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# THE DEVIL BEHIND THE MIRROR

Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic

STEVEN GREGORY

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# 1

## The Politics of Livelihood

La República Dominicana es un país creado por Dios para el Turismo, me he atrevido a decir algunas veces, estimulado por la belleza de su potencial.

[The Dominican Republic is a country created by God for Tourism, I have dared to say sometimes, excited by the beauty of its potential.]

Don Angel Miolán, director of  
Dominican tourism, 1967–1974

I had been in Boca Chica for two weeks and still had not seen Minaya. I made it a daily practice to walk from one end of the beach to the other to cultivate relationships with people who, like Minaya, made their living selling goods and services to foreign tourists. I would begin at the fortresslike Coral Hamaca Beach Hotel and Casino at the eastern end of town and walk west, pausing along the way to speak with vendors, guides, and touts who worked at the bars and restaurants along the beach. Midway along the trek I would stop at an Italian-owned restaurant to visit my research assistant, Milquella Reyes, who worked there as a waitress. I would then continue to Hostal Zapata, a midsized hotel owned by Gabriel Zapata, a Dominican who had lived in Washington, D.C., for many years. I had stayed at Zapata's hotel often, and, sharing an interest in politics, we had become friends.

Next to Zapata's hotel was the Boca Chica Resort, the second of the town's all-inclusive resort hotels. Rumor had it that the site had once been occupied by the beach house of the mother of Dominican dictator Rafael Leónides Trujillo Molina (1930–1961). West of the Boca Chica Resort was a large parking lot used by Dominicans who visited the beach from the capital and elsewhere. Scattered throughout the lot were food stalls selling fried fish, *yaniqueques* (johnnycakes), and beverages.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the parking lot the beach continued for another two kilometers until it reached the neighboring town of Andrés, signaled by the towering red-and-white-striped smokestack of Ingenio Boca Chica. With few exceptions, the western end of the beach was used by Dominican visitors, especially on weekends and holidays when busloads of people arrived from the capital.

My daily tour of the beach was also an effort to persuade people that I was not a tourist in an economy in which wealth differences between foreigners and most residents were enormous, indisputable, and endlessly reiterated by the symbolic and spatial order of things. To that end, I would often carry a clipboard with me and wear long pants and a dress shirt with two pens prominently displayed in the pocket. It was the only time in my career that I have tried to look like an anthropologist.

I had met Minaya two summers earlier and made it a point at the end of each trip to buy two or three shirts from the huge bundle of garments that he lugged back and forth along the beach in the afternoon heat. We had spoken often about his work and my own, and he had introduced me to many of his coworkers. Like the other vendors, Minaya was a good listener. To sell things to tourists, one had to be alert to subtle inflections in the voice that suggested some direction in their fickle desire to consume or a shift in the precarious balance between interest and irritation.

It was March 2001, and tourism was slow in the wake of the global recession. Many of the vendors, hair braiders, and others who worked the beach had gathered under the palm trees in front of the Boca Chica Resort. Within the walled compound one hundred or so tourists were stretched out on chaise longues. Every so often vendors would approach the low concrete wall, display their wares, and then retreat once more to the shade of the palms.

I found Minaya resting against a palm tree with his cousin, a cigar vendor. Minaya explained to me that he had just returned from San Juan de la Maguana, his birthplace, where he had attended a funeral. His brother-in-law had been electrocuted while trying to jerry-rig an electrical connection to his home from the power line that passed above it—a tragic, yet not uncommon, accident. Since business was slow, Minaya told me, he could leave work early, and he invited me to his home in Andrés for dinner. It was his daughter's fifth birthday, and his wife was making *sancocho*, a hearty soup often served on special occasions.

Minaya slung the motley bundle of garments over his shoulder, and we headed for the narrow alleyway next to the Hotel Don Juan, where the vendors gathered at the end of the day and stored their goods. It



1. Vendors displaying their wares in front of the Boca Chica Resort. The boy holding the sack is collecting bottles for their deposits. Photo by the author.

was also the meeting place of Boca Chica's *Sindicato de Vendedores* (Vendors' Union). Here the vendors gathered daily to discuss their trade, resolve disputes, and organize their activities so as to ensure that on any given day there would not be too many selling the same commodities in the same places. When business was slow, the *síndico* (union president) staggered the work schedules of members to ensure that everyone sold enough to make ends meet.

Vendors lined the shaded alley, some wearing the pale blue smocks issued to those who were licensed by the *Policía Turística*, or *POLITUR*, the specialized tourism police. Two Haitian women sold fried fish and sausages from a rough-hewn wooden stall. Neatly arranged stacks of clothing, cigar boxes, and wood carvings imported from Haiti were set up along the alley's walls. Manolo, the union president, was involved in a heated discussion with a jewelry vendor about the power plant that was being built across the Bay of Andrés by the AES Corporation, a U.S.-based global power company. From the alley we could see the plant's bulbous liquid gas tank and the delicate silhouette of the jetty where tankers would one day dock. The jewelry vendor was arguing that the new power plant would solve the problem of the *apagones* (blackouts) that were a daily occurrence in Boca Chica and across the nation.

"*Ven acá*" (Look here), Manolo snapped, glaring at the man. "The

blackouts are not the result of a lack of power,” he insisted. “That’s a lie. There is plenty of electricity in the country. What is happening is that the power companies, the foreigners, want to make more money. They make the blackouts to force the people to pay more. It’s an abuse.”

“Yesterday,” a cigar vendor chimed in, “they killed two in Capotillo,” referring to two men who had been shot dead by the National Police in a poor barrio of the capital during protests against the blackouts.

In fact, the recently privatized power distribution companies had been shutting down service to neighborhoods in the capital and elsewhere where bill collection rates were low. Intended to discipline a recalcitrant population and the Dominican government into paying newly inflated electric bills, the power outages had incited widespread, unrelenting protests throughout the country.

In Boca Chica the power issue had become a lightning rod for public debate about privatization, economic justice, and the behavior of foreign corporations within the nation. The daily blackouts were often greeted with cries of “*Sé fue la luz!*” (The lights have gone!), a refrain sampled from a popular merengue, and caustic commentaries on the nation’s economy and political leadership. In everyday speech, Dominicans punned the noun *poder* (power) to form such phrases as “*Aquí, no hay poder*” (Here, there is no electricity/political power).

For beyond the inconvenience, the blackouts injected a rhythm of crisis into everyday life, disordering the taken-for-grantedness of neoliberal assertions of economic development and giving rise to a “heretical discourse,” as Bourdieu (1977: 170) put it, of social justice and defiance. Graffiti spray painted onto the wall of the AES Corporation’s office in Boca Chica read, “*El pueblo demanda poder!*” (The people demand power!).

Minaya enjoyed controversy and turned to me. “Tell me, Gregory, they say that we pay more for the lights in this country than they do in New York. Is it true?”

I replied that I didn’t know but that I thought that an average electric bill might be about \$30 a month. There was a pause as we made the calculation.

“Five hundred pesos,” Minaya remarked. “The same, maybe less.”

We left the beach and headed for Calle Duarte to hire *motoconchos* (motorcycle taxis) for the three-kilometer trip to Minaya’s home in Andrés.

