a kind of resource to rework the spatial and social processes of capital and the state to resolve accumulation crises. The embodied negotiations that I have presented in this chapter suggest that displacements and the uneven geographies that they reproduce are not solely a resource for capital, however, nor are they singularly determined by its movements. The mayor's lament over intransigent migrants, for example, is representative of one such naïve understanding of coloniality: that the structural hierarchies of race, gender and class (and implicitly nation) are fixed social and spatial positions into which subjects are slotted passively. A worker

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<sup>27</sup> Dominican women's reluctance to return to hometowns and cities has been noted in the context of international migration by Grasmuck and Pessar (1991). Women's experiences negotiating gender norms (of labour, sexuality, and household hierarchies) upon return are discussed by Gregory (2007: 69-80).

in Santiago, then, should naturally migrate “back” to his or her former position when rendered unemployed.

By examining men’s and women’s experiences after trade zones in the Cibao, it becomes clear that hierarchical articulations of social difference form complex subject positions that are irreducible to the movements and desires of capital. Former male garment workers, for example, sought to position their socially marked bodies in order to create social and spatial distance from agrarian labour, a social position constructed as abject through race, class, gender, and national hierarchies of the Cibao. Migrant men’s embodied negotiations lead to multiple practices depending on their connections to and possibilities for livelihood within their *campos*. Within the structuring of race, nation, class and gender experienced by Dominican women, the gendering of labour appears as a dominant relation albeit inseparable from complex race/class hierarchies. The white/*mestizo* patriarchal ideal of the male-headed household, one that has always materialized unevenly in the Dominican context, has undergone contradictory changes through the transnationalization of *campos* and the incorporation/expulsion of women into and from paid work. Nevertheless, my reading of former female garment workers’ narratives suggests that this ideal household structure continues to gender paid labour in *campos* as male. Staying in the city thus remains a key strategy to stay in circulation as potential paid labour whether or not paid work materializes. The social and spatial positioning of former garment workers to reproduce themselves as subjects also demonstrates the interconnections between accessing ‘modern’ forms of labour and gendered performances of consumption such as cultivating an urban style and body type.

It is upon the terrain of these complex identities that spatial divisions of labour are remade. Ironically, perhaps, although the outcomes partially frustrate the desires of capital for a migrant labour force that follows the rhythms of accumulation cycles, both capitalist narratives and those of migrants draw upon a similar discourse of the social and spatial position of the modern subject. The divergence between labour geographies and those of capitalist accumulation stems from how these narratives are lived by those subjects who forge subject positions not only through ‘modern labour’ but also through navigating the instability of wage work. These embodied negotiations, as I have called them, are far from acts of voluntarism. Workers position their socially marked bodies in spaces – the household, the street, the patio, the *campo* – that are raced and gendered in ways that are not of their choosing. Through these acts of corporeal positioning the un- and underemployed iteratively reproduce spatial divisions of labour.

Although the process of migrants negotiating possibilities for livelihood may be universal, critical ethnography of specific experiences reveals the richness of geographical difference that is generated. In the case of the three *campos* that I focused my study on, men were more likely to find a place for their paid labour “back home,” a circumstance that, combined with practices of livelihood and migration woven through Cibao *campos*, suggests a particular gendering of these spaces. The possibilities for paid work and subject positions of social worth in effect masculinized these *campos*; in other words, the abject positions facing former garment workers were strongly differentiated by gender and locality. Migration decisions are part of a host of processes that create the possibilities for livelihood, a fraction of which I have been able to touch upon in this chapter. What is clear, however, is that at the threshold of the idled garment factory,

retrenched workers' multiple social and spatial practices of subject-making come to the fore and reveal the complex subjects of labour that animate the uneven reconfigurations of global production.

## Chapter 5: Reworking Coloniality through the Haitian-Dominican Border

“Haiti is not the future. It is the present.”

-- Levi's sourcing manager, on joint production with the Dominican Republic

### 1. Introduction

The United States occupation of the Dominican Republic in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent project of Dominican state-making inscribed the relational value of Dominican and Haitian labour through the creation of exclusive spaces for Haitian workers, as well as the elimination of Haitian and Haitian-descent peasants from the Dominican countryside (see chapter 4). By the late twentieth century, with the collapse of the sugar economy, these state-managed spaces of hyper-exploitation had broken down. As Haitian workers were incorporated massively as a low-wage workforce in cities and towns, as well as in domestic and secondary agricultural exports (like coffee) (see Lozano 2001),<sup>1</sup> Dominican trade zones reinforced new geographies of segmentation, guaranteeing the relational and hierarchical reproduction of “Dominican” and “Haitian” labour, violent abstractions underpinning a gradient of exploitation. This strategy was evident in state discourses on trade zones and national employment, exemplified by the director of the government's industrial promotions agency (*La corporación de fomento industrial*), responsible for trade zone development in the late 1990s:

...[T]he effort by the government to construct and develop industrial parks is to solve the problem of unemployment. The trade zones must be for Dominican workers. For this reason, the employment of foreign machine operators, especially Haitians, must be strictly forbidden because this would provoke a devaluing of wages since Haitians come to the country and work for anything.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The social and spatial practices of the state to police Haitian labour have thus also shifted, see Wooding and Moseley-Williams (2004) for an analysis of these practices.

<sup>2</sup> “El Proceso de Dominicanización de las Zonas Francas” [The procession of Dominicanization of the trade zones], *Rumbo*, Mirta Rodríguez Calderon, 15-21 de Octubre, 1997. 51-3. Restrictions on foreign workers

Trade zones, in other words, were a spatial strategy that explicitly sought to constitute the value of *Dominican* labour for low-wage export-based accumulation.

By the early 2000s, as Dominican assembly workers were increasingly being excluded from export accumulation strategies spearheaded by transnational capital and supported by state subsidies, Haitian labour was emerging again as a low-wage resource for labour-intensive exports.<sup>3</sup> Provisions were written into the free trade agreement with Central America and the United States (DR-CAFTA) to allow for so-called co-production with Haiti, an arrangement that would see assembly in Haiti of garments otherwise transformed and shipped from the Dominican Republic (still largely of imported US fabric). Garment owners and managers associated with firms outsourcing to Haiti, like the veteran Levi's sourcing manager in Santiago quoted in the chapter epigraph, emphasized the urgency of incorporating Haitian workers into the garment labour process.<sup>4</sup> A handful of Dominican garment firms as well as large North American firms with operations in the Dominican Republic were searching for business arrangements in Haiti to make this reordering of production possible.

Rather than a repeat of previous structural patterns or an expression of a naturalized expansion of wage labour to a new frontier, the emergence of Haitian labour

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in the Dominican Republic are not specific to the trade zones: the Dominican Labour Code limits the proportion of foreign workers permitted in any firm in the country to 20 percent. In practice, this provision, while not enforced, is discursively mobilized, as it is in this example, to delineate sectors that are for "Dominican" workers. [Personal correspondence, Bridget Wooding, see also Wooding and Moseley-Williams (2004).] The employment of Haitians is also limited by the documentation required for trade zone work; many Haitians, Dominico-Haitians (Haitians born in the DR), and some (economically poor) Dominicans are undocumented and therefore have more difficulty accessing state regulated work.

<sup>3</sup> Trade zones had thrived in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. See chapter 2 for details.

<sup>4</sup> Author interview, Levi's office, Santiago. October 26, 2006.

as an imperative for garment accumulation based in the Dominican Republic was produced through intensified geographies of unevenness and relatively new social relations, in particular, a fraction of capital, Dominican garment industrialists, together with foreign multinationals, seeking to position themselves within a quickly shifting pattern of accumulation. By the 2000s, garment capital, led by the Dominican Republic's largest garment supplier, Dominican Textile, sought to incorporate the northern border region of the island into the garment and textile assemblage through the construction of the island's first transborder trade zone. The reworking of coloniality across this new terrain was inseparable from broader forms of interdependence that were emerging between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In less than two decades, the northern border, also the western edge of the Cibao, had become a key site of accumulation for a host of Dominican petty traders and agro-industrialists. Geographies of inter-dependence and exploitation were being forged by traders, investors, migrants, and farmers on both sides of this politico-territorial boundary.

The task of this chapter is to understand how hierarchies of social difference, or the coloniality of power, articulated with the reordering of spaces and subjects at the border as part of a shifting garment and textile assemblage. As a geography of displacements, I take neither the continuum of exploitable and hyper-exploitable labour produced as "national" (i.e., Dominican and Haitian), nor the appearance of this apparently new low-wage frontier, for granted. Rather, I explore recent transformations of the northern border region between the Dominican Republic and Haiti in order to consider, on the one hand, how changes in transnational capital, state power, and politics contesting neoliberalism and state development intersected to incorporate the border into

a transnational production assemblage, and, on the other, how practices of power, organized resistance and livelihood both produced and constrained capital accumulation through export production there. I draw on a displacements perspective to illuminate the process whereby the colonality of power and spatial divisions of labour intersect; in other words, how the reordering of socially marked subjects relates to the production and hierarchical ordering of places in relations of accumulation.

Drawing on interviews primarily with residents of the border town of Ouanaminthe (Haiti) and managers from Dominican Textile, observations of practices inside the border trade zone, as well as primary documents including union campaign literature and development policy reports, I discuss recent transformations in Ouanaminthe and neighbouring Dajabón (Dominican Republic) and the politics surrounding the building of the border trade zone between the two towns.<sup>5</sup> The chapter is divided into four main sections. In section two, I detail the transformation of Ouanaminthe in the wake of the political transition from dictatorship in the 1980s, focusing in particular on the embargo against Haiti initiated in 1991. In section three, I tease apart the political conjuncture that brought together unlikely allies in the early 2000s – local farmers and land owners, anti-neoliberal activists, and right-wing anti-Aristide campaigners – to organize against the implantation of the trade zone on the border. The fourth section details the ensuing struggle for labour rights in the zone in the context of Haitian state collapse. In section five, based on my observations in the zone, I discuss the daily practices of power and its limits that underpin the zone's strict division

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix I for a discussion of methodology in Ouanaminthe and the border trade zone. I am greatly indebted to the research assistance of Delién Blaise who facilitated these interviews and provided translation from Haitian Creole.



of labour between Haitians and Dominicans, in effect constituting the space as a “revolving door” for both management and workers. The displacements that I recount here highlight how coloniality is continually reworked through the constitution of new spaces of accumulation. Accumulation at the border and the expansion of Dominican exports and transnational foreign investment to the region illustrate how coloniality is reworked spatially through the intensification and fragmentation of sociospatial unevenness. At the same time, the character of this new space, and the dynamic geographies of unevenness that constitute it, is not determined by the demands of capital alone. Layered histories, class struggle, and livelihood practices shape these geographies in contingent ways.

## *2. Re-making the border: the Haitian embargo of 1991-1994 and the growth of Ouanaminthe*

The northern border that runs between the towns of Ouanaminthe (Haiti) and Dajabón (DR) is marked by the Massacre River. Apparently named for a conflict between French buccaneers and Spanish colonists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the river was resignified through the violence of modern statehood when many of the victims of Trujillo’s 1937 ethnic cleansing campaign died there while survivors crossed its wide bed to safety in Ouanaminthe. The massacre, popularly known as *el corte* (the cut or wound) in Spanish or *kout kouto-a* (the stabbing) in Creole, was directed against Haitian and Haitian-descent peasants in the northwest of the DR, especially in the areas around Dajabón. With the important exception of seasonal migrants from Haiti crossing the

border to work in the distant Dominican/US sugar plantations of the southeast, the result of the massacre was the formal closure of this erstwhile fluid frontier.<sup>6</sup>

The sparse record of state intervention in the region following *el corte* implies that Trujillo's early preoccupation with the border was an aberration. The massacre and efforts to establish settler colonies in the 1950s remained the only precedents of active Dominican state policy in the area (Augelli 1962). Investment promotion incentives (including the contemporary trade zone promotion law), adopted throughout the second half of the twentieth century to provide tax breaks to businesses that located in the border area, generally failed to spur significant investment due to lack of basic infrastructure, including electricity and schools. For decades, then, much of the population of the Dominican border region has emigrated in search of education and jobs. Many of those migrants arrived in the Dominican trade zones, especially in nearby Santiago. Overall, the Dominican state's presence on the border has largely materialized in its military form (Silié and Segura 2002).

In the northeast border region of Haiti, the state's primary manifestation was, similar to that of the DR, in its military form: the largest deployment of soldiers outside of Port-au-Prince resided in Ouanaminthe. Following the massacre, Haitian residents of Ouanaminthe lived for decades without venturing the short kilometre to Dajabón. For some, this was a political and personal decision taken in the wake of the massacre, although the Haitian state also forbade cross-border traffic, at least under Francois

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<sup>6</sup> Trujillo "nationalized" many of the sugar plantations in the 1950s, a move that incorporated them into his personal fortune. Only three out of 15 sugar concerns were in the Cibao. For this reason, the vast majority of migrant Haitian labor passed through the southern border, the crossing that was geographically closest to the majority of the sugar estates concentrated east of the Dominican capital. The massacre specifically targeted Haitians who had settled as peasants in the northwest frontier area. Haitian labourers on plantations were not touched, with the exception of one plantation in the Cibao, near Puerto Plata, where Haitian sugar workers were killed during the *mêlée* (Turits 2003; see also Derby 1994).

Duvalier.<sup>7</sup> A clandestine trade existed between the two militaries but for the most part, cross-border activities were restricted.

Over the course of nearly half a century following the massacre, Ouanaminthe remained a relatively small town with an expansive agricultural periphery integrated into the social and economic fabric of Haiti's northeast. Agricultural products such as mango, yucca, rice, and avocado were brought to the town from the surrounding countryside and some surplus was taken by road to Fort Liberté and Cap-Haïtien. The only major investment in the region was a large sisal plantation (the Dauphin plantation) in nearby Morne Casse that operated for nearly forty years, generating considerable employment in Haiti's northeast before being abandoned by its US owners when the market for sisal collapsed. Local residents' recollections of Ouanaminthe during the period of the border's closure are deeply nostalgic: a pastoral town of about 10,000 - 15,000 people (see footnote 17) where everyone knew each other, free from the trappings of urban vice like bars, crime and prostitution. The town was based around four streets. In the 1970s, Jean-Claude Duvalier inaugurated a generator, providing between three and six hours a day of power, and a water system, both serving those who lived in the town center. The military had a significant presence -- nearly six hundred soldiers at the time of its disbandment -- incorporating recruits from the northeast region and from the town itself.

Shortly after the fall of the Duvalier regime in 1986, restrictions on cross-border trade were eased and a bi-national market quickly emerged, fuelled by Haitian tariff

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<sup>7</sup> This is a statement based on Ouanaminthe resident's description. According to Saintilus (2007) the Haitian authorities did not officially close the border until 1963 and it was re-opened when Jean-Claude Duvalier took power following his father's death in 1971. In either case, both interviewees and Saintilus describe transit across the border as greatly impeded, controlled exclusively by the Haitian and Dominican militaries who operated a clandestine trade irrespective of the official policies of either state.

liberalizations imposed by the US and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (Saintilus 2007; Weisbrot 1997). On Mondays and Fridays, local Haitians began to cross the bridge over the Massacre to Dajabón to buy foodstuffs, and on Saturdays and Tuesdays, local Dominicans started coming to Ouanaminthe to purchase cosmetics, used clothes, electronics and US rice that had flooded the Haitian market.<sup>8</sup> By the 1990s, sources estimate that the average tariff difference between the two countries was 20 percent; however, the practice of taxing imports was likely less systematic than such a statistic suggests.<sup>9</sup> Other forms of cooperation emerged (and continue), based on the widening inequality between the two countries. For example, one peasant leader explained the practice of hiring Dominican combines for the rice harvest, a service paid in produce to the machine's owner.<sup>10</sup>

Ouanaminthe would not be immune, however, to the country's upheavals in the wake of the Lavalas movement that gathered force during the late 1980s and swept its leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, into power in 1990. Among other reforms, Aristide abolished the army, a force that had brutally served the interests of Haiti's "parasitical" albeit fractious political elite (see Dupuy 1988; Trouillot 1990). The move further

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<sup>8</sup> There was no consistent account of what Haitians primarily bought in the DR at the beginning of the border trade. Also, some interviewees described the market between Duvalier's departure and the embargo (1986-1991) as largely contraband, controlled by both militaries. According to Saintilus (2007), the bi-national market days were established in 1988.

<sup>9</sup> The statistic is from Silié, 2002, p. 73. Interviews with Dominican exporters to Haiti suggest that tariffs were relatively arbitrary. The reduction of tariffs on rice imports to Haiti during the post-dictatorship period spurred a vigorous rice trade with the Dominican lower classes. For example, the use of rice transshipped through the border was widespread amongst food vendors in the informal sector around the trade zone in Santiago.

<sup>10</sup> Author interview, November 25, 2006. This veteran farmer and peasant leader explained this form of on-going cross-border cooperation: Haitian farmers contract the Dominican owner of a combine to harvest their rice in the border region. While the combine is cutting the rice, workers put it in sacks at the same time and a portion of the harvest is given to the machine owner as payment. The combine operator looks for ways to cut the rice so that some is left over, a share that is subsequently collected and split between the operator and the Haitian farmer.

isolated Ouanaminthe from the Haitian state and reinforced, for some residents, their relative powerlessness with respect to the Dominican armed forces whose presence was felt strongly at the border. After only eight months, Aristide was ousted by a military coup and the Organization of American States (OAS) called for an embargo in condemnation of the action. Ouanaminthe quickly became the terrestrial port for a significant proportion of oil-based imports from the Dominican Republic, sanctioned by Dominican President José Joaquín Balaguer, the intellectual author of modern Dominican anti-Haitianism (San Miguel 1997) whose hostility towards Aristide was well known.<sup>11</sup> As the gasoline, diesel, and kerosene trade across the Massacre began to supplement more and more of Haiti's basic energy needs, a diverse influx of migrants from all over the country arrived in town to participate, a migration that residents' described as akin to a gold rush. The new migrants included wealthy and well-connected traders as well as the land- and capital-poor. These latter migrants, men and women, lived in temporary shelters along the river and sold gallons and jugs of gasoline that they carried across the river to intermediaries. The wealthy traders coming from the main cities transported the fuel to semi-paralyzed industries and businesses in the country's urban centers. Agricultural plots near the river, occupied by temporary shelters, holding tanks, and tanker trucks, became so steeped in gasoline and waste that farmers thought they would never recover the land.

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<sup>11</sup> The United Nations joined the embargo in 1993. Until that time, while there was a gasoline trade through Dajabón and Ouanaminthe, there were still tankers arriving from non-OAS member states. The UN embargo lasted from June 1993 to October 1994 although it was suspended for two months from August to October 1993. Balaguer, while officially supporting the OAS resolution, also sanctioned the passage of food and gasoline through Dajabón. Once the embargo was tightened, Balaguer's policy remained, albeit unofficially (Sagas 1994). The New York Times, for example, reported that the gasoline trade happened in full view of the Dominican military (see French, *A Dominican's Two Burdens: Haiti and Balaguer*, April 14, 1994).

Residents' relationship to the gasoline trade was ambivalent. Many participated either directly in the trade or in the provision of related services. Several interviewees from the town's elite demonstrated how the trade took over the town by giving the example of school teachers who left their classrooms in the middle of term, borrowed small amounts of money and quickly achieved an economic status previously unimaginable for their social position: for example, by building their own homes and buying motorcycles. In other words, for the town's establishment, the gasoline trade disrupted social hierarchies. As one teacher and member of a prominent Ouanaminthe family explained:

It was a kind of social and economic explosion... The population was not prepared for this development and it had many consequences. From a cultural perspective, there was a loss of culture. We started to have problems of youth delinquency, epidemics, high insecurity, and depravity of our customs.<sup>12</sup>

From the perspective of pre-1991 town residents, the embargo led to a weakening of the town's identity as Ouanaminthe absorbed migrants from all over Haiti, noted as outsiders by, for example, their religious practices and styles of dress.<sup>13</sup>

The trade also fuelled a building boom that threatened landholdings, large and small. Some landholders quickly sold their properties to pre-empt their occupation by

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with school teacher and community leader, June 26, 2007. Ecole Univer, Ouanaminthe.

<sup>13</sup> My purpose is to convey the social divisions, recounted to me in interviews, that hampered efforts to organize community responses to the many challenges that faced the town. Many interviewees expressed the need to find ways to build alliances across these divisions. A local labour rights lawyer and long-time resident explained the problem as follows:

Still now, people say 'those others who come here.' And if there's a problem, they blame the people who have come here. But there are people from Ouanaminthe... [who] are more accepting... There's discrimination. Not just by people from Ouanaminthe [the town] but also from the surrounding districts [*sections communales*] because the person from Dilairé [a nearby village] for example knows that he is from Ouanaminthe. He also has problems with people from Cap-Haïtien or San Michel. To date, there's a problem with integration. Each year, the population grows because people say in Ouanaminthe there is work, in Ouanaminthe there's trade, you can go to the DR, you can do something. Author Interview, June 21, 2007.

landless migrants, while small owners rented pieces of their plots and their yards to new arrivals. With the influx of migrants and capital funnelled into home building, Ouanaminthe saw the rise of numerous *cités*, new neighbourhoods often established through organized land occupations. The town's growth was commonly described to me as 'anarchic,' as unplanned and unorganized, and contrasted with neighbouring Dajabón's relatively more planned and regulated urban order. While officials in Dajabón were able to channel some of the capital generated by the boom into the construction of municipal buildings and a hospital, the instability of the state in Ouanaminthe meant that profit from the new trade was accrued individually and secured largely through the construction of individual housing. In short, pre-1991 residents' narratives conveyed a mix of sentiments: being besieged by outsiders, crime, and contraband, benefiting from new opportunities, and feeling strongly identified with long-time natives, '*moun wanament natif natal*.'<sup>14</sup>

In effect, the embargo set off a series of events that transformed both towns and their relative positions in the evolving and inter-related patterns of accumulation and dispossession of both countries. The embargo's effect on Haiti's productive sectors was devastating, and the subsequent political instability continued to hamper possibilities for (re)construction. After serving as a temporary site for gasoline provisions, Dajabón became a seemingly permanent depot supplying a significant portion of goods produced in the DR, or transhipped through the country, to the north of Haiti. The production and distribution of ice and water is a good example. The embargo precipitated the closure of the regional ice factory in Cap Haitien. Aguas Beler, a small Dajabón-based ice factory,

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<sup>14</sup> i.e., "native born Ouanaminthe people." This phrase was used to describe not just people born in Ouanaminthe, but specifically those who were connected to families from the city pre-1991.

boosted production and diversified. From a daily output of around 80 blocks a day, by 2006, the operation sold hundreds of ice blocks to Haiti on a daily basis, 30,000-35,000 small water bags per week, as well as distributing propane gas, hundreds of tons of rebar a month and other building materials.<sup>15</sup> At the time of my research, the company was the only supplier of ice and purified water to Ouanaminthe: a large operation compared to other local businesses in Dajabón, employing fifty direct workers.<sup>16</sup>

The market between the two towns was transformed in scale and scope, expanding to more consumer as well as non-consumer goods and becoming a main conduit of supply for the northern region of Haiti, an interaction that reflected a new trajectory of unequal inter-dependence (Dilla and de Jesus 2005). The market activity itself was transferred to the Dominican side of the border soon after the embargo began. On Mondays and Fridays each week, an estimated two to three thousand Haitians crossed into Dajabón to sell used clothes, cosmetics, rice, beans, and garlic, largely imported from Miami, and to buy basic foodstuffs (Ibid). The petty trade in used clothes and shoes was mostly between Haitian and Dominican women traders. Dominican agricultural and agro-industrial producers from the Cibao valley, mostly men, sold foodstuffs, a good portion of which could not be sold in the DR due to poor quality, type of good (for example, rice tips), or increasing competition from US imports (Dilla 2004). As Dilla argues, the character of the trade as formal, informal, legal or illegal “dissolved in a series of social practices of survival” for both sides, albeit the burden of need falling heavier upon Haitian traders (Ibid: 34). Several NGOs organized around the myriad of abuses –

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<sup>15</sup> Author interview, Aguas Beler company president, Dajabón, August 8, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> By the summer of 2009, the company president had launched his candidacy for the region’s senate seat affiliated with the ruling PLD.



from physical harassment to arbitrary seizures of goods and taxes – that Haitian and many Dominican traders continued to face at the hands of Dominican officials. In addition to the biweekly market, wholesale commerce in consumer and non-consumer goods such as cement, ice, rebar, and flour took place on a daily basis.