Calle Duarte was Boca Chica’s main street and ran parallel to the beach from the western end of town to the Coral Hamaca Beach Hotel and Casino, about two kilometers to the east. Midway along Calle

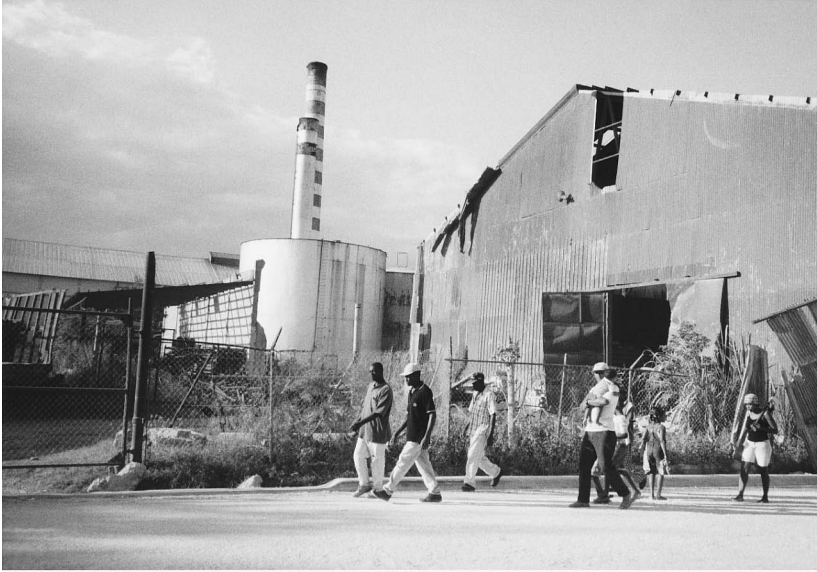
Duarte were the town's Catholic church and plaza. Facing the tree-shaded plaza were the police station and the offices of the *ayuntamiento*, or municipal government. Clustered around the plaza were an assortment of bars, restaurants, money exchanges, gift shops, and other businesses that catered largely to foreign tourists.

Crosscutting Calle Duarte was Calle Juan Bautista Vicini, which extended north from the plaza to Carretera de Las Américas, the highway linking Boca Chica to the capital in the west and to San Pedro de Macorís in the east. North of the town center were a patchwork of residential neighborhoods interspersed with budget hotels, grocery stores, and other small businesses. Calle Vicini and the grid of paved streets continued on the other side of the highway, where I lived, but soon dissolved into unauthorized settlements (*arrabales*) of cinder-block and wood-frame houses, connected by a tangle of dirt roads.<sup>2</sup>

We reached the town plaza and hired two *motoconchos* for the trip to Andrés. Because I wanted to photograph the sugar factory, we took the road that skirted the coast, past Ingenio Boca Chica and the Port of Andrés, and farther on to Punta Caucedo. Along the way trucks loaded with equipment and building materials roared past us, kicking up dust and gravel as they made their way to the unfinished power plant. Ingenio Boca Chica appeared to be abandoned. The corrugated steel panels that covered the factory's milling and boiling areas were missing in places, and chunks of machinery were strewn about the yard. A security guard dozed at the entrance, a shotgun cradled in his lap.

I asked Minaya about the factory. He drew his index finger across his throat, *muerto* (dead). Ingenio Boca Chica and other government-owned sugar mills had been recently "capitalized," that is, leased to private corporations, which were expected to invest in them and enhance their profitability. As yet, the factory's new operator—a Mexican multinational corporation—had not begun the renovations needed to return it to operation. As a result some three thousand workers had lost their jobs. Once a bustling, albeit poor sugar settlement, or *batey*, Andrés was now a community without an economy.

We continued on foot along the coastal road, and Minaya told me about his life. He had been born in San Juan de la Maguana and had come to Andrés in 1988 to work at the *ingenio* (sugar mill), where his uncle was a foreman. With no formal schooling, he told me, his employment prospects had been bleak. At the factory he labored as a *vagacero*, whose job it was to remove the spent cane after milling. It was back-breaking and poorly paid work, and after a few months on the job he



2. Ingenio Boca Chica as seen from the coastal road in 2001. Photo by the author.

quit. With money borrowed from his uncle, Minaya purchased his first stock of goods to sell on the beach. “It’s better to have your own little business,” he told me, “and have more freedom.”

After years of scraping and saving, Minaya bought two adjacent wood-frame casitas on the outskirts of Andrés and sent for his mother, brother, and three sisters from San Juan. Other family members soon followed. Eventually, Minaya bought a cinder-block house next to the others and married a woman from his hometown. His brother and cousins worked with him on the beach as vendors, and two of his sisters managed a *colmado* (grocery store), which the family rented from a neighbor. Minaya enrolled his youngest sister in elementary school at the age of nineteen.

We turned off the coastal road and followed a narrow dirt path that led into Andrés, past crumbling wooden houses and newer cinder-block buildings that were stalled at various stages of construction. Minaya pointed to the house that his eldest sister was building—a roofless, concrete rectangle with cavities yet to be filled with windows and doors. The poor, he explained, built their houses “little by little” as they saved money to buy fixtures and allotments of cinder blocks.

We arrived at his home, located at the end of an unpaved cul-de-sac

at the edge of town. Children were gleefully sifting through the remains of a birthday piñata while their mothers stood by, cake in hand, impatient to leave. Minaya noticed me peering at the tangle of illicit wire connections to the power lines overhead and grinned. “In my house,” he quipped, “there is power.”

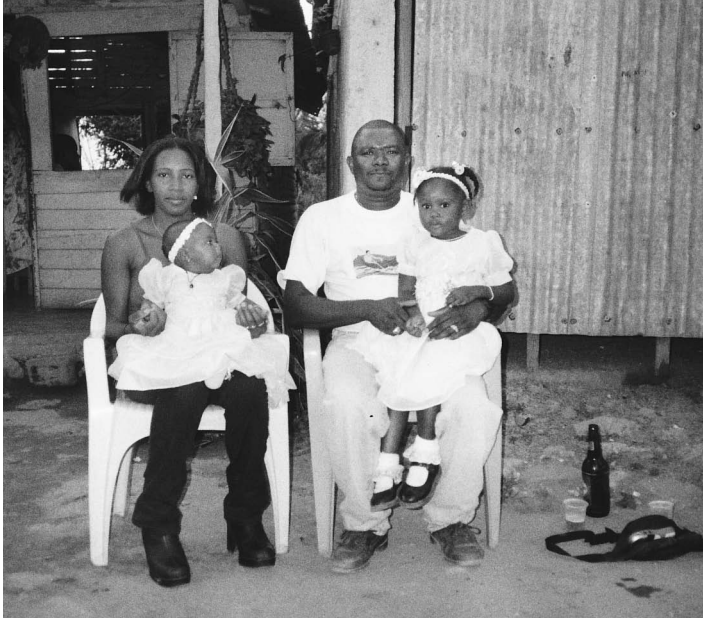
We entered the enclosed porch, and Minaya brought out chairs from inside. He told me how he had gathered his entire family on the cement porch when Hurricane George flattened his mother’s house and blew away the roof of his own in 1998. “There were twenty of us gathered here on the patio—who knows, maybe thirty.” He gazed at the cement ceiling. “But this ceiling is strong. It stayed.”

Minaya’s wife, Jocelyn, and his three sisters came out to greet us with coffee, followed by a procession of nephews, nieces, and cousins. With her second, newborn child in her arms, Jocelyn told me about her business selling hair care products to neighbors. Poor economic conditions had prompted many women to create microenterprises to contribute to household budgets. An assortment of plastic bottles and glass jars were neatly arranged in a homemade display case on the porch. When we finished our coffee, Jocelyn invited us inside to eat.

The main room of the two-room house was divided by a wall unit that separated the living room from the cooking area in the rear. The family of four slept in a small side room subdivided by curtains. A sofa, a coffee table, and two chairs were squeezed into the front room. A television set and portable CD player occupied the wall unit, along with family photographs, a porcelain serving dish, and empty bottles of imported liquors, which I had often seen displayed in the homes of poor families. Less a display of conspicuous consumption than a keepsake of special occasions, the bottles were symbols of the just, though infrequent, desserts of hard work.