While the fraught integration of the two towns into regional circuits of subsistence and accumulation generated significant, albeit unevenly distributed, infrastructural and service improvements in Dajabón, since the embargo, Ouanaminthe's existing infrastructure largely buckled under the pressures of migration and commercial growth, hampered as well by the repeated collapse of the Haitian state. The two diesel-powered generators that provided limited electricity stopped functioning completely in 1998 and the water service had long been limited to one day a week for a fraction of the population. Despite the infrastructure's collapse, the town's commercial character was unmistakable: a host of money changers were available seven days a week; three banks and five microcredit institutions were concentrated in the town center, all established since the embargo. By the time the Dominican firm Dominican Textile was considering the border between these two towns for a trade zone, Ouanaminthe's urban population had grown approximately five-fold in a decade.<sup>17</sup> Many homes doubled as warehouses or hotels, the town's population increased by thousands on market days, and the daily rumblings of flatbed trucks and transport trailers along the main route to and from Dajabón only ceased when border disputes closed the frontier.

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<sup>17</sup> The *commune* of Ouanaminthe has five rural *sections communales* plus the town. The 1982 census registered 36,495 inhabitants in the commune which would have been largely rural. The next census in 2002 (published in 2005) registered 82,549 inhabitants in the commune, with 43,774 in the town. The numbers here are based on estimates given by various informants, including two who participated in the 2002 census, taking into account the widespread claim that the census was not accurate as well as the perception of a booming town that would lead informants to overestimate the population. The population in neighbouring Dajabón is 16,500.

### *3. Reordering trade zones between the Dominican Republic and Haiti*

In the entryway to the corporate headquarters of Dominican Textile in Santiago, three pairs of individually encased jeans stand as artefacts of the firm's efforts to rework its position in the garment and textile assemblage by incorporating Haitian labour into its operations. The carefully placed display offers the mass produced garment as a unique piece. Its singularity does not rest on the product itself but rather upon the connection between the product and the place it was produced, prominently indicated in the display's text, "First Production, Levi's, Ouanaminthe." The firm's project of a border trade zone was one of the three largest investments in the garment and textile sector in the 2000s, all related to so-called co-production between the DR and Haiti.<sup>18</sup> Hanesbrand (formerly Sara Lee), a US-based manufacturer, and Gildan, a Quebec-based manufacturer, built large knit mills in the DR. HanesBrand shipped some material for garment production to four plants near Santo Domingo and one in Santiago, and sent the rest to the Haiti for assembly. Gildan appeared to have no assembly in the DR, shipping all material spun in their knit mill to wholly or jointly owned facilities in Port-au-Prince.<sup>19</sup> Dominican Textile's two main Dominican competitors, DCD and IA, had both attempted, unsuccessfully, to set up stable subcontracting in Port-au-Prince.

Dominican Textile, on the other hand, undertook an ambitious plan to establish a new frontier for garment assembly at the border. While the company president fervently

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<sup>18</sup> See chapter 2 for a discussion of Haiti's export assembly industry in the 1970s and 1980s. Wage rates for the trade zone sectors in Haiti and the DR were almost the same in the early 1980s, equivalent to 0.55 versus 0.58 US cents per hour respectively (Safa 1995: 12), although the Haitian sector was considered more experienced. The export goods sector – including garment, toys, and baseballs – employed some 60,000 workers in the Haitian capital by the middle of the 1980s and collapsed under the OAS embargo.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with executive director, ADOZONA, Santo Domingo, July 21, 2006.

defended the firm's position as an employer of "untrainable" Dominican workers in Santiago (see Chapter 3), he also affirmed an inevitable shift of assembly work to the country's low-wage neighbour.<sup>20</sup> From the firm's perspective, Ouanaminthe was an adequate "greenfield" site; the town's tumultuous 1990s, its collapsed infrastructure, and vigorous transnational trade were not barriers but opportunities. "We were bringing jobs to a town with 90 percent unemployment," reflected the company President when asked about the many protests that had challenged the project: "I believed we would be greeted with a red carpet." In the early 2000s, as the company attempted to inscribe its vision of a border trade zone onto an oxbow of the Massacre River, local politics related to social transformations in Ouanaminthe and growing opposition to then-President Aristide in Haiti transformed the project into a site of national and international campaigning, causing disparate groups with conflicting interests to organize against this new development. In this section, I tease out some of these politics in an attempt to understand the circumstances that placed the trade zone at the center of both anti-neoliberal mobilizations and right-wing opposition to the Aristide government. While the politics of Aristide's overthrow in 2004 have been discussed in great detail by other scholars,<sup>21</sup> I consider the local context and position of Ouanaminthe as one site through which these fraught politics played out.

Although generally associated with the poor *cités* of Port-au-Prince, the Lavalas movement found considerable support in Ouanaminthe in 1986 when it first emerged as a

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<sup>20</sup> Author interview, Santiago, November 8, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> For an account that spares neither criticism of Aristide nor ire for US and European imperialism, see Dupuy (2007). For an incredibly detailed and documented account sympathetic to Aristide and deeply critical of left intellectual criticism of his second mandate, see Hallward (2007). For a more general journalistic overview, with particular attention to the role of US intervention, see Chomsky, Farmer and Goodman (2004).

popular, liberation theology-inspired movement for radical social change. In the volatile political opening following the flight of Jean-Claude Duvalier, a youth movement in the town formed to support Lavalas' broadly anti-imperialist and anti-neoliberal stance,<sup>22</sup> the leaders of which remained active in town politics over the next two decades. One youth leader and member of an established Ouanaminthe family, Gaston Etienne, was among the many leftist, anti-imperialist students who risked their lives to support Aristide during the period. Gaston explained that he had gone to Santiago to study agronomy because positions at universities under Duvalier were only accessible through clientelist connections which he lacked. At the height of his activism, he would travel from Santiago and cross the border at night to paste pro-Aristide posters around town in Ouanaminthe, most intrepidly postering the military's headquarters, a bastion of Duvalierism. As the political situation deteriorated following the military coup in 1991, Gaston remained in exile in the DR for several years, fearing for his life if he returned to Haiti.

Gaston returned to Ouanaminthe with the lifting of the embargo and the return of President Aristide to the country, a move supported by several thousand marines and US President Bill Clinton, to finish the fifth year of his interrupted term. Some observers on the left in Haiti and in the Haitian diaspora argued that Aristide's rhetoric no longer matched his actions (see footnote 21); for example, Aristide agreed to structural adjustment terms, including the privatization of state enterprises, as a condition of his return. In Ouanaminthe, Aristide's newly formed Famni Lavalas (FL) party continued to win local elections. Middle class and elite interests began to align to oppose Aristide

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<sup>22</sup> The movement was called *Mouvement des Jeunes Patriotes de Ouanaminthe* and was affiliated to the national federation of popular organizations.

during the second half of the 1990s, forming the Democratic Convergence (CD), a coalition that spearheaded allegations of election fraud in 2000. The allegations constituted the pretext for a crippling three-year suspension of international aid to Haiti, led by an emboldened neoconservative administration in the United States and supported by the European Union and the IFIs.<sup>23</sup>

Cut off from aid, facing pressures to create jobs, and perhaps wanting to demonstrate a willingness to support foreign investment, Aristide found an unlikely ally in the maverick Dominican investor from Dominican Textile and his loyal backer, the powerful brand Levi's. In 2001, the Haitian government agreed to expropriate 500,000 square metres of land in the fertile Maribahoux plain bordering the rapidly growing northern edge of Ouanaminthe for the construction of the company's trade zone. Shortly thereafter, the government passed a trade zone promotion law to accommodate the new investment.<sup>24</sup> A local representative of the FL, and the Dominican consul in Dajabón at the time, explained the party's motivation for the project as follows:

All Third World countries have passed through the stage of the trade zone. Like those countries, it is a means to generate employment... People thought that 20,000 workers would give political support to Aristide so the movement against the zone was started by his opponents, led by Guy Philippe.<sup>25</sup> This mixed with popular movements who started to do paid work [*tarea pagada*]... But those from the popular movements [i.e., Lavalas' base] understand that it is a necessary evil [*mal necesario*].<sup>26</sup>

The representative's narrative of the trade zone forming part of an inevitable process of development reflects what anti-neoliberal critics of Aristide argue was the

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<sup>23</sup> For more on the aid suspension and the US-led efforts to topple the Aristide's second government, see Farmer (2004), pp. 17-20.

<sup>24</sup> The new Law on Trade Zones was passed at the end of July, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Philippe was a former police chief and military officer from Cap-Haïtien who was one of the leaders of the coup against Aristide in 2004 which he organized from exile in the Dominican Republic (Dupuy 2007: 152).

<sup>26</sup> Author interview, Ouanaminthe, July 2, 2007.

latter's increasingly conciliatory stance towards local and transnational capital. While the project mobilized those ideologically opposed to a trade zone model of development, some actors in the movement against the zone were more concerned that the zone would strengthen Aristide's base in the northeast, as the representative suggests.

Former Aristide supporter Gaston Etienne, together with affected landowners, tenants and other members of established Ouanaminthe families, formed the *Komitè Defans Pitobè*, or the Pitobert defence committee, named after the agricultural area of the Maribahoux plane that was expropriated for the zone's construction.<sup>27</sup> The plain was one of the few fertile areas of agricultural land in the mostly semi-arid Northeast province.<sup>28</sup> Haitian agricultural production is almost entirely rain-fed, meaning that the river and its flood plain concentrated the most viable areas of food production for local subsistence and commercial trade in the region. Many of the families who worked the farms around Ouanaminthe were tenants while the landowners ran businesses in town or in other cities. In Ouanaminthe and in Port-au-Prince, the Pitobert group displayed the agricultural products of the region to counter claims by the zone's supporters that the area was neither fertile nor under production. The committee also criticized the proposal on nationalist grounds, citing a constitutional restriction on foreign ownership of land along the border.

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<sup>27</sup> The number of farmers affected was a matter of great dispute. The company initially claimed that fifty-five farmers were affected and offered compensation to the landowners only (number unknown). This total was subsequently challenged. The committee argued that not only were more landowners dispossessed but that dozens of tenants lost their livelihoods. The IFC (see below) reviewed the compensation plan once it became involved in the project in 2003 and found that ninety-five farmers were affected and merited compensation. The representative from the Haitian agricultural ministry in charge of finding alternative land for owners and tenants dispossessed by the FTZ said the government's plan was assisting 172 affected families, 100 tenants and 72 owners. Author interview with Director, Technical Secretariat, National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INARA), Ouanaminthe, June 20, 2007. For the IFC assessment, see Report to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Investment in Dominican Textile, Project No. 20744, September 26, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> The rest of the region is similar to its Dominican homologue, the dry *línea noroeste*.

For the Pitobert committee, as well as the local Catholic Church that joined the opposition to the zone, the appropriation of land was another fissure – real and symbolic - - in the town’s already precarious system of food provisioning.<sup>29</sup> More and more of Ouanaminthe’s food was being supplied through the Dajabón market, a supply that could easily be cut off, and often was, due to disputes between trading interests on either side. Rather than a trade zone, the committee called for the fulfillment of the long-held promise of irrigation and infrastructure to support agricultural production.

Organizers of the Pitobert committee felt that the symbolic and material importance of the Maribahoux did not resonate with the thousands of new immigrants to Ouanaminthe. As Gaston Etienne explained:

The majority of people who come from outside of Ouanaminthe, if you go out and try to get their support against corruption, for example, you won’t get their support even with a good campaign... they’ll say ‘it’s just the Ouanaminthe group that’s doing this’... This majority was... in favour [of the trade zone], the people from outside. Because, for me, that area [Maribahoux] has a tradition, a history. I knew when there was a rice harvest, or cane and we used to eat the crops. This was the granary for the town. For those people [from outside], this doesn’t matter. They don’t know the tradition.

The claims to Maribahoux were made on the basis of the symbolic value of the town’s agricultural periphery, a value that separated those ‘*moun Wanament*’ from the landless migrants who lived in the growing *cités*.

A separate small group of prominent local intellectuals – teachers, lawyers and a school principal -- distanced themselves from the more activist committee, claiming no

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<sup>29</sup> Indeed Father Regino Martinez, the Jesuit leader of a large human rights NGO in Dajabón, and leading figure in social movement politics on the border, initially supported the project on the condition that it did not expropriate fertile land. Although receiving assurances to the contrary, Father Regino publicly withdrew his support when the trade zone’s location was finally clarified. (Author Interview, November 6, 2006.)

qualms with a trade zone. The group believed that jobs were desperately needed in the area but rejected the proposed location of the zone in fertile agricultural land. This group attempted to build support for the zone's relocation to Morne Casse, on the abandoned site of the old sisal plantation, approximately 15 km west of the border towards Fort Liberté. This tract would later be the site proposed by the Haitian government as compensation to the landowners and tenants displaced by the trade zone.<sup>30</sup>

Local opposition to the zone was bolstered by anti-Aristide forces that had united under the banner of the CD. Two anti-neoliberal NGOs, one organized by a well-known economist who famously broke with Aristide in 1995, supplied information, raised awareness about the border struggle in Port-au-Prince, and sponsored a conference attended by one hundred and fifty Caribbean activists in Ouanaminthe to support the movement against the zone.<sup>31</sup> Another key supporter was the staunch anti-Aristide journalist, politician, and owner of one of the largest radio stations in the northeast, Jean-Robert Lalanne. Lalanne gave the struggle ample air time and later played a pivotal role in supporting strikes in Gonaïves and Cap Haïtien in late 2003 that further destabilized the Aristide government. Recalling Lalanne, a former Pitobert committee activist argued that the struggle was used strategically to build the opposition to Aristide, not to support local demands. Finally, the movement was bolstered by an independent labour union called Batay Ouvriye (BO), translated as Workers' Struggle. Two organizers moved to

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with INARA, Ouanaminthe, June 20, 2007.

<sup>31</sup> These groups, PABDA and GARR, argued that the zone was to be the cornerstone of a broader integration plan to establish a series of trade zones along the border. Indeed the two countries signed an agreement with the US at the Summit of the Americas in Miami in 2001 to convert bilateral debt into a fund for island integration including the construction of border trade zones. There has been no follow up on the plan as far as I am aware. The conference was a regional assembly of the Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas (COMPA), titled "Building Alternatives in the face of Neoliberalism" and met in Ouanaminthe, October 14-16, 2002.



Ouanaminthe, one from Cap-Haïtien and one from Port-au-Prince, to support the campaign against expropriation and to build a base for eventual trade union organizing inside the trade zone. One of the organizers, Yannick Etienne,<sup>32</sup> was from an old Ouanaminthe family, exiled under the first Duvalier regime. Yannick and other Batay militants had spearheaded organizing campaigns in the trade zones in Port-au-Prince in the 1980s. Initially supportive of the Lavalas' movement, BO became one of the most outspoken left critics of the Aristide administration. In sum, the trade zone project became a sort of touchstone for a multitude of grievances that united groups of disparate political orientations – anti-Aristide, anti-neoliberal, nationalist and localist -- in their opposition to the project.

Dominican Textile was able to break ground in March of 2003, but the project had helped to galvanize opposition to the government that had paved the company's way in Haiti. While the movement against the zone failed to stop its construction, the political upheavals in Ouanaminthe and Haiti in 2004 would impede the project's operations. Two important consequences of these early mobilizations against the zone affected its subsequent operations: first, several of the students who had organized with the Pitobert committee were among the first hired at the trade zone when it began operations at the end of 2003. Batay Ouvriye began to work with this group, informally referred to as the zone's "first class," to form a union committee. Second, the company alienated many notables in town as well as the Catholic Church, both in Dajabón and Ouanaminthe. For

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<sup>32</sup> BO is a Haitian labour movement started in Port-au-Prince. Several of the lead organizers, including Yannick Etienne, are return migrants. Etienne spent twenty-five years in New York City during which time she attended CUNY and participated in anti-war and anti-imperialist movements of the 1960s. She returned to Haiti in the final years of Jean-Claude Duvalier's government to organize against the dictatorship. [Author's notes, July 2007.]

political support to resolve the many conflicts that lay ahead, the company would have to turn to distant allies in Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo.

#### *4. CODEVI: state collapse and unionization*

By the end of 2003, the basic infrastructure for the new trade zone, named the Industrial Development Company (CODEVI) was in place. The bi-national zone gave expression to a strict territorial division of labour. In addition to the land of the river's oxbow on the Haitian side of the border, where factories were to be located, the company acquired an adjacent 150,000 square metres on the Dominican side, thereby both guaranteeing bi-national access to the zone and privatizing a small section of the political boundary (see Figure 1).<sup>33</sup> Haitian workers and a handful of lower level managers entered and exited from Haitian territory, crossing a bridge over the river and passing through a small enclosed area within the zone that housed the training center, a clinic and a corporate office (and later, the radio and TV station). Dominican supervisors and managers, and two higher level Haitian managers, entered and exited from the Dominican side. Haitian and Dominican customs houses faced each other near the Dominican entrance, signalling the territorial boundary between the two nation-states. The first two factories, and the only two at the time of writing, were installed by the end of the year.

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<sup>33</sup> Land adjacent to the trade zone site on the Dominican side of the border was owned by the only other significant investor in the area who operated a large distribution company. At the time, the investor's operation transported large quantities of goods into Ouanaminthe, where they were warehoused and distributed. He had acquired a 500,000 m<sup>2</sup> piece of land on the north side of Dajabón, near the border, with plans to develop an import/export depot: goods could be imported and warehoused in a duty-free depot and then re-exported to the DR, Haiti, as well as other countries in the circum-Caribbean. Dominican Textile successfully lobbied the Dominican government to expropriate the 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> piece of the land, giving the trade zone direct access to the DR and a place to house Dominican personnel within Dominican territory. Interview, Santo Domingo, March 27, 2007.

One plant had an exclusive contract with Levi's and produced 505 and 501 jeans, splitting operations on the jeans with Dominican Textile's assembly plants in Santiago.

The other was established jointly with Hanes to produce t-shirts.

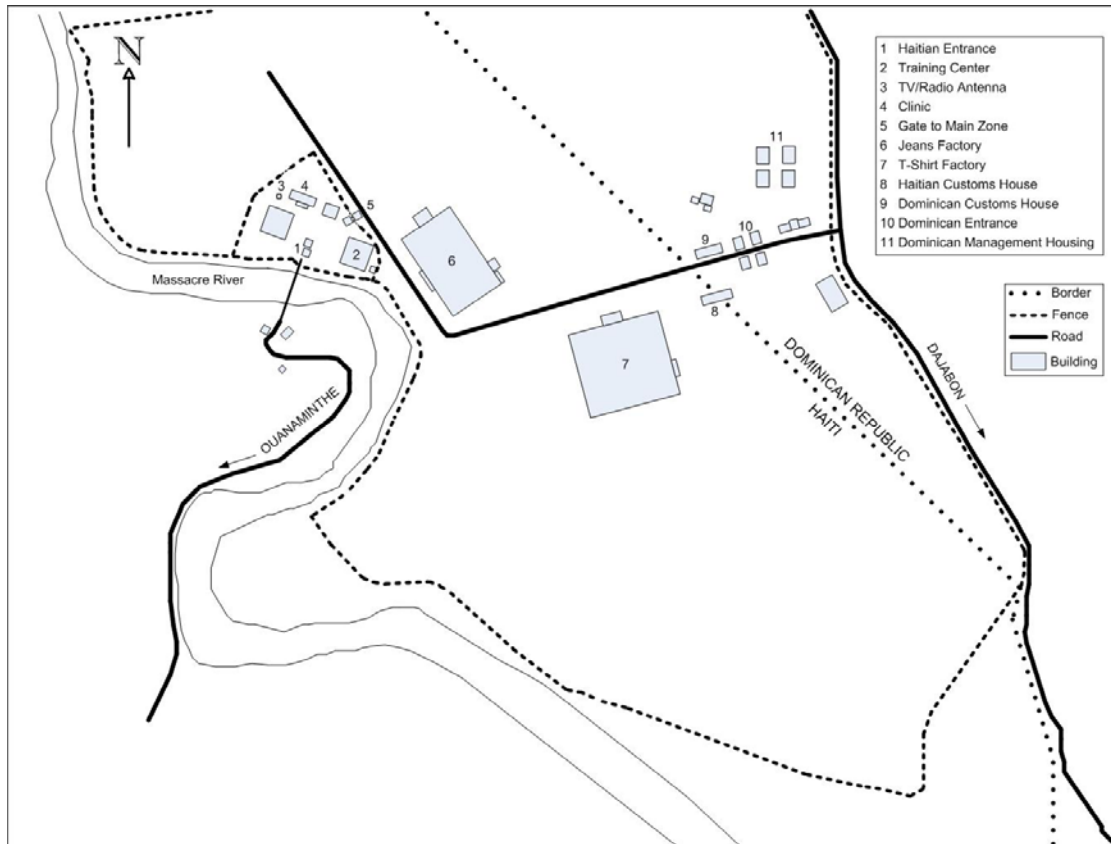


Figure 5.1: Border Trade Zone, Haiti and the Dominican Republic (Total area: 550,000 m<sup>2</sup>)

By this time, Dominican Textile was close to exhausting its capital resources, a result of its investment in the trade zone project as well as the installation of more capital-intensive processes in Santiago, including a cutting room (moved from Miami), a small knit mill (moved from Alabama), and a product development department (see Chapter 3).

The company was having difficulty servicing its debt and turned to the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) for a loan. The IFC underwrote a \$41.4 million financing package, including a \$20 million low-interest loan, to continue upgrading the company's facilities in the Dominican Republic, refinance its debt, and to continue construction of CODEVI. In addition to the IFC loan, the bulk of the other monies were to be generated during the first two years of the zone's operation.<sup>34</sup> The loan projected the creation of 1500 jobs in the initial phase of the trade zone and the possibility of catalyzing investment to generate 20,000 direct jobs once the entire site was developed.<sup>35</sup> In IFC project documents, border zones were suggested as possible palliatives for the migration of Haitian workers to the DR. The IFC also claimed that its involvement could help to manage social and environmental risks arguing that its "extensive environmental and social due diligence and sustainability undertakings provide comfort to Dominican Textile's key customers helping confirm [the company's] adherence to best industry practice."<sup>36</sup> The IFC justified the loan as a contribution to the stability of the Dominican garment export sector by "securing the long term growth" of its largest firm in the face of shifts in the industry.<sup>37</sup> The project's authors wrote that "[b]y providing long term

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<sup>34</sup> The remainder of the money was loaned by a financial institution called DEG of Germany. Report to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Investment in Dominican Textile, Project no. 20744. September 26, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Report to the Board of Directors, September, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Proposed Investment in Dominican Textile, Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti, September 23, 2003. Because the IFC lends to private capital and not governments, the institution benefits from the kind of flexibility that created the possibility to finance the border trade zone while the donor community withheld aid dollars from the Aristide government. As the loan officer for the project explained, "We're not a donor. Actually we get to have our cake and eat it too" (In-person interview, June 11, 2007). The low-interest loan was, I would suggest, a determining factor in the viability of the company, allowing it to weather a credit crisis that consumed several of its competitors. Project documents state an interest rate of 3.5% per annum, relative to a commercial lending rate of between 14-18%. By 2007, Dominican Textile would emerge as the most important firm in the sector, claiming to concentrate 20% of what was left of the DR's garment exports (Listin Diario, June 5, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> IFC Summary of Project Information, project number 20744. Downloaded October 17, 2005.

corporate funding IFC will bolster the financial sustainability of Dominican Textile, the largest employer in the Dominican Republic.”<sup>38</sup>

The irony of a loan to a firm to build production capacity in Haiti justified by the importance of the firm as the DR’s largest employer was not lost on Dominican unionists who had undertaken several failed attempts to organize in Dominican Textile’s fourteen plants in and around Santiago. Following the signing of the loan agreement, the Dominican union federation, FEDOTRAZONAS, which had spearheaded organizing efforts in Dominican Textile’s Dominican plants (and was partly funded by the US-based AFL-CIO Solidarity Centers), began to criticize the loan agreement, arguing that the company did not respect freedom of association. The union federation and its international allies, including the AFL-CIO and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), pressured the head of the IFC to respond to the Dominican union’s allegations.<sup>39</sup> The campaign resulted in an independent investigation of the allegations and, once verified, a public statement from IFC that the loan would subsequently be conditioned on respect for core labour standards by the beginning of 2004.<sup>40</sup> In this revised loan agreement, Dominican Textile agreed to remediation, including training for managers and supervisors on labour rights and regular audits.

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<sup>38</sup> Proposed Investment in Dominican Textile, Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti, September 23, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> The ICFTU (renamed ITUC in 2007) raised the project in a meeting between ‘civil society’ and the World Bank during the latter’s annual meetings in Dubai in 2003 and received a rapid response after several failed attempts to engage the project officer in Washington, DC. Interview with Peter Bakfis, ICFTU, February 23, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> The IFC’s previous position is expressed in the full project report written to the World Bank’s Board of Directors for the purposes of loan approval. The authors give their preliminary assessment that these claims are baseless but concede to recommending an independent investigation. “We will only commit the proposed investment if this investigation confirms our provisional assessment and the allegations are shown to be unfounded” (Report to the Board, iv.)