After dinner Minaya invited me to the family’s *colmado*. Minaya’s eldest sister was busy serving an elderly woman, who was complaining about the size and price of each item as it arrived—an onion, two carrots, a bullion cube, and a clump of tomato paste sealed in a plastic bag. Minaya chuckled as he reached into the freezer for a beer. “*No es fácil, Doña Julia,*” he said. Not looking up, the woman agreed, “No, life’s not easy.”

We sat out front on plastic chairs. Minaya’s cousin Feo was playing dominoes with friends. It was now dark, and we could see the warm glow of the massive Coral Hamaca Beach Hotel across the bay and the headlight trail of cars driving east on the highway toward San Pedro de Macorís.



3. Minaya and Jocelyn Sánchez on Diana's fifth birthday. Photo by the author.

"Tell me, Gregory, how is the book going?" Minaya asked.

"Little by little," I replied. I took the opportunity to remind him about my work. I told him that I was writing about the changing economy—tourism, privatization, and so on—and about the impact of these changes on people's lives.

Minaya thought for a moment. "Here we are all poor," he said, grinning as he did when preparing a joke in his mind. "So you will have to write a very big book!"

We stayed at the *colmado* for another hour, bringing each other up to date on our lives. Just as I was about to leave, Minaya asked about my trip to Cuba the year before. I replied that although there were shortages and other problems, people seemed to have enough to eat and access to health care and other essential services.

"But, Gregory," he countered, leaning toward me, "they say that in Cuba there is no freedom—there is no democracy." His face became stern, wrinkles forming across his brow.

"Yes, that's what they say." I did not want to argue politics with a friend.

“Here, in the Dominican Republic, we have plenty of freedom,” Minaya continued, “plenty of freedom. And democracy too.” His tone was solemn, but I could see the telltale grin beginning to form. Feo and the others looked up, dominoes cradled in their palms. “Here we have the freedom to work. And to struggle. *And we have the freedom to be poor!*” Minaya burst into laughter and insisted that I stay for one last beer.

The ironic notion of having the freedom to be poor recalls Karl Marx’s (1964) account of the unfreedom of “free labor” under capitalism and the multifaceted relationships between the structures of coercion that govern the lives of working people and the modes of agency, maneuver, and resistance available to them. At the crux of these everyday struggles was the capitalist labor process: the power relations and practices through which labor was, as Marx put it, subsumed by capital. Indeed, for Minaya and for others with whom I worked, this struggle for livelihood was not merely one of earning a living. Equally important, it was a struggle over power-laden definitions of *what* constituted productive labor and of the bodies in which it was to be found—that is to say, a struggle over the political, symbolic, and spatial ordering of the social division of labor.

This chapter begins an examination of the production and policing of this division of labor and the myriad inequalities that it both expresses and secures. My interest in the division of labor—a category that has received relatively scant attention in the social science literature—is driven by both interpretive and theoretical concerns (Garnsey 1981).<sup>3</sup> The most pressing problems facing the people with whom I worked were at once economic (in the narrow sense of earning a living) and positional, having to do with their social location vis-à-vis commingling and multi-scaled power arrangements, stretching from the proximate community to the global order. The value and qualities of their labor were politically constructed through the iteration of social distinctions (among them, race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship) and by means of a variety of practices in which state authorities played critical, although not exclusive, roles. In short, the politics of identity was inexorably fused with the everyday politics of making a living. Though this social positioning was, in large part, a function of class (taken as one’s location within capitalist relations of production), it was irreducible to class identity, or, for that matter, to any category that, to sustain its identity, must be abstracted from its muddled spatial and temporal contexts. Rather, class identities

were embodied in and lived through a matrix of social differences that located one in the social and spatial order of the capitalist labor process (Ong 1991).<sup>4</sup> By examining the everyday structuring of the social division of labor, its power differentials and social distinctions, I focus attention on a field of antagonism and conflict that was axial in the lives of the subjects of this ethnography.

An analysis of the social division of labor and the sociospatial practices of division that constitute it also provides an approach to theorizing class, not in relation to other differences, but through the sociospatial fields within which racial, gender, ethnic, and other differences are crafted and lived.<sup>5</sup> This spatial understanding of class, as it is embodied in marked subjects, emphasizes and renders problematic the subject's dynamic and practically structured relationships, not merely to the "point of production," but also to the wider social field of the extended reproduction of capital. This strategy resists the logic of "intersectionality" that has often accompanied attempts to conceptualize class in relation to race, gender, and other social distinctions. Instead, I approach class formation and its politics of livelihood as a process that is realized through the sociospatial ordering of differences, that is, as the social division of labor.<sup>6</sup>

### DOMINICAN COUNTERPOINT: SUGAR AND TOURISTS

Andrés and Boca Chica are located on the southeastern coast of the Dominican Republic, about thirty kilometers from Santo Domingo. Until recently the two towns were part of the National District of Santo Domingo and were represented by the *síndico*, or mayor of the capital. Surrounding the city of Boca Chica proper were a number of settlement areas (e.g., Monte Adentro, Los Tanquecitos, and Caucedo), some of which were developed as squatter communities by migrants. This larger area, 149 square kilometers, was referred to by residents and the authorities as greater Boca Chica (Sección de Boca Chica) and was considered a single political community. In 2002 (after I conducted fieldwork) Andrés and Boca Chica and neighboring settlements were reorganized as a *municipio* (municipality)—one of four constituting the newly created province of Santo Domingo. In 2000 the population of greater Boca Chica was estimated to be 73,149 (CIECA 2001).<sup>7</sup>

Once a settlement of fishermen, Andrés developed as a sugar *batey* with the construction of Ingenio Boca Chica at the end of the nineteenth century by Juan Bautista Vicini, an Italian-born merchant capitalist who

migrated to the Dominican Republic in 1882 (Cabrera 2001). The Dominican sugar industry blossomed in the late nineteenth century, spurred by the disruption of sugar production in Cuba during its wars of independence (1868–1878) and by the decline in sugar beet production in Europe during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.<sup>8</sup> The development of large-scale sugar plantations was driven by foreign capital and technical expertise provided by Cuban, Italian, North American, and Puerto Rican immigrants, some of whom, like Bautista Vicini, married into elite Dominican families, forming what Emilio Betances (1995: 26) described as “a local sugar bourgeoisie based on foreign resident planters.” These planters entered into an alliance with the administration of President Ulises Heureaux (1881–1899), from which they received loans and profitable concessions to build and operate an infrastructure of ports and railroads.

However, in the face of declining sugar prices (especially during the crisis period 1881–1889), many of these factories foundered, forcing their owners to sell to foreign corporations that, like the U.S.-controlled Porto Rico Sugar Company and the Cuban-Dominican Sugar Company, were rapidly consolidating their control over Dominican sugar production (Knight 1939; Betances 1995). U.S. involvement in the Dominican political economy increased when the New York-based San Domingo Improvement Council (SDIC), backed by the U.S. government, purchased the Republic’s debt in 1893 from the Dutch firm of Westendorp and took control of Dominican finances (Veeser 2002). In 1904 Theodore Roosevelt appointed U.S. officials to collect Dominican customs revenues on behalf of the SDIC. The Dominican-American Convention, signed by President Ramón Cáceres in 1907, legalized the customs receivership and extended U.S. control over accounting and budget procedures, reducing the Dominican state to a “semi-protectorate of the United States” (Betances 1995: 72).

The consolidation of foreign, primarily U.S. control of the sugar industry was strengthened during the U.S. military occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916–1924). In 1920 the U.S. military government issued Executive Order No. 511, a land reform measure authorizing a cadastral survey and a new system of land registration that further undermined the system of *terrenos comuneros* (common lands), making it possible for the sugar corporations to legally expropriate peasant holdings and dramatically extend the acreage under their control (Betances 1995). Only the year before, the military government had imposed a tariff system that exempted U.S.-made industrial products from import

duties, thereby undermining both the local manufacture of goods and the export of raw agricultural commodities (Moya Pons 1990).