By the end of 2003, Haitian workers, supported by Batay Ouvriye, formed a committee and began to agitate around basic labour demands: wages and hours, sexual discrimination and harassment, and the treatment of primarily Dominican supervisors towards the all Haitian workforce. The workers' committee also objected to the presence of the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs in an office inside the trade zone, demanding a formal territorial separation between the state and the company.<sup>41</sup> While frequent tensions between Haitian workers and Dominican supervisors galvanized the organizing effort, as did the support from community leaders who had opposed the zone, in the early formation of the union, the campaign was couched largely in terms of labour-management conflict and basic labour rights. The union gained support quickly and submitted its paperwork for recognition as the Union of CODEVI Workers, Ouanaminthe (SOKOWA) to the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs at the beginning of February 2004.

The possibility of resolution through the workings of the civil state dissipated with the Haitian state's collapse, however. Confrontations between pro- and anti-Aristide forces escalated throughout the country in early 2004. In Ouanaminthe, these confrontations materialized in violent attacks against opponents of the zone by pro-Aristide forces, including the burning of Gaston's pharmacy (and all the papers related to the Pitobert committee) on February 4<sup>th</sup>. One week later, a rebel militia entered Ouanaminthe, led by Guy Philippe and other former members of the military. They were joined by several prominent members of the town and at least one well-known activist from the Pitobert committee. The rebel forces proceeded to CODEVI where they found themselves facing the Dominican military, called in to defend the trade zone. After tense

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<sup>41</sup> Union leaflet, December 4, 2003.

negotiations, the rebels received supplies from the trade zone and retreated.<sup>42</sup> Following this confrontation, the Dominican military began to have an active presence inside the trade zone, technically on Haitian soil, quickly transforming the union campaign into a struggle over national sovereignty. What ensued in this climate of instability is contested by both sides but the initial effect was the firing of thirty-one union leaders in a militarized and violent conflict.

Pressure from various US-based labour rights groups and unions together with the IFC and Levi's, the continued organizing campaign in Ouanaminthe, and mediation by local leaders led to the eventual reinstatement of the fired workers and the apparent demilitarization of the border zone.<sup>43</sup> The union began to have preliminary meetings with management, the latter acceding to some of the workers' demands.<sup>44</sup> The union claimed that the company still refused to negotiate over their substantive grievances, however, including wages and the incorporation of reinstated workers into the main operations of the plant.<sup>45</sup> A team of three independent monitors – two Dominicans and one Colombian based in Ouanaminthe – maintained a permanent presence in the factory for five weeks, holding weekly conference calls with Levi's, Dominican Textile, the IFC, and US-based labour rights groups. The situation escalated as allegations of violent treatment between Dominican managers and Haitian workers, especially women, circulated in union leaflets,

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<sup>42</sup> Several local organizers said that the militia subsequently participated in violent repression of labour leaders at the zone, and that at least one and possibly more former members of the Pitobert committee participated in attacks on union leaders.

<sup>43</sup> The current head of security of the zone at the time of fieldwork was also active in the Dominican military. Author's conversation with head of security, May 7, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Meeting minutes between SOKOWA and CODEVI, April 27, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> Union leaflet, April 30, 2004. The reinstated workers were apparently being kept in the training center in order to limit their influence on the rest of the workforce.

and the conflict appeared to spread to the second plant producing for Hanes (Union leaflet, June 3, 2004).

In early June, workers staged short work stoppages, alleging the company had refused to address their immediate grievances by cancelling a meeting with the union. The union claimed that the Dominican military forcefully expelled four supporters, all women, who were participating in the job action. In protest, the union called for a strike the following Monday. A temporary solution was mediated by the Haitian consul and workers agreed to return to work. On June 8, Dominican Textile sent out a public letter announcing the closure of the trade zone citing “repeated threats and violent action that threaten employees on the part of a radical activist group called Batay Ouvriye.” The company also publicized the visit of the archbishop of Santo Domingo, who gave the project his blessing in an attempt to minimize the effect of the local Catholic Church’s opposition.<sup>46</sup> Three days later, half of the five hundred workers at the Levi’s plant were fired while Hanes announced it would discontinue orders.

Numerous meetings between different actors ensued in what had become a highly publicized, international conflict. The IFC, while reluctant to cancel the loan, had also publicly conditioned the loan on the respect of freedom of association during the previous campaign started by Dominican unions. By February of the following year, Dominican Textile agreed to reinstate 150 of the workers fired the previous June, and began the process of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement with the union, signed in December of 2005. The three-year agreement guaranteed a base wage of 900g

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<sup>46</sup> “Cardenal visita zona franca Juana Mendez (sic),” *Hoy*, June 8, 2004. 12B.



(US\$23.68 per week)<sup>47</sup> and annual increases that would offset inflation, in addition to union recognition, a labour-management conflict resolution committee, and protections against sexual harassment.<sup>48</sup> It was the only collective agreement among Dominican Textile's fourteen factories operating at the time (all in the DR with the exception of the two in the CODEVI zone).

### *5. Disposability at the border: Managing the trade zone<sup>49</sup>*

In late 2006, after several months of negotiation with Dominican Textile, I was permitted limited access to the border trade zone. My conversations were confined to Spanish speakers because of my language ability and my presence was greeted with considerable suspicion, the latter stemming from the highly publicized international labour rights campaign two years prior. Production in the trade zone followed similar outsourcing patterns that had characterized the industry since the beginning of the export apparel boom in the 1980s with the exception that knit fabric was now partly being milled in the Dominican Republic. In the t-shirt factory, knit material arrived from a Hanesbrand mill in the US (via the Dominican Republic) and from the Dominican town of Bonao where the US manufacturer had established a 400-person facility as part of its “co-production” strategy with Haiti. Receivers weighed the material and logged the shipment into the North Carolina-based company's tracking system, triggering a ten-day “put through” clock at the end of which some 35,000 dozen t-shirts were transported by

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<sup>47</sup> Exchange 2006: 38g for 1 USD. Average wages for Dominican Textile's Dominican employees in Santiago were approximately 1500 pesos/week, or about USD\$53.57 depending on production.

<sup>48</sup> Convention Collective de Travail, Decembre 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Individual's names in this section are pseudonyms.

truck to the largest port in the Dominican Republic and shipped to the US market. The factory was not yet at full capacity and dozens of sewing machines from Hanesbrand, marked with shipping labels from a previous journey from Texas to San Pedro, Mexico, stood crated in one corner awaiting the expansion of production. The gendered, national and racialized division of labour that pervaded the logic of the zone operated as a micropolitics at the level of the factory floor. Dominicans, mostly men except for a handful of women in quality control, worked as supervisors, auditors, dispatchers and in maintenance and inventory. All the operators were Haitian. Eighty percent of the operators making t-shirts were women while men made up forty percent of the operators producing jeans. I was told that the difference in the sex/gender ratio between the two factories had to do with the quality of material – knit material for t-shirts is lighter than the woven material of jeans. This logic (which operated in the Dominican Republic as well, see chapter 3) normalized a gendered gap in wages: operators in the t-shirt factory on average earned about thirty percent less than their counterparts in jeans, where, in addition to higher piece rates, there were more specialized, relatively better paid operations.

One expression of the micropolitics that underpinned the hierarchical divisions of labor of the zone was that related to drinking water. Each of the areas on the factory floor where Dominicans worked had bottled water stations, sometimes covered by a cardboard box or a cloth. One of my guides, an assistant in human resources, offered me an unsolicited explanation: while there was nothing wrong with the water consumed by Haitian workers through a ground filtration system, Haitian water could harm Dominicans who were accustomed to “their” water. The efforts to hide the water stations

suggested otherwise, and several weeks after my visit, a significant conflict arose when Haitian workers blockaded the Aguas Beler water delivery truck from Dajabón following several days where the water system in the Levi's factory had been inoperable.

Perhaps it was conflicts like those over water, conflicts that were inseparable from the national difference between management, on the one hand, and the workforce, on the other, that prompted Dominican employees in the zone to emphasize the temporary nature of their work there. Most Dominican employees made a point of explaining to me that the goal of Dominican Textile was to make the plants Haitian-run as soon as possible. No managers expressed any reservations about this projected change, one that would, given the company's trend towards shutting down factories in the Dominican Republic, likely leave them without jobs in the sector. I soon realized that very few members of management and supervision had been working for more than a year in the trade zone; the general managers of the Levi's and Hanes factories had been replaced two and three times (respectively) and I met no Dominican supervisors who had been at the zone more than eighteen months. The high management turnover suggested that work in the border trade zone was either not highly desired by the company's Santiago-based employees or that one strategy to deal with conflicts was to replace managers and supervisors, or a combination of both.

One exception to the revolving door of management was Sergio, the company's head of human resources for the zone. Sergio was the first Dominican Textile employee to arrive in Ouanaminthe before construction was completed; he was charged with hiring and training Haitian workers for garment assembly. Sergio had set up four training centres in Santiago in the previous decade during the company's expansion there. Like

many of his male counterparts whom I met in the company, he had started as an operator in his late teens and worked his way up the highly gendered ladder of management.

Sergio was the only Dominican manager who had spent time in Ouanaminthe (mostly during the initial phase of the project when he set up a provisional training centre at one of the town's two night clubs) and who still visited on occasion. His views of the project and the town echoed those the company president had expressed to me in Santiago: "Go to Ouanaminthe on any day of the week," he told me, "and it looks like a Sunday afternoon. Everyone is just hanging around, not doing anything." Sergio thus saw himself as contributing to much needed development of the town and its inhabitants by providing training and jobs to an otherwise "unoccupied" workforce. Escorting me between the Levi's and Hanes plants one day, Sergio was handed a request for a new operator from a Haitian supervisor that he had trained as an operator three years earlier. "Look," he showed me the form, "now [the supervisor] has good judgment [*tiene criterio*]. He wants someone who is punctual." This comment and others reflected Sergio's belief that he was fomenting a natural maturation of the workforce from a state of indiscipline and non-productivity to one of responsibility and efficiency. He expressed deep satisfaction in how the plants were coming up to speed and how workers who once "couldn't comprehend producing hundreds of pieces in a day" were producing just as well as their Santiago counterparts.

Standing on the bridge that crossed the Massacre River at the Haitian exit of the zone just before the end of the shift one day, Sergio pointed to the women, dressed from the waist down, who were washing clothes in the river below. "When I first arrived, there were many more [washer women]," he told me. "I talked to all the different

[church] denominations [in Ouanaminthe] and asked them to create awareness with the people so that they wouldn't wash clothes like that near the zone. It creates a bad image." He continued, "How can we be sewing fashionable clothes here next to so many naked (sic) people?... For foreigners and Dominicans, it's very shocking." Sergio seemed to see no contradictions between what he perceived as "idle" labour in Ouanaminthe and his own efforts to influence where and how women forged their livelihoods through daily, often paid, tasks of social reproduction. Work in Ouanaminthe, revolving around these activities and the multiple forms of livelihood that ebbed and flowed with exchange rates, prices and politics of the binational market, was conveniently reduced to a latent source of labour power in management's view of the town.

Like Sergio, Martin, one of two Haitian human resource managers, seemed to perceive his role as facilitating worker development, but expressed reservations about its prospects. Martin was originally from Port-au-Prince and lived in Santiago where he had gone to university. He had been working at the trade zone for one year. Martin lamented the low level of education of the zone's current employees who mostly came from rural areas. One of his hopes was for a second shift to be established in the zone because, as he expressed to me, "nobody in Ouanaminthe was going to sacrifice their schooling to work in the trade zone." Martin expressed his own desires to continue his studies, hampered by the demands of his current job. His perception that the trade zone offered

limited opportunities for the upward mobility of Haitians was echoed to me in my interviews in town.<sup>50</sup>

Martin's office received a steady stream of workers, mostly accompanied by supervisors, asking for permission for special leaves or severance pay due to illnesses or injuries. The tension between extracting surplus value from labour and the need for workers to be socially reproduced as able bodies played out repeatedly in these interactions. One morning while I was in his office, a woman came to see Martin without her supervisor and showed him her swollen foot. She asked for permission to come to work a half hour late each day in order to seek treatment until the foot healed. Martin agreed. A few minutes later the injured workers' Dominican supervisor came into the office and demanded that Martin reverse his decision: "Who knows when [the foot] will heal?" he complained. Martin replied curtly that the worker would produce better with a healthy foot and the supervisor retreated to find a more senior manager to override Martin's decision.

Representatives from Santiago arrived at the trade zone weekly to solve problems and deal with continued conflicts between workers and management. The delegation of Santiago managers that I accompanied on one of their weekly trips to the zone was led by the company's division head, José Antonio. When he arrived in his white SUV at the factory, José Antonio was greeted as "el ministro" by zone managers and union leaders. He laughed at the designation which signified the importance of his role as an arbitrator and decision-maker. He immediately faced an all male delegation from the union

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<sup>50</sup> The principal of the main high school, for example, explained that fewer of his students were seeking work in the trade zone. Seeing themselves as future professionals, they felt the zone would not offer the opportunity to work and study at the same time. (Author interview, July 16, 2007)

demanding an audience with him to discuss recent conflicts. Later on, he shared that the biggest problem the company was dealing with in the zone was frequent work stoppages. “[The workers] stop easily,” he commented, “but we are getting a handle on it.” Details were not made available to me but clearly the practices of negotiated accommodation and training, represented in my interactions with Sergio and Martin, were not the only forms of power exercised to extract surplus value. Several strategies were evident. First, the company had set up a TV and radio station inside the trade zone. The radio station allowed management to control the audio content on the factory floor and, together with the TV station, to extend the company’s influence in the northeast region of Haiti where the project continued to be controversial. Second, the company continued its practice (as in 2004) of mass firings as a strategy to deal with conflict. In a subsequent interview with the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs, I learned that the company had officially reported firing 170 workers in the first four months of 2007, nearly fifteen percent of the workforce. The bulk of these workers were fired for carrying out a work stoppage at the beginning of the year when the company attempted to change how the daily production totals would be tallied. The revolving door of workers was evident in the streets of Ouanaminthe where I visited on several occasions and where I lived the following summer. Grey trade zone t-shirts, given to each worker when they began to work at the zone (and deducted from their salary if they were lost), were worn by what seemed like hundreds of people in town, markers of the pace at which the company fired workers and disgruntled workers sought out livelihoods in commerce and other activities.

## *6. Conclusion: Reworking the geographies of coloniality*

The displacements that underpin the border trade zone reveal how capital accumulation and the coloniality of power combine through the production of place. Historical and contemporary geographies of violence at the border, the force of the embargo, on-going neocolonial interventions in Haiti, and the fractiousness of the Haitian state created the conditions of possibility for a “new” low-wage frontier in Ouanaminthe. These factors are contingently linked to processes to renew accumulation in the Dominican Republic, including strategies that render Dominican garment workers as superfluous to the new “knowledge economy” paradigm advanced by the state and capital (described in chapter 3), and the ambitions of garment industrialists to recuperate profitability within this new paradigm.

In his formulation of the notion of coloniality, Quijano argues that the raced and gendered hierarchies forged through the conquest of the Americas constitute a terrain of articulation, one that adapts historic patterns of exploitation and domination to the necessities and attendant conflicts of contemporary capitalist accumulation (2000). In an earlier article, he elaborates:

The distribution of social identities [through racial categories] would henceforth sustain all social classification of the population in America. With and through it, diverse forms of exploitation, labour control and relations of gender would be articulated in changing forms depending on the necessities of power in each period. (Quijano 1998: 30, my translation)

This abstract terrain of articulation can be understood by examining the shifting geographical unevenness of production: the efforts of capital to arrange places and socially marked bodies into a hierarchical ordering of value, as well as practices of resistance and livelihood that surround these efforts.



Although the coloniality of power shapes the terrain of hierarchical social difference through which new contours of accumulation are forged and places are reproduced, the outcomes of this process are not determined by capital alone. The shifting contours between hyper-exploited wage work and the exclusion of people and places from this relation – contours I have traced between Santiago and Ouanaminthe and in daily operations of the border trade zone – are shaped by social relations, especially forms of class struggle, state violence, and foreign intervention, that result from particular histories and geographies. In the case of the border trade zone, the very conditions of possibility for its establishment – the embargo, the creation of Ouanaminthe as a pole of migration and as a regional market, and the fractious cross-border politics that have accompanied this process – continue to shape, and indeed to limit, the fixing of accumulation to this margin of intense unevenness. These counter-tendencies manifest themselves at the level of organized protests, like those of the garment union, and the everyday practices of managers and workers. The continual replacement of management, the waves of firing of workers, the barriers workers face to reproduce themselves as able, labouring bodies in the context of Ouanaminthe's collapsed infrastructure, and the unmet expectations of Haitians for social mobility through work in the trade zone represent but a few examples of the limitations to the project of accumulation at the border.

Accumulation at the northern border and the expansion of Dominican exports and transnational foreign investment to the region provide one example of how coloniality is reworked spatially through the intensification and fragmentation of sociospatial unevenness. Whether this new pattern of territorial subordination is a stable one cannot be predicted but what is certain is that only a decade before the first crops were uprooted

in Pitobert to build the trade zone, the idea of such an arrangement of labour and capital was unthinkable. Not only was the relatively isolated border town of Ouanaminthe an inadequate source of labour, but Dominican and transnational capital was supported by the Dominican and the US state to exploit Dominican labour in the transnational garment and textile assemblage. Shifting sociospatial relations of inter-dependence between the Dominican Republic and Haiti and each country's relative and distinct positionality with respect to transnational capital and actions of the state will continue to condition the possibility for new spatial strategies of accumulations on the island, shaped by their overdetermined relation with the coloniality of power.

## Chapter 6: The Space-Times of Global Displacements

*Global displacements* began with a simple shift in the inquiry into the transnational organization of commodity production. Rather than asking what happens when a new technical division of labour is introduced into a place that has not previously been a location for this work, the project sought to ask what makes the on-going re-ordering of production assemblages possible. Moving away from the “Third World factory frame” as an object of analysis, I have inquired into its conditions of possibility. These conditions are generally assumed to be reflections of capitalist crisis in the global North, whose effects hasten so-called “offshoring” of production to regions in the global South. I have painted a different picture: that of a continual reworking of uneven geographies and the subjects produced as exploitable in the lower rungs of capitalist accumulation. This reworking takes place through the on-going reproduction of both the coloniality of power – the articulation of historic forms of racialized and gendered labour in renewed hierarchies of labour’s value (for capital) – and its overdetermined relationship with the uneven geographies of capitalism. Shifting the angle of inquiry, the displacements I have studied in the Dominican Republic and the border region with Haiti bring this perspective to bear on industrial restructuring and retrenchment in the waning years of the circum-Caribbean’s garment boom.

In each chapter of the text, the perspective of displacements has guided my reading and interpretation of the narratives and practices that were woven through the restructuring of this sector. My analysis of firm practices and state discourses in chapter 3 demonstrates that the combinations and permutations of absolute and relative surplus

value – of the search for low-wage labour and the reorganization of the labour process to shift the proportion of its component parts – is irreducible to static North-South trajectories of industrialization. Rather, the tensions between the two are played out on factory floors, in sector lobbying efforts, as well as in new discourses of “mind-facturing” as the country’s future, on the one hand, and trade zones as its obsolete past, on the other. The structure of gender – as a binary dualism and as a structuring component of the coloniality of power – animates these contests over how, where and who will accrue profits and receive wages from capitalist production.

My inquiry into displacements in chapter 4 explores geographies of labour and their imbrication with racialized and gendered spaces in the Cibao through the narratives and practices of retrenched garment workers. While the coloniality of power – that is the historic and geographic articulation of raced and gendered labour with forms of labour control – underpins the reworking of capitalist accumulation, geographies of work and livelihood are not solely determined by capital. Although retrenched workers navigate the unstable divide between wage and non-wage labour from social positions and as socially marked bodies not of their choosing, their embodied negotiations nonetheless defy the desires of capital for a pliant labour force that waxes and wanes with business and regulatory cycles. There is much written on the difficulties of capital to institute wage labour in the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> My own study, and the work of others who have traced labour geographies in these spaces, shows that this content to coloniality has had complex geographical effects in the distribution of hyper-exploited wage labour and the gendered and racialized boundaries between wage and nonwage labour. This constitutively

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, Cooper, Holt and Scott (2000), Mintz (1974), and Scott (1985).

modern interplay between capital and a multiplicity of labour forms is fundamental to the making and remaking of uneven geographies of accumulation and disinvestment.

New processes of accumulation, place-making and livelihood practices at the Haitian-Dominican border provide a final example of how displacements shape capitalist production. The intensification of geographical unevenness that I detail in chapter 5 is the result of a radical remaking of place during the post-dictatorship period in Haiti. A destabilized state, combined with the force of an economic embargo, profoundly reshaped the border's most populous town. Where the owner and managers of a major garment contractor based in Santiago, together with a US brand and a US manufacturer, saw a Greenfield site for profit-making, Ouanaminthe landowners and farmers experienced another assault on the integrity of their town, while right-wing militarists and anti-neoliberal activists and intellectuals, from their opposite ideological positions, claimed the proposed trade zone as evidence of a failed project of state reform. Three years after the first jeans and t-shirts for export were produced in Ouanaminthe, the border trade zone continued to face the limits of its own terms, confronting frequent spontaneous and organized work stoppages and the constant turnover of managers and workers. Struggles to expand capitalist production to the border reveal how the coloniality of power – the abstract terrain of social difference materialized in hierarchies of wage and non-wage labour – is worked out through the production of place, creating spaces that are commensurable with reworked labour hierarchies. This process of linking up capitalist production, place and labour hierarchies is a contingent one, however, shaped not only by the desires and necessities of capital but also the practices of daily life, class struggle and the state.

In her oft-cited speculations on value (1988b), Gayatri Spivak writes that although the metaphor of text/textuality/textile has etymological sanction for her textual reading of “value,” the notion of value as that which cooks in a roiling economic boil more closely approaches a deconstructionist reading of “the economy.” Value, the ultimate supplement of political economy, continually defies an ontological position, she continues. Instead, it demands a continued interrogation of how it is fixed in apparent relations of equivalence (the “continuist chain of value”) and how such equivalence is premised on the very unfixity (as more than, escaping, “discontinuist”) of value. Throughout the previous pages, I have attempted to trace the roiling boil of value in global garment production as animated and overdetermined by relations of coloniality. I have considered this heated movement through the notion of displacements: mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that are constituted by the production of uneven geographies and socially marked subjects.

Underwriting *Displacements* is a central tension between deconstructing a way of thinking about value relations in global production (i.e., “accumulation in series” or the continuist chains of global production) and making space for *praxis*, for an approach to transnational production based upon the “structure of the current situation” (see Introduction). I undertook critical ethnographic work towards this end. By tracing displacements in multiple ways – micropractices on shopfloors, development discourses, firm and sector practices, migration decisions and livelihood strategies, and my own mobile positioning – my aim has been to gesture towards a particular space-time of capitalism that is at once distinct from and constitutive of continuist narratives of capitalist development. Displacements, then, signal not only the production of social and

spatial difference that is the condition of possibility for sequentialist production, but, I hope, move towards an understanding of production assemblages as part of a multiplicity of practices and experiences that cannot be thought or imagined through the continuist imaginary of de/industrialization.

By way of conclusion, I offer the reader the following notes and reflections about the space-times of displacements:

June 17, 2006, my last day at the trade zone: I ended up having a long conversation with Rosa [who works with the garment owners] again. Rosa told me she was tired, really *decepcionada* [disillusioned] and frustrated [with sector lobbying efforts]. She could not bear to sit through any more *discurso* [speechifying]. If she could control the message of the sector, she would tell them to just keep their heads down and do what business dictates. She said she was disillusioned with the government too and went on to share a piece of her personal political history for the first time with me. Her family was from a relatively well-to-do town in the central Cibao where she had once been a supporter of the current governing party [what is now the PLD]. She became involved because her older brother was very active in the 1970s. He was arrested several times until her family successfully convinced him to give up his activism, sure that he would join the many victims of Balaguer's regime. She emphasized what a divided society the Dominican Republic was after Trujillo, from his death to the end of the PRD government in 1986.

Rosa remained a supporter of the PLD until Fernandez [the current president] made a deal with the PRSC [Balaguer's party] to come into power. That completely left her disillusioned. Today, she felt that no party represented the people or was thinking about what was best for the country.

I asked why she thought there had been little organized protest around the recent factory closures. The problem is the attitude of the society, she explained: a passiveness, a lack of initiative and a sense of entitlement. For example, with the current wage negotiation – there haven't been any increases in productivity so if you aren't producing more why should you be entitled to earn more? When people see the trade zone representatives on the news, they scoff and say, "oh there goes the trade zone sector, complaining again," assuming that the problem is just their problem. But the *empresarios* [business owners] are going to be the least affected in this whole affair because at the end of the day, they just move their capital somewhere else. She is worried about the society, the 200,000 people in the region whose livelihoods revolve around the trade zone. A job, the sort of stability and social protection that the trade zones provide, is better at the end of the day, even if only slightly better, than being on a tricycle selling oranges in the street.