By 1916 Ingenio Boca Chica, along with other mills, had been absorbed into the U.S.-controlled Cuban-Dominican Sugar Company (Betances 1995). In the same year twenty-five-year-old and soon to become dictator Rafael Trujillo was employed at Ingenio Boca Chica as a *guardacampestre* (security guard), initiating an enduring connection between the Trujillo family and the coastal area. Trujillo's employers at Ingenio Boca Chica would later provide him with a letter of reference when he applied to the Guardia Nacional, the National Guard established by the U.S. military occupation in 1918.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Ingenio Boca Chica and its associated cane fields drew upon a diverse labor force, which included *cocolos* (migrant workers from the British West Indies) and Haitian *braceros*. Although the sugar industry had employed seasonal Dominican workers in its early years of development, low wages on the estates and price inflation in the late nineteenth century discouraged rural Dominicans from abandoning subsistence cultivation for wage labor. Orlando Inoa (1999) reported that the first group of West Indian migrant workers arrived in 1872. By the early decades of the twentieth century, thousands of workers were arriving each year from the Leeward Islands (Antigua, Nevis, and St. Kitts) and elsewhere in the Caribbean and, after 1915, increasingly from neighboring Haiti (Martínez 1995).

During the 1950s, Rafael Trujillo began buying out the holdings of the U.S.-controlled sugar companies, expanding the Trujillo elite's monopoly of the Dominican economy. In 1956 Trujillo bought Ingenio Boca Chica and four other mills from the West Indies Sugar Company. After Trujillo's assassination in 1961 the Trujillo-owned mills were nationalized and placed under the management of the government's Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (CEA; State Sugar Council), created in 1966 (Chardon 1984).

Although the early 1970s witnessed a sugar boom as a result of a spike in prices on the U.S. preferential market (from 6.9 cents a pound in 1970 to more than 60 cents by the mid-1970s), sugar prices fell precipitously after 1976, leading to a decline in production (Betances and Spalding 1995). By 1986 revenues from traditional exports (e.g., sugar, cacao, coffee, and tobacco) had dropped from 51.9 percent of hard currency in 1977 to just 22.8 percent. Sugar accounted for only 8 percent of export revenues in 1991, compared to 40 percent provided by the rapidly growing tourism industry (Itzigsohn 2000). By the 1990s the fulcrum of

the region's economy had shifted from Andrés and its declining sugar industry to Boca Chica and international tourism.

Boca Chica, located roughly three kilometers down the coast from Andrés, developed gradually in the early decades of the twentieth century as a seaside resort, frequented by affluent *capitaleños* (residents of the capital), who built vacation cabañas along the shore. Much of the land in Boca Chica was owned by Juan Bautista Vicini, who built the town's Catholic church and initial infrastructure. Boca Chica's beach, facing what is reputed to be the largest coral-ringed lagoon in the Caribbean, remains one of the most popular seaside resorts for Dominicans and hosts a variety of public festivals, such as Semana Santa (Holy Week), that draw huge crowds from Santo Domingo and elsewhere.

In 1952 the Trujillo regime constructed the Hotel Hamaca, the first of Boca Chica's resort hotels, as part of a largely unsuccessful campaign to stimulate domestic and international tourism during the prosperous post-World War II period (Meyer-Arendt, Sambrook, and Kermath 1992). Although occupancy rates remained low at most of the seaside and mountain resorts built by Trujillo, the Hotel Hamaca attracted wealthy, predominantly North American tourists and celebrities throughout the 1960s, in part because of its proximity to the capital and the international airport.

Beginning in the late 1960s and spurred by the aggressive promotion of tourism as an economic panacea by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and other international agencies, the administration of President Joaquín Balaguer began an aggressive campaign to promote tourism. Tourism was presented by its international boosters as a means to advance from a primary sector-based economy to one based on services, without passing through a phase of industrialization, as had been attempted through earlier import substitution policies.<sup>9</sup> As Malcolm Crick (1989: 315) observed for the Caribbean as a whole, "Tourism was represented as an easy option for development because it relied largely on natural resources already in place—e.g. sand, sun, friendly people—and therefore required no vast capital outlays for infrastructure."

In 1971 legislation was passed granting a 100 percent income tax exemption, duty-free imports, and other generous concessions to tourism industry investors. The Department of Tourism Investment and Infrastructure (INFRATUR) was created within the Central Bank to provide low-interest financing and other incentives to domestic and foreign investors and to stimulate infrastructural development. In the same year

Edes Mendar, a Spanish consulting firm, conducted a study for the IDB that examined the southern coast's potential for tourism (Báez 2000). The final report identified measures to promote the development of infrastructure and recommended the relocation of residents from the *zona playera* (beach zone).

In 1973 the Balaguer government issued Presidential Decree No. 3134 authorizing the state to purchase and, if necessary, expropriate privately held coastal lands in Andrés and Boca Chica that were earmarked for tourism development. The resulting speculation in land led to a massive displacement of people from the *zona playera*. Clara Báez (2000) noted that this displacement led, in effect, to the transfer of coastal properties from residents to foreigners. "The tourism development plan," Báez concluded, "viewed the resident population more as a nuisance to be relocated far away than as a human and cultural resource to be integrated into the development of tourism in their community" (66).

Designated in 1973 a Polo Turístico (Tourism Pole) by presidential decree, Boca Chica, along with the tourism industry as a whole, grew rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s (especially in the aftermath of the 1983 currency devaluation), witnessed by the renovation and expansion of the twenty-eight-room Coral Hamaca Beach Hotel (formerly the Hotel Hamaca), the construction of two additional all-inclusive resort hotels, and the establishment of dozens of small and midsized hotels, restaurants, gift shops, and other businesses catering to the growing number of foreign tourists.

Boca Chica's rapid transformation into an international tourism destination was mirrored at other seaside resorts, such as Puerta Plata, La Romana, and Playa Bávaro. Whereas in 1970 only 89,700 foreign tourists visited the Dominican Republic, by 1992 their number had grown to 1.6 million. Although tourism contributed only US \$368.2 million in hard currency to the Dominican economy in 1985, that figure skyrocketed to US \$1,046.4 million by 1992 (Betances 1995). Between 1991 and 1996 the number of tourist rooms in Boca Chica and neighboring Juan Dolio (forming Pole I) increased from 2,614 to 4,040 (Abt Associates 2002).

The expansion of tourism in Boca Chica drew migrants from other areas of the country who settled in Andrés and Boca Chica and in expanding squatter settlements to the north. A resident interviewed by Báez (2000: 67) described Boca Chica's residents as a "floating population of migrants." Many of these new arrivals came from rural areas that had been impoverished by the decline in agricultural exports. Many came with the expectation of earning a living in tourism-related services.



4. Musicians playing for tourists in front of the Hotel Don Juan. Photo by the author.

A thirty-eight-year-old man who moved with his family to Boca Chica from San Cristóbal in 1995 told Milquella Reyes, “When I was in my town, everyone was saying, ‘Over there, in Boca Chica, there are many tourists. You can make money and improve yourself and have a better life.’ But now I am here, and there is no work. Nothing.”

In fact, the growing tourism economy provided few jobs for local people. In 1996 the Asociación para el Desarrollo de Boca Chica (Boca Chica Development Association) calculated that hotels and restaurants in Boca Chica employed only 1,662 of the 42,869 residents. A more recent survey estimated that the hotel industry employed only 1,800 persons directly (Mouchel Consulting, Ltd. 2001). With the exception of unskilled, low-paying work in hotel services (e.g., security, housekeeping, and commercial laundries), few residents of Andrés and Boca Chica possessed the skills and other credentials required to work in the formal tourism sector.

The failure of tourism to promote job growth in Boca Chica was consistent with the situation elsewhere in the Caribbean. As Crick (1989) has argued, luxury tourism typically employs expatriate management and staff brought in from elsewhere and, consequently, seldom stimulates local job growth. Moreover, luxury tourism tends to form enclaves of

economic activity—exemplified by the all-inclusive resort model—that remain insulated from local economies, reproducing, as Crick put it, “the dualistic structure, the plantation system, of the colonial economy” (317; see also Pattullo 1996). Equally important, hiring patterns in Boca Chica’s tourism industry were shaped by subtle and not so subtle forms of race-*cum*-color discrimination. Many residents reported to me that tourism-related firms did not hire persons who were perceived as *morenos* (relatively dark skinned) for positions that brought them into contact with foreign tourists, for example, positions as clerks, waiters, bartenders, or dealers in hotel casinos. Frequently, these “front desk” employees were recruited from the capital.

The majority of the residents of Andrés–Boca Chica thus fell between the cracks of a rapidly changing economy: between a moribund sugar industry and declining traditional export economy and an expanding tourism sector that offered few job prospects for low-skilled and racially marked people. Although some residents found work in the export manufacturing factories located in Las Américas FTZ, these factory jobs were difficult for most to secure, and the low wages and forced unpaid overtime (ranging between fifty-six and eighty total hours per week) made them untenable livelihoods for many.

For example, twenty-three-year-old Yahaira Brito, married and the mother of two toddlers, took a job at a garment factory in Las Américas FTZ when her husband, a construction worker, could no longer find enough work to support the household. Yahaira’s starting salary of \$3,500 pesos (US \$215) per month barely covered the family’s expenses after deducting her monthly rent of RD \$1,200 and transportation costs to and from the factory, which averaged RD \$600 monthly. When her diabetic mother became ill and could no longer baby-sit her children, Yahaira was forced to quit the factory job. When I met the couple in 2001, both were unemployed and increasingly in debt to relatives and local merchants. Yahaira and other women with whom I spoke agreed that few export processing jobs paid a living wage and, from the standpoint of women, the jobs presupposed households with male wage earners (see Safa 1995).

## STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

In 2000–2001 neoliberal economic reforms legislated by the administration of former President Leonel Fernández were implemented in Andrés–Boca Chica and elsewhere in the nation, further eroding the livelihoods of

residents. Responding to pressure from the IMF, the World Bank, and the IDB, the Dominican Republic put into action a program to “capitalize” state-owned industries, notably the sugar and power industries. The privatization of state-owned industries was one component of a sweeping package of economic and political reforms, anticipated in earlier IMF agreements, that consolidated a restructuring of the Dominican economy.

In 1990, shortly after having been reelected president, Balaguer embarked on a comprehensive program of economic reforms, which came to be known as the New Economic Program (NEP). Faced with worsening economic conditions—rising inflation, growing trade deficits, and increasing debt arrears to the IMF and other international lenders—the Balaguer administration was obliged to negotiate an agreement with the IMF, conditional on the implementation of fiscal reforms (e.g., price liberalization, exchange rate devaluation, and decontrol of interest rates), tax and banking reforms, and the elimination of food subsidies (IMF 1999).

These “structural adjustment” policies, informed by neoliberal economic theory—a resurrected version of classical liberal economic thought dominant in the United States and Great Britain before the Great Depression—were based on the view that only an unregulated capitalist system—a “free market” economy—can achieve optimum performance with respect to economic growth, efficiency, technological progress, and distributional justice (Kotz 2002). In the neoliberal view state involvement in the economy should be minimal and the regulatory policies associated with the welfare state dismantled by sharply cutting back social welfare spending, privatizing public assets and functions, and reducing taxes on businesses and investors. At the international level the neoliberal program advocates the free movement of capital, goods, and services across national borders.

In the Dominican Republic 1990 tax reforms opened national markets to foreign competition by reducing tariffs and eliminating most import quotas and licensing requirements. The Foreign Investment Law, passed in 1995, opened key sectors of the Dominican economy to foreign investment, extended to foreign investors the guarantees granted domestic investors, and eliminated all restrictions on profit remittances and capital repatriation. The devaluation of the peso, by depreciating the value of Dominican labor, attracted foreign investment in tourism, export processing, and other growth areas of the economy (Betances 1995).

A 1999 IMF report presented a glossy evaluation of the NEP’s results at the end of the millennium:

The response to the stabilization program was positive. Economic growth resumed, driven especially by those sectors that were more open to competition, such as tourism and tourism related activities, construction, non-sugar manufacturing, and telecommunications. In 1991–95, the average rate of GDP growth accelerated to over 4 percent, while inflation slowed sharply. (IMF 1999: 13)

Although the NEP lowered inflation, accelerated the nation's growth rate and stimulated a massive influx of direct foreign investment, NEP structural adjustment policies led to increases in underemployment and poverty and to a sharpening of social inequalities. As José Itzigsohn (2000: 50) has noted, the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a dramatic reduction in the state's role in providing social services and employment-related benefits (indirect salary), notably in health care and education. For example, by 1990 real capital expenditures in education were equal to only 45 percent of what they had been in 1980. In health care 1990 expenditures amounted to 81 percent of what they had been ten years earlier. And in 1992 the real minimum salary was only 77 percent of its 1980 level and 58 percent of its 1970 level.

This deterioration of wages and public services was aggravated by reductions in social security. By the early 1990s the Instituto Dominicano de Seguro Social (Dominican Institute of Social Security) was near bankruptcy and was reducing the subsidies it paid to insured workers: \$7.2 million in constant 1988 pesos in 1979, compared to only \$2.8 million in 1989 (Itzigsohn 2000). As a result, although unemployment decreased and participation in the labor force increased as a consequence of restructuring, wages, benefits, and social security deteriorated both in the downsized public sector and in "growth sectors" of the economy. In fact, Itzigsohn (2000) has suggested that it was this deterioration in real wages, coupled with sharp cutbacks in social security, that forced Dominican households to send more workers into the labor force, yielding higher employment rates.<sup>10</sup>

The Fernández administration, which came to power in 1996, gave renewed impetus to this process of neoliberal economic restructuring, advancing policies of trade liberalization, privatization, and fiscal and monetary discipline. In 1997 the Public Enterprise Reform General Law was passed that authorized increased private sector participation in economic sectors dominated by state-owned enterprises such as the sugar, power generation and distribution, and mining industries.<sup>11</sup>

In September 1999 management of the ten publicly owned sugar mills operated by the CEA was auctioned off to private corporations, which

were granted thirty-year leases on the mills and a package of financial incentives. Management of Ingenio Boca Chica and four other mills was transferred to Conazucar, a Dominican subsidiary of the Mexican Zucarmex Group. In accordance with the agreement, all mill employees—thirty thousand nationwide—were dismissed to ensure that the transfer to private management would occur free of labor obligations. For the 1999–2000 harvest, only two mills—Boca Chica and Consuelo—were run at near-capacity, and equipment from the other mills was cannibalized to sustain the former. Only five hundred of Ingenio Boca Chica’s three thousand employees were rehired.

In March 2001 Conazucar, embroiled in disputes with the government, labor unions, and independent sugar growers, sold its leases on the five mills to Consorcio Pringamosa, a consortium of Dominican and foreign investors. During the 2000–2001 harvest cycle, as Pringamosa negotiated with the government over the disposition of its new holdings, Ingenio Boca Chica remained idle and in disrepair. One laid-off mill worker complained to me that he was owed nine months’ back wages but, in the ownership shuffle, did not know which “foreigners” were in charge.

If the capitalization of the sugar industry further weakened labor markets in the area, the privatization of the power industry escalated the cost of living. In April and May 1999 the Dominican government completed the sale of its power-generating and distributing assets, formerly managed by the state-owned *Corporación Dominicana de Electricidad* (CDE). In the capitalization plan, the state invited private corporations to submit bids for part ownership of the state’s power assets. The winning bidders would receive half ownership and full management control (IMF 1999). The distribution of electricity was taken over by *Unión Fenosa* (a Spanish company) and the U.S.-based AES Corporation, and the state began buying power from private generators, such as Cayman Power, AES, and Smith Enron, the owner of a controversial power plant in Puerto Plata.