The government wasn't feeling the pressure from anyone other than the owners at the moment. The thing about an island, she continued, is that small things seem huge or become huge and big things are sometimes ignored. It was only a matter of time, though, that people would start to get desperate because when they get laid off, they're given 20,000 pesos [of severance] which will last them for three months. Come August, she predicted, the situation was going to get critical and there would be more visible social unrest. She worried about the hole that was being left in society by dropping all these people. Because there wasn't a planned transition, this model was being kicked out of place [*she slapped the side of one hand into the other*] and what would come in its place would only be worse for workers.

I was surprised by my reaction to Rosa's complicated narrative. While I did not share her business perspective (e.g., of "entitled" workers), I could not help but sympathize with her claim that any job was better than no job, and recognize myself in her desire for an ordering of workers' experience *in sync* with the movements of capital. Unlike Rosa, perhaps, I desired that such an ordering might lead to a progressive politics demanding viable livelihood alternatives and the redistribution of wealth that these necessitated. The crisis that Rosa predicted – and also perhaps desired – was not entirely dissimilar. *It was only a matter of time* she claimed, that the realities of this *hole*, the emptiness apparently left by the shutting down of the trade zones, would be recognized by society as the crisis event that it was, as something that would threaten the reproduction of social relations and force some kind of response from those who were really going to be affected by the uneven shifts in capital taking place.

Rosa's comments on society's misrecognition of the crisis event as an everyday occurrence echoed strangely with an oft-cited passage in Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988). In her reflections on her native country of Antigua, Kincaid laments the slippage between the event and the everyday in a small place, a narrative that combine sarcasm, irony, frustration, and no small dose of disillusionment. Kincaid writes of



events in a small place where “every event is a domestic event” (52). “[T]he people in a small place cannot see themselves in a larger picture, they cannot see that they might be part of a chain of something, anything,” Kincaid continues. The event appears hurtling towards people in a small place and is experienced initially as an immense burden. “[A]nd they live like that,” she writes, “until eventually they absorb the event and it becomes a part of them, a part of who and what they really are, and they are complete in that way until another event comes along and the process begins again” (53). For Kincaid, it seems that the absorption of burdensome events into everyday identity substitutes for contextualizing experience in a set of larger events – something Kincaid longs for but simultaneously recognizes as nearly impossible. “It would demand the invention of a silence, inside of which these things could be done” (Ibid.).

Just as the event is made ordinary through its incorporation into experience, the everyday is also prone to becoming an event:

[The everyday and the event] go back and forth, exchanging places, and their status from day to day depends on all sorts of internal shadings and internal colourings, and the forces that manipulate these internal shadings and internal colourings are kept deliberately mysterious and unknown. And might not knowing why [Antiguans] are the way they are, why they do the things they do, why they live the way they live and in the place they live, why the things that happened to them happened, lead *these people* to a different relationship with the world, a more demanding relationship, a relationship in which they are not victims all the time of every bad idea that flits across the mind of the world? And might not knowing why they are the way they are and why they do the things they do *put in their proper place everyday and event*, so that exceptional amounts of energy aren't expended on the trivial...? (Ibid., 56-7, emphasis added.)

On the one hand, Kincaid captures a familiar gesture of the colonizer, who dismisses the native's time as a form of disordering, attributing it to a kind of ignorance of their place in the world. If only the everyday and the event were placed properly, she

laments, that is, placed within some sort of abstract global sense of Time, we could say “capital’s time,” then the people of a small place would stop confusing the two and make demands for a different relationship to “the world.” But Kincaid is dismissing neither this disordering of time as mere ignorance nor her native co-nationals as solely victims. Her prose captures the sense that the postcolonial moment is shot through with this particular process of colonization, of an on-going disorientation, even a wilful manipulation of the experience of the everyday and the event. It is precisely through her writing, her text conveying both a passionate commitment to justice and a poetic sense of the limits to politics condensed by years of observation and disappointments in her native land, that Kincaid seeks to unseat this disordering of time that underpins on-going processes of dispossession and exploitation in the postcolonial moment.

The frustrations of Kincaid, a disenchanting ex-patriot, are not alien to Rosa’s, a liberal, middle class Dominican, nor my own, even if the content of our politics is likely to be distinct and our social positions even more varied. I offer the project of displacements and its commitment to the “structure of the current situation” as an attempt to make space for other readings of the everyday event and events that are incorporated into livelihood making in the everyday. If we are to understand the on-going reproduction of uneven geographies of capitalism, my contention is that a framework that unfolds to the rhythms of capitalist crisis centered in the global North will continue to obscure as much as it apparently reveals. The reproduction of coloniality simply cannot be reduced to these sequential, predetermined beats. Rather, it must be continually interrogated as the structure of the current situation, as an on-going, contingent, that is, overdetermined, process of producing spaces and subjectivities. Through such an

interrogation, not as a project so much as a continual practice, forms of *praxis* can be possible, forms that both address the current situation in its particular terms and work towards forging links between other non-homologous, but nevertheless intertwined and connected, current situations.

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## **Appendix I: On Method**

My research drew upon a variety of methods to gather information, develop relationships and gain an understanding of development debates and industrial/export restructuring in the Dominican Republic, and in particular in the Cibao. This appendix focuses on those methods related to interviewing and participant observation (see the Introduction for an addition discussion on the politics of participant observation and mobile research positions). My methods were adapted to the different social locations of those who participated in the project; conversations and interviews successively shaped my questions in response to what I was learning from different interlocutors. I organize the present text around the different social actors with whom I worked: (i) industry managers, owners and engineers, (ii) state and development officials and consultants, (iii) current and former garment workers, and (iv) participants and local leaders in Ouanaminthe. The final subsection (v) addresses choice of residence and transportation and the influence of both on my research.

### i. Garment industry managers, owners and engineers

My principal link to the garment sector was through the Santiago industrial trade zone association. I worked for the first four months from the association's offices located inside the Santiago trade zone. The director sent letters of introduction on my behalf to twenty-six garment firms located in the Santiago zone and four satellite zones in La Esperanza, La Vega, Matanzas, and Gurabo. Because those who participated in the

association were mostly Dominican firms, and I was gaining access through the association (as well as the relative preponderance of Dominican-owned garment firms in the region), the majority of the firms that granted me interviews were of primarily Dominican capital. In eight firms, I undertook multiple interviews with different managers; I also frequently met managers and owners at the association where I engaged them (with varying degrees of success) in more informal conversations. Those managers of the two US transnational firms who participated in my study explained to me that their participation was a favour to the director since access usually had to be granted through their head offices in the US. I did not strongly pursue access through US and Canadian head offices; I was able to have multiple informal conversations with brand representatives and buying agents circulating in Santiago, another benefit of my location at the trade zone association.

Interviews with managers and owners were semi-structured and followed a set of themes that I predetermined and sent to my informants prior to the interview. In addition to basic company information (summarized in Table 1), I asked managers and owners to share their opinions on the competitiveness of the firm and the country in export garment production, changes in the firm's organization, their perceptions of changes in the industry at the global level, government and development programs related to industry promotion (and their firm's involvement, in any), and the future of the sector and their firm. As I pursued more interviews, the questions evolved based on unexpected answers from previous interviews. For example, in my initial interview schedule, I asked informants how they arrived at their present position. While I expected responses to cover career trajectories, managers and owners framed their position in senior

management with respect to regional social networks and their identities as Santiaguero or Cibaeño. In most cases, the question opened up conversations about the firm's trajectory in relation to the region's position within the Dominican nation-state, discussions of regional strengths and weaknesses from elite perspectives, perceptions of labour (rural versus urban, workers from the Cibao versus the east, Haitian labour), and the future of the city and the region. In one instance, the question evoked a decidedly negative response: the owner of a large firm seemed to find the question impertinent, replying curtly that he came from a well-known Santiago family with multiple businesses. He was obviously irritated by my apparent lack of knowledge of the (elite) social milieu. This in itself showed the importance of the question and a particular worldview in this context that assumed elite social structures as something obvious and known, not as the object of study.

Almost all the managers I interviewed were men (with two exceptions) and all the owners were men. Interviews took place in the manager's/owner's office. Three informants said they granted me time because they had daughters "my age" (i.e., apparently young) also pursuing studies at university. In one case, the owner of a large firm included his daughter in the interview and made her the principal link between myself and the firm, stating that she was also working on a thesis and could perhaps learn from me. In most cases, however, following the interview, managers/owners assigned me to an industrial engineer to take me on a tour of the facilities.

Table A.1: Cibao Garment Firms

ID	OWNERSHIP	MANAGMNT	EMPMT <sup>1</sup>	CAPABILITY <sup>2</sup>	MAIN PRODUCT	CAPACITY	Notes	Year
1	Dominican	Dominican	11,000	F (knit), FS, P, C, S, W	bottoms, tops	320,000 + 40% tops		1986
2	Dominican	Dominican	6,000	FS, P, C, S, W	bottoms	600,000 bottoms	Closed 2/2007	1986
3	Dominican	Dominican	5,900	FS, P, C, S, W	bottoms, tops	200,000 + 10% tops		1986
4	Dominican	Dominican	1,400	FS, C, S, W (?)	bottoms	60,000 bottoms	Closed 4/2007	1989
5	Dominican*	Dominican	1,000	FS, P, C, S, W	bottoms	55,000 bottoms		1994
6	Dominican	Dominican	1,600	FS, C, S	underwear	110,000 dz.		1988
7	US/Dominican	Dominican	100	FS, C	bottoms	160,000 bottoms	Closed 2007	1998
8	US	US/Dominican	2,200	C, S	children's wear	300,000 units		1976
9	Dominican	Dominican	500	C, S	bottoms	40,000 bottoms		
10	US	Dominican	1,400	C, S	bras	185,000 units		1985
11	Dominican	Dominican	200	C, S	bathing suits, tops	40,000 units		
12	Dominican*	Dominican	160	C, S	bathing suits	5,000 dz		1979
13	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	20	C, S	bathing suits	15,000 units		1989
14	Dominican*	Dominican	300	S	bottoms, tops	12,000 bottoms		
15	Dominican	Dominican	240	S	bathing suits, tops	23000 units		
16	Dominican*	Dominican	500	C, S	bottoms, tops	120,000 units		

\* Change of ownership in past five years.

<sup>1</sup> Indicates direct employment at time of interview.

<sup>2</sup> F – Fabric production; FS – Fabric Sourcing; P – Product Development; C – Cutting; S – Sewing; W – Washing and Finishing.

I undertook less supervised participant observation through relationships I built with industrial engineers through my participation in night classes in industrial pattern-making in the new textile center adjacent to the association offices. Sixteen industrial engineers from four export firms and a small number of local (domestic) producers, women and men in their mid-20s to early 40s, all from the Cibao, took part in the class

two nights a week for thirteen weeks. The engineers had been trained in time-motion studies and were hoping to gain new skills to participate in the “pre-production” services that a select number of firms had established (see chapter 3). Through relationships with two female engineers, I was able to negotiate access to observe production in two Dominican firms. In both cases, I had already established a relationship with the general manager through a previous interview. Once at the firm, I was assigned to the same engineer who I shadowed during my period of observation. Both engineers were responsible for coordinating assembly with pre-production and dealing directly with counterparts working for US brand marketers or retailers. The relationships with the two engineers and one of their friends who also was in the class were not only key to gaining more access to firms; as I discuss in the introduction, they developed into more complex relationships related to two of these women’s aspirations for emigration, better paid work, and better hours, as well as one of their positions as a devout evangelical Christian who hoped that her kindness to me might inspire me to join her at her church.

With the cooperation of the company president of the largest firm in the region, Dominican Textile, I was able to observe the firms’ extensive operations in the Santiago zone, in their private trade zone on the outskirts of the city, and finally, in the new trade zone in Ouanaminthe. I spent three days in the private zone near Matanzas and eight days in the trade zone in Ouanaminthe (in two trips). In addition, I undertook shorter visits to the firm’s facilities in the main trade zone in Santiago where I was based. Three production managers circulated between these three zones and because I was circulating as well, I had the opportunity not only to conduct interviews with them, but also to engage in multiple conversations during travel between the zones and, in the case of



Ouanaminthe, after work where managers were billeted in Dajabón. These conversations inform my analysis in chapter 5.