Beginning in late 2000, electric meters were installed in Andrés and Boca Chica, and many households that had never been billed for electricity found themselves paying as much as RD \$500 per month—roughly 15 percent of the minimum private sector wage. In some poor barrios deemed unprofitable by the power distribution companies, meters were not installed and residents were charged flat fees irrespective of their actual consumption. In general, prices to consumers more than doubled as the power distributors were allowed to index rates to infla-

tion and the price of oil. The Dominican government agreed to subsidize much of this increase at an expense of US \$5 million a month. Moreover, in an effort to enforce bill collection, the power distributors began deliberately blacking out sections of the capital and elsewhere that were not paying their bills in a timely manner. These punitive blackouts were a daily occurrence throughout the nation in 2000–2001 (and beyond), provoking mass protests that were often brutally repressed by the armed forces.

### IMPROVISING A LIVELIHOOD: THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Neoliberal structural adjustment policies pushed many residents of Andrés and Boca Chica into the informal economy, into economic activities that were outside of formal wage-labor relations and avoided state regulation.<sup>12</sup> The informal economy had been expanding in the Dominican Republic before the adoption of the neoliberal, export-oriented model of development in the 1980s. However, labor deregulation, reductions in public sector employment, and other adjustment policies contributed to a substantial increase in underemployment and informal employment in the Dominican Republic and throughout the Caribbean and Latin America (de Oliveira and Roberts 1993; Mullings 1999; Itzigsohn 2000).

The privatization and de facto abandonment of Ingenio Boca Chica had left some three thousand workers unemployed and their households bereft of a source of income. Both formal and informal enterprises that were dependent on the sugar economy and the income of its workers suffered as well. Many households were forced to improvise livelihoods, wholly or partially, through informal economic activities. For example, when the father of sixteen-year-old Yamily Rodríguez was laid off from Ingenio Boca Chica in 2000, she and her sister quit school and began working as unlicensed masseuses and manicurists on the beach and her mother began taking in laundry.

As in Yamily's household, women often responded to worsening economic conditions by intensifying both their unpaid household labor and their paid informal work (Espinal and Grasmuck 1997; Wilson 1998a). In some cases this involved what Susan Vincent (1998: 121) has described as the "commodification of domestic labor." For example, Milagros Peralta converted her living room and porch into dining areas and opened a six-table *comedor* (restaurant). While Milagros and her mother prepared food, her younger sisters waited tables. Most of her regular cus-

tomers were coworkers of her husband, a policeman. Other women established similar microenterprises in their homes, such as hair salons, laundries, or shops that offered clothing and other goods.

When Paredes García found that his salary as a schoolteacher no longer provided a living wage for his family, he quit his job and began working as a welder at a curbside car and motorcycle repair shop. Elwin Polanco lost his job at a bakery in Andrés when its business declined. Like many young men, Elwin turned to the tourism economy, improvising a living as an unlicensed tourist guide, marijuana dealer, and occasional pimp.

Many of these informal economic activities were clustered around Boca Chica's tourism economy. Men mostly sold a variety of products, ranging from clothing, crafts, and cigars to shellfish, fruits, and other foods. Women mostly worked on the beaches as masseuses, manicurists and pedicurists, and hair braiders, catering largely to foreign tourists. Young men worked as *motoconchos*, providing inexpensive transportation to residents and tourists alike. *Motoconchos*, who numbered in the hundreds in Boca Chica and its environs in 2001, typically rented their motorcycles at a per diem rate of about RD \$200 (US \$12). Men with whom I spoke viewed working as a *motoconcho* as an alternative—albeit a very dangerous one—to strenuous, sporadic, and low-paying work as day laborers in construction, one of the few jobs available to the unskilled.

The one exception to the gender-segregated nature of the informal economy that I encountered during the period of my fieldwork was a jewelry vendor of Haitian descent, who was described to me by her male coworkers as a “lesbian.” Vendors with whom I spoke offered two explanations for the gendered division of labor, neither of which conceded willful discrimination. One common view was that men were better suited to conduct business in the *zona turística* because they are more aggressive; another was that men are more savvy at negotiating with foreign tourists. Both male views implied that women were more suited to economic activities that made use of their “natural” female abilities and support research that has shown that “women’s work comes to be seen as related to the domestic sphere no matter what they do” (Vincent 1998: 122).<sup>13</sup> As I show, these constructions of women’s roles and capacities also informed the discourses and practices of the police and other authorities.

Although state authorities issued a limited number *carnetes* (licenses) for some of these economic activities—vending and massage, for example—few workers could afford the licensing fees charged to work legally in the *zona turística*. As a result most of those who earned their liveli-



5. Informal day laborers working at a seaside restaurant. Photo by the author.

hoods on the margins of the tourism economy did so illicitly and were subject to harassment, arbitrary arrest, and stiff fines by the National Police and POLITUR. Although there had been at least one attempt to regulate the *motoconchos* by issuing them identification cards and distinctive, police-issued vests, the effort was resisted by the *motoconchos* (who feared licensing fees and restrictions on their areas of operation), and enforcement was lax. Consequently, *motoconchos* were routinely stopped by the police, sometimes in townwide operations, and fined for lacking proper documents. As Beverly Mullings (1999: 70) has pointed out for Jamaica, the efforts of the tourism industry and public authori-

ties to “formalize or eliminate” informal activities have not only further reduced tourism’s benefits to the population at large but have also turned areas serving tourists into “virtual war zones.”

Another significant area of informal economic activity in Boca Chica was sex work, targeting the largely European and North American tourists who visited the area. During the 1990s, Boca Chica became a notorious destination for male sex tourists due, in part, to the proliferation of U.S.-based Internet web sites dedicated to “single male travel” (see chapter 4). Much of the town’s tourism infrastructure—small and mid-sized hotels, restaurants, bars, and discotheques—owed their livelihood to this predominantly male, sex-oriented tourism. The prospect of making money *trabajando con turistas* (working with tourists) attracted young women and men from the capital and other impoverished areas of the country and from Haiti to work in Boca Chica’s discotheques and bars as hostesses, bartenders, and sex workers.

Ivelisse, a twenty-six-year-old mother of three from San Pedro de Macorís, explained to me that she made more money in one weekend working with tourists than she had earned in one month as a machine operator in the San Pedro FTZ. Moreover, the long hours and forced overtime at the factory made it impossible for her to care properly for her children. Like Ivelisse, many women who worked with tourists were single mothers and, often, heads of households and viewed their work, not always involving sex, as the only option available to them to support their families and gain access to health care. Sex work was tolerated by the authorities, but those who pursued it, like others working in the informal economy, were routinely arrested and fined by the police, typically for lacking proper identification. Like Ivelisse, many viewed informal work as a less onerous and, in some cases, more lucrative alternative to wage labor in the formal economy, whether in FTZ factories or in low-paying tourism-related services.

Beyond its importance as a source of livelihood, the informal economy also gave rise to social relations and cultural practices that challenged elite, power-laden definitions of the labor process. As a strategy for avoiding regulation, informality brought its practitioners into routine conflict with state authorities. These social conflicts did not merely involve disputes over licensing requirements; equally significant, they implicated and aggravated deeper antagonisms related to the hierarchical organization of the tourism economy, its sociospatial division of labor, and its underlying ideologies of racial, sexual, gender, and class difference.

This oppositional side of informal economic activities has been muted,

if not neglected, in much of the literature on informality. As John Cross (1998: 2) has pointed out, researchers have tended to treat informal workers as “passive economic subjects rather than economic actors—as those who had ‘lost out’ in the struggle for ‘formal’ jobs rather than as people attempting to win the struggle for a decent living.” Against this tendency, Aili Mari Tripp (1997), writing on Tanzania’s urban informal economy, has underscored the significance of noncompliance with regulation as an important “weapon of the weak,” a modality of agency and resistance capable of contesting and influencing state policies. Tripp attributes the neglect of these oppositional aspects of informality to a narrow view of politics that stresses formal political structures at the expense of the “texture of the everyday” (9). I push this argument further and argue that these practices of noncompliance stretched beyond labor regulations to implicate power-laden constructions of both labor and identity.

To be sure, the notion of informality embraces disparate activities, which differ considerably with respect to their linkages to formal capitalist enterprises and the degree to which they are tolerated, overlooked, and, in some cases, even promoted by the state (Crichlow 1998). Alejandro Portes (1994a) has pointed out that the informal economy contributes to the process of capital accumulation because it provides cheap goods and services by lowering the costs of the reproduction of labor and by using low-cost, unregulated labor through “off the books” hiring and subcontracting arrangements. In Boca Chica many formal enterprises such as restaurants, gift shops, and construction companies hired informal and, in many cases, undocumented workers in order to avoid labor regulations governing the minimum wage, mandatory bonuses, and other benefits. In such contexts informal workers (and their employers) were generally, although not always, disregarded by state authorities and not prosecuted.

However, the vast majority of informal workers in Andrés–Boca Chica were self-employed and, within the highly regulated and policed economy of tourism, were routine targets of the state. Moreover, given the low wages in the formal tourism-related services sector, there were few incentives to employ or subcontract informal labor.<sup>14</sup> In short, formal and informal labor was distinguished less by wages and benefits than by illicit versus licit activities and, importantly, laboring bodies that were stigmatized versus those that were not.

I examine the everyday production and policing of this boundary between informal and formal economic practices and between bodies deemed productive and of social value and bodies marked and devalued



6. A corn vendor and his son working on the beach. Photo by the author.

and, in elite discourses, stigmatized as *delinquentes* (delinquents). Indeed, it was along the hotly contested edges of the formal economy that the sociospatial relations and discourses of difference that constituted the social division of labor were most legible and vulnerable to dispute. Alternatively, I examine the ways in which the laboring poor circumvented, challenged, and reworked this distinction and, in the process, exercised alternative and, often, oppositional conceptions of productive labor, economic value, and social justice. I approach informality as a field of offstage cultural production—a “hidden transcript,” as James Scott (1990) put it—across which the laboring poor improvised and exercised modes of subjectivity and practice that brought them into conflict with the dominant, neoliberal regime of accumulation and its discourses of difference.

Further, I argue that the central contradiction or, better, field of antagonism in late capitalism is less the “structural” relationship of labor to capital than the political cleavages that result from the social *and* spatial structuring of the division of labor—a field of antagonism and conflict that is indissolubly economic, political, *and* symbolic and in which the state remains analytically central. From this vantage point, informality is not merely a strategy of noncompliance that skirts and sometimes resists state regulation; equally significant, it produces social practices, rela-

tions, and forms of consciousness that call into question the capitalist labor process and the division of labor in which it is rooted. Through their everyday struggles for livelihood, the laboring poor contested power-laden constructions that defined both the nature of productive labor and the capacities of the bodies in which that labor was to be found—constructions of labor power that were shot through with asymmetrical evaluations of racial, gender, and cultural differences. Attending to these everyday struggles illuminates key antagonisms and resistances to the reorganization of the labor process in late capitalism.

### CITIZENSHIP AND THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION

The ability of residents to secure a livelihood, whether in the formal or informal economy, was conditioned by the strength of their claims to citizenship. The possession of documents certifying Dominican nationality (notably, *actas de nacimiento*, or birth certificates, and *cédulas*, or national identification cards) was required to secure jobs in the formal economy and, more generally, to establish one's legality vis-à-vis state authorities. The "policing of citizenship," through the routine checking of identity papers, was a leading technology of power by which the police and other authorities governed the movement of people within and across the social division of labor and through the spaces of the tourism economy. Being *sin papeles* (without papers) was a widespread and serious problem for the laboring poor, locking many out of jobs in the formal economy, undermining their access to goods, services, and rights associated with citizenship, and subjecting them to arbitrary harassment and arrest by the police.

For a variety of reasons, many people in Andrés and Boca Chica did not have birth certificates, which were needed to obtain other forms of identification. Following the birth of a child, parents are required to present themselves at an office of the Registro or Oficialía Central del Estado Civil (Civil Registry) to officially declare the birth so as to be issued a birth certificate. When a person reaches the age of eighteen, this certificate must be presented at an office of the Junta Central Electoral (Central Electoral Board) to obtain an adult *cédula*, which is required for voting, securing employment in the formal sector, opening a bank account, and obtaining licenses and other documents.

Many people, especially those in rural areas, delayed or neglected registering their children's birth, through oversight, ignorance, or lack of resources to travel to the nearest Oficialía and pay the required taxes.

For example, Josefa Sánchez, a forty-five-year-old mother of four, had been trying to find employment for years. Finally, in 1998, she secured a housekeeping job at the Boca Chica Resort. However, when she was unable to produce a *cédula* at the end of her three-month probationary period, she was fired.

Over the years Josefa had hired investigators, called *buscones*, to find people who could testify to the facts of her birth in accordance with a complex legal procedure necessary to secure a “late” birth certificate. These failed efforts had drained the family’s resources, and Josefa had given up trying. Not long before I met her, Josefa had opened an illegal gambling parlor in her home to supplement the income she earned from washing clothes. However, being without papers, Josefa feared arrest by the police and, worse, being mistaken for a Haitian immigrant and deported. As Milquella put it, Josefa was an “invisible woman—a woman without an identity.”

This was not an uncommon problem among the poor. José Beato, a community activist based in Andrés, estimated that at least 32 percent of the adult population there (excluding persons of Haitian descent) lacked birth certificates and other identity papers and, “from the state’s perspective, [did] not exist” (*Listín Diario*, June 3, 2001). In the case of Dominicans of Haitian descent, the situation was far worse. Because Dominican authorities generally did not issue birth certificates to children born of Haitian parents (Martínez 1995), the vast majority of Dominicans of Haitian descent living in Andrés–Boca Chica were barred from the public school system, the formal economy, and electoral participation.<sup>15</sup>

The citizenship status of some residents was compromised as a result of their encounter with the police and the criminal justice system. Most employers, especially in the tourism industry and FTZs, required job applicants to present a Certificado de Buena Conducta (Certificate of Good Conduct) along with a *cédula* and other supporting documents. Issued for a fee by the National Police, the Certificate of Good Conduct certified that the applicant did not have a criminal record and was otherwise in good standing with the law. This document was also required when applying for licenses (e.g., to work as tour guides or vendors) and when applying for visas at foreign embassies and consulates. People who had been arrested by the police (not infrequently for lacking identity papers and working informally) had difficulty obtaining this critically important document.

Lack of a Certificate of Good Conduct was also a problem for the growing number of Dominicans who had been deported from the United



7. Josefa playing with her granddaughter on her porch in Andrés. Photo by the author.

States under the strict guidelines of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). Under IIRIRA, foreign-born, permanent residents of the United States can be deported for a variety of offenses, including ones that previously had been classified by the INS as misdemeanors, such as shoplifting, illegal gambling, and marijuana possession. The IIRIRA was made retroactive and placed unprecedented restrictions on rights to judicial appeal. Although it was not possible to estimate the number of *deportados* (deportees) living in Boca Chica, I met eleven Dominican Americans who had been deported under the act (see also Hernández 2002; Brotherton 2003).