## ii. State and development officials and consultants

I conducted eight interviews with actors in this category, seven men and one woman, from somewhat diverse social backgrounds: a cosmopolitan elite development expert, two mid-level government bureaucrats, a member of the Dominican political class trained at Harvard with Michael Porter on competitiveness, an elite female entrepreneur from an established tobacco family in the Cibao (who negotiated the textile clauses for DR-CAFTA), two globe-trotting textile industry consultants (from the US and Spain), and a Dominican “Cold Warrior” with a twenty-year history of economic advising in Central America, in charge of DR-CAFTA related projects in exports. Interviews were semi-structured; while addressing the trajectory and prospects of the garment sector, conversations focused more broadly on accumulation strategies (exports primarily) for the Dominican Republic and the role of the state in supporting them. Three informants facilitated official reports that they had written in whole or in part. I subsequently analyzed a subset of these texts; a fraction of this analysis is included in chapters 3 and chapter 5. I also volunteered with a delegation of industry experts from the US and Spain with a mandate from the government to study the industry crisis and suggest state and private sector solutions. This experience afforded me an additional perspective on production organization in the garment industry.

### iii. Current and former garment workers

I interviewed a total of thirty-eight garment workers following the closure of a single large firm called IA (basic data summarized in Table 2). Thirty-six of the participants were linked directly (as members) or indirectly (as friends of members) to two unions that operated in IA. I conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between forty-five minutes and an hour and a half with all participants. Most interviews were conducted individually in workers' homes and a small number of interviews were conducted in groups of two or three. Group interviews took the form of conversations as participants would comment on one another's answers (see for example, section 5 of chapter 4). I was also well aware that conversations in groups amongst former co-workers were conditioned not only by what people would reveal to a stranger (me), but how they wanted to present themselves to friends and neighbours. For example, in some instances, the setting of an individual interview led to people sharing more personal information – e.g., about tensions in households between partners – that did not emerge in group interviews, because, I assume, people were more cautious about sharing this information with their peers. Reciprocities were an important factor influencing why some workers decided to share their stories with me. Through union leaders, for example, I compensated participants for their time as well as transportation in the six cases where the interview did not take place in their home (total of 200-250 pesos or about six US dollars). The amount of compensation was suggested by the union. I discuss other material reciprocities below but I do not want to suggest that workers' generous participation in this project was reducible to these. Although I can only imagine the

motivation of others, my position as an outsider, as a North American, as a young woman and a student racialized as white most certainly opened some conversations, surely as it foreclosed others.

Interviews covered two principal areas: the workers' current situation and his or her labour history. With respect to the first, I asked about current livelihood strategies, sources of income (including remittances), numbers of dependents (children, obligations to family in the *campo* or elsewhere), the amount of severance pay<sup>169</sup> the worker received and what it was spent on, debt and expenses, and whether and how he or she had been looking for work. In terms of work history, I asked about educational background related to migration (schooling finished back home, training/school in Santiago), and asked workers to share their narratives of their job history. I also asked participants' opinions about their work in the trade zone and the possibilities for work afterwards. This wide range of topics was not covered in all interviews; the content of the interview was shaped by how workers shared their stories with me. My questions evolved iteratively, especially over the course of initial interviews, as I began to understand more of the context in which workers were forging their livelihoods. For example, I was initially interested in international remittances and how they shaped unemployed workers livelihood strategies. While these remained important in some cases, participants discussed complex social connections with their *campos*. This focus led me to pursue regional connections related to livelihood making.

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<sup>169</sup> In lieu of state-administered unemployment benefits, workers in much of Latin America and the Caribbean receive one-time pay outs (i.e., severance pay) from their employers upon being laid off or fired. Severance amounts to one month's pay for every year employed up to a specified cap.

My ability to follow workers' trajectories in the months following IA's closure rested on deeper relationships that I forged with five former garment workers – three women and one couple (man and woman) – who maintained connections to their former co-workers both in Santiago and in their respective *campos*. In Santiago, I made multiple visits in the evenings to two of their homes where workers would often congregate in the weeks following the closure to discuss problems and strategies for livelihood. I traveled with three of these former workers to their *campos* on weekends. In the case of one young woman who had moved back home, I stayed for several days with her in her mother's house. I conducted a small number of interviews with return IA workers in their *campos*. Other relationships of obligation and material reciprocities developed with these former workers who facilitated my ability to follow a relatively large number of individual trajectories. For example, when traveling to *campos*, I contributed to buying basic goods that return migrants would normally bring home (e.g., cooking oil, coffee, and toiletries) and paid for travel. I discuss other reciprocities and these complex interactions in section 6 of Chapter 1.

Table A.2: Former workers interviewed from IA Manufacturing

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>No. of factories*</u>	<u>Total TZ yrs.</u>	<u>Place of birth</u>	<u>Primary Activity**</u>
F	28	2	12	Pimentel, SFM	Domestic worker
F	26	3	8	La Reforma	Return to <i>campo</i> (home-based food prep and selling)
F	46	2	7	Paraiso de Barahona	Food prep for workers at in-home mattress workshop
F	24	5	6	Dajabon	Domestic worker
F	45	1	12	Salcedo	Unpaid domestic work
F	41	6	20	Santiago	Unpaid domestic work
F	23	1	1	Santiago Rodriguez	Unpaid domestic work
F	24	2^	1	Santo Domingo	Export garment (on temp lay off)
F	30	4	10	Lomas Jicames, Nte	Unpaid domestic work
F	33	5	8	Azua	Unpaid domestic work (Remittance-supported household)
F	27	4	6	Almacigos	Unpaid domestic work
F	35	3	18	Clavijo, SR	Unpaid domestic work
F	35	1	4	Bonao	Unpaid domestic work
F	42	2	13	Banica	Unpaid domestic work
F	26	2^	6	Nagua	Export garment
F	35	1	7	Navarrete	Unpaid domestic work (Remittances)
F	25	4^	6	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i> (Unpaid work)
F	23	1	3	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i> (Unpaid work)
F	22	1	3	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i> (Unpaid work)
M	26		10	Puerto Plata	Collective taxi driver
M	26	2	10	La Vega	Export garment
M	36	2	14	Alta Mira	Return to <i>campo</i>
M	38	4	17	Santiago	Working for union federation
M	35	4	7	Santiago	Odd jobs
M	27	3	5	Santiago Rodriguez	Warehousing, hardware company
M	26	2^	6	Marmol	Export garment (on temp lay off)
M	44	8	14	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i> (Lumber trade)
M	28	1	3	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i>
M	21	1	3	Almacigos	Return to <i>campo</i>
M	36	3^	8	Partido	Odd jobs
M	38	1	17	Santiago	Odd jobs (shoe repair)
M	37	6	16	Rio Grande	Return to <i>campo</i> (Motoconcho)
M	25	3^	6	La Reforma	Return to <i>campo</i> (Rice trade)
M	38	1	7	Guaraguao	Return to <i>campo</i> (Rice production)
M	27	1	6	San Pedro Mac.	Money lending
M	45	2	15	Rio Grande	Return to <i>campo</i> (Municipal job)
M	42	1	12	Rio Grande	Return to <i>campo</i> (Odd jobs)
M	22	2	4	Santiago Rodriguez	Odd jobs

Source: Authors notes, February 2007 to July 2007.

\* "Total trade zone yrs." are not always consecutive. In all but two cases, trade zone factories were in the garment sector.

\*\* Primary activity is in Santiago unless otherwise indicated.

^ - Worker worked in another garment factory after IA.

#### iv. Community leaders in Ouanaminthe

I made numerous trips to the border during my dissertation fieldwork. These trips were usually for 3-4 days. In the final phase of my research, I moved to Ouanaminthe for six weeks and worked with a highly qualified and dedicated research assistant, Delien Blaise, who facilitated interviews with various community leaders in town. I conducted interviews in Spanish, French or Haitian Creole; the latter two with Mr. Blaise as an interpreter. I began the border study by gathering documentation on the struggle against the zone – including leaflets, photos, diary entries and reports – from the head nun of the Juanistas, a progressive Catholic order. Other written materials were apparently lost when the pharmacy owned by one of the leaders of the opposition to the zone was burned. Mr. Blaise, together with a local labour activist, Yannick Etienne, helped to identify interviewees: these included teachers, lawyers, a school principal, the mayor, his assistant, NGO workers, and a representative of the government's agrarian commission (responsible for administering the compensation plan to Maribahoux farmers displaced by the trade zone). While my starting point for the interview was the trade zone and the local struggles that had emerged around it, most interviewees encouraged me to understand the conflict in light of the dramatic changes in Ouanaminthe since the fall of the Duvaliers. My questions were reshaped by the relatively consistent reframing of my starting point by community members whom I interviewed. I have attempted to convey how residents described the recent changes in their town, related but not reducible to my starting point of garment production, in chapter 5.

My research in Ouanaminthe was limited by language and by the division between “locals” and “immigrants” that I describe in the chapter. I interviewed a particular class of professionals and local intellectuals. My few attempts to reach out to leaders of new immigrant communities in town failed. In part, this limitation was due to the short time that I lived in town and thus my dependence on Mr. Blaise, who was a member of the established professional class and did not have strong relationships amongst newcomers or their organizations. The importance of Mr. Blaise’s social position in determining informants for my study is evident in the following example: before acceding to an interview, one potential informant who identified strongly as a town native and who did not initially recognize Mr. Blaise first sought to confirm his position in Ouanaminthe by asking where Mr. Blaise was raised and what school he went to before I could proceed with the interview.

#### v. Other notes

The most important choices in research are the most basic: where to live, how to get around, what and where one eats, etc. All of these shaped how people interacted with me in ways that I can imagine but cannot ever know. I reflect on some of these choices below and the knowledge and perceptions that resulted from them, shaping my understanding of Santiago and the Cibao.

*Transportation* – In Santiago, I used the public system of collective cars. These were important sites where I often listened to workers discussing goings on at the trade zone or where drivers shared opinions with me about a wide range of topics. One driver,

for example, told me he had worked for a Korean garment firm in the 1980s; together with a group of Dominican workers, he spent more than a year working for the parent company in Korea. The money he saved during his work abroad allowed him to buy his first vehicle and begin working in the transportation sector. I traveled to and from the border on numerous occasions, almost always by bus, sometimes with key informants. Although the distance between Santiago and Dajabón is only 120 km and roads are in reasonable condition, the return trip could take three hours because of the number of checkpoints (between four and fifteen) where military officials searched for contraband rice and undocumented Haitian migrants. I witnessed several scenes of remarkable resistance to the state's racial profiling that are beyond the scope of the present text but I mention the trip and the militarization of the area (the northwestern Cibao) as an important factor in understanding how distance was relative and experienced differently by those who the state singled out as "illegal" subjects in the region and those with light skin and foreign passports, like me, who circulated relatively effortlessly.

*Residence: Blackouts* – I lived in a middle class neighbourhood close to the center of Santiago with an anthropologist and her family. Informants almost always inquired where I was staying and I am certain that this affected our interactions although I cannot determine exactly how. For certain, my position in *Los Pepines* neighbourhood in a home with a back up electricity system (series batteries called an *inversor*) meant that I was largely shielded from the constant blackouts that especially affected working class and poor neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, blackouts punctuated my research in factories and homes and were a constant source of commentary. For example, the onset of a



blackout consistently solicited a cynical reinterpretation of the ruling party's slogan: "Y dicen que 'es pa'alante que vamos.'" ["And they say 'we're moving ahead.'"]

*Residence: Policing* -- My choice of residence and research method limited the extent to which I was able to engage with questions of criminalization of residents in the neighbourhoods surrounding the trade zone. In 2006, the government initiated a "zero tolerance" policing policy called *Barrio Seguro*. The program had a strong presence in both urban neighbourhoods where I conducted interviews in Santiago. The following section from my notes details a conversation between two former IA workers and myself in the kitchen of one of the workers a month after the factory shut down in a working class neighbourhood near the trade zone. It shows the imbrication between employment status and the social worth of subjects – as upstanding citizens versus criminals – especially, in this case, for men.

*The conversation moved to questions of the neighbourhood and security... Patricia and Rubén both recounted stories of being stopped by police looking for some bribe money. One night, Rubén was coming home from IA and got swept up in a raid on the neighbourhood. He was taken to jail and there was a police lieutenant there who knew him and asked what the hell he was doing there. "I was on my way home from work," he told him, "look, I still have my ID card on." The lieutenant got angry with the arresting officers – "can't you see that he is coming home from work?" He ordered them [the arresting officers] to take him [Rubén] straight home. Another night he was playing tablero (dominoes) with a couple buddies because it was very hot and there was no electricity so they were outside, biding their time for the electricity to come so they could sleep with the fans on. The police came by and put them against the wall. He showed them the [factory ID] card and they let him go but they still wanted to take his friend whom he defended.*