One of these Dominican Americans, Tomás Ortíz, migrated to New York with his family in 1974 at the age of fourteen. After graduating from high school, he completed one year of study at Hostos Community College. At twenty-five he married a Dominican-born woman who was a U.S. citizen. Although he was a permanent resident (his wife and his three children were U.S. citizens), Tomás was deported from the United States in 2000 after having pled guilty to a charge of marijuana possession and after having been imprisoned at an INS detention facility in Louisiana for eight months. Unable to return to his family in New York, Tomás settled in Boca Chica, reasoning that his fluency in English would help him to find work in tourism. However, despite his language skills and other credentials, his status as a *deportado* made it impossible for him to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct. When I met Tomás in 2001 he was working as an unlicensed tour guide, arranging excursions, car rentals, and other services for tourists. On the day of our interview, Tomás was scheduled to appear before Boca Chica's prosecutor to answer charges of operating tours without a license.

As the above cases illustrate, citizenship—understood as “a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations” (Tilly 1995: 8)—constituted a critical and contested field of power relations and practices where struggles over access to employment, political participation, and other rights and goods were conducted between state authorities and the diverse population under their control. This ongoing series of transactions implicated in the making, policing, and unraveling of citizenship formed a node of disciplinary practices, enabling and disabling the movement of people through space and labor markets and constituting them as class-, gender-, and racially marked subjects with weakened or non-existent claims to the nation and its resources.

Indeed, it was through the policing of citizenship—its enabling discourses, practices, and logics of verification—that differences tied to race, class, gender, and national origin were embodied and articulated as a system of exclusions that was the foundation of the social division of labor. In Josefa's case, her unverifiable citizenship status (the result, in part, of her family's class and rural origins) not only excluded her from employment and other social rights and services but also rendered her vulnerable to being (mis)taken by the authorities for an illegal *Haitian* immigrant, that is, to being racialized and criminalized, as have been many Dominicans of unverifiable identity (Human Rights Watch 2002). As Michael J. Mitchell and Charles H. Wood (1998: 1007) observed in

their study of race and police brutality in Brazil, “perceived social status is a defining characteristic of citizenship” (see also Da Matta 1987), and, far from a legal identity, citizenship was produced through everyday interactions that transposed socially constructed distinctions into formal systems of exclusions (see also Caldeira 2000). As Ong (1996: 737) has put it, citizenship is a “process of subject-ification.”

In Andrés–Boca Chica this politics of citizenship centered on the tourism economy, where identity-based exclusions served to insulate the profits, most notably, of the all-inclusive resort hotels. Because these profits depended in large part on tourists spending their money within the resort complexes, the hotel industry in Boca Chica exerted considerable pressure on state authorities to police competing informal economic activities. Acting largely through the Asociación Pro-Desarrollo Turístico de Boca Chica (Boca Chica Tourism Development Association), a group dominated by representatives of the area’s three major resorts, the tourism industry pressured police to crack down on unlicensed vendors, *motoconchos*, sex workers, and others who provided comparatively inexpensive goods and services to tourists. These campaigns to *limpiar la calle* (clean up the street) typically constructed informal activities as criminal ones that threatened tourists and *el ambiente turístico* (atmosphere for tourism). Typically, those with the weakest claims to citizenship tended to be criminalized and marginalized, spatially as much as economically, within the stratified tourism economy.

### TOURISM’S OTHER: LA FIESTA DE TÍQUERES (THE HUSTLERS’ PARTY)

I arrived in Los Coquitos just after 8:00 P.M. and parked my scooter in the narrow alley next to Colmado La Gloria. A compact barrio overlooking the western end of the beach, Los Coquitos had a bawdy but lively reputation among residents and was held by some to be a den of thieves, hustlers, and drug dealers. Colmado La Gloria sat at a bustling intersection, across the street from a popular pool hall and catty-corner to a noisy *motoconcho* stand where a dozen or so drivers would gather to wait for customers, occasionally racing the engines of their Yamahas in anticipation of a fare.

La Gloria was reputed to have the lowest beer prices in Boca Chica, and young men gathered there in the evenings to drink and socialize amid the staccato melodies of bachata music booming from two huge speakers. Inside La Gloria high-tech gambling machines—new to Boca Chica in 2001—lined one wall. Behind the counter was the familiar

inventory of commodities: neatly stacked bottles of Brugal and Barceló rum, olive oil, and vinegar; cans of evaporated milk, beans, peeled tomatoes, and Vienna sausages; boxes of Pampers; and round plastic cases filled with locally produced candies. Two teenage boys in Red Sox baseball caps manned the long wooden counter. A middle-aged woman was fastening party balloons to the walls and ceiling.

As the cost of living skyrocketed and the economy worsened, *colmados* had become important entertainment venues for a population that could no longer afford bars, nightclubs, and restaurants. *Colmadones* (the term used to refer to *colmados* with music and seating) such as La Gloria were engaged in cutthroat competition for regular patrons.

I had been invited to a birthday party for Elwin Polanco, a twenty-three-year-old man-about-town who had the reputation of being one of Boca Chica's most infamous *tígueres*. In the Dominican Republic *tíguere* is a versatile term typically used to refer to men whose behavior and disposition place them beyond the pale of respectability and, often, the law. Commonly, it was used to refer to hustlers and criminals or, more generally, to people engaged in behaviors that victimized others. I was sometimes warned to avoid certain neighborhoods—Los Coquitos, for instance—because *allá, hay muchos tígueres* (there, there are many *tígueres*).

*Tíguere* was also applied to men who were womanizers and seducers or who otherwise exploited women emotionally, sexually, or financially. Though the concept of the *tíguere* indexed qualities typically coded as male—notably, predatory masculinity—it was not reserved for men alone. Women who displayed these characteristics could also be viewed as being *tíguere*. For example, Minaya explained to me that his one-year-old daughter was *más tíguere* (more *tíguere*) than his five-year-old daughter because she only rarely smiled or cried and seemed to possess a forceful personality.

Moreover, the idea of the *tíguere* conveyed a sense of daring, rebelliousness, and, above all, savvy: to be *tíguere* was to surmount obstacles, flaunt conventions, and skillfully, if not always ethically, manipulate the world to one's advantage. Among the laboring poor, not surprisingly, the figure of the *tíguere* evoked considerable ambivalence. For example, I was once present among workmen at an informal auto repair shop when one of them related an incident involving a cousin in the capital. One day the cousin was approached by an officer of the National Police, who insisted that he repair the brakes of a relative's truck at no charge. Surmising that he had no choice, the cousin complied and spent most of a



8. Patrons dancing to bachata at a *colmación* in Andrés. Photo by the author.

day working on the truck. However, determined to recoup his losses, the injured mechanic also loosened the bolts securing the truck's rear axle. One week later the policeman's relative returned with a broken axle and, in the end, paid for work three times the value of the unpaid job. At the story's end and amid the laughter of his coworkers, a man exclaimed, "*Que tiguerazo. Él sabe mucho!*" (What a big *tiguera*. He knows a lot!).<sup>16</sup> For some, *tiguera*s are as much admired as they are feared for their ability to manipulate, if not subvert, a social system stacked against the poor and the powerless.

Elwin arrived on his scooter with a passenger in tow. He told me that the birthday party was running late because his friend's motorcycle had been confiscated by the police in a security sweep. He and his distraught passenger had just returned from the police station where Elwin had pleaded the latter's case to no avail.

"*Perfecto*," Elwin said, surveying the party decorations and the dozen or so plastic chairs that had been arranged on the sidewalk in front of La Gloria. "Tonight, brother," he said to me, "there will be nothing missing—beer, whiskey, food. Everything perfect." Elwin told me that he had spent \$1,000 pesos (US \$60) on the birthday party.

Elwin was slender, dark, and handsome and wore his hair in short dreadlocks that he often covered with one of his trademark assortment

of hats. This evening he wore a brown felt, bowler-shaped hat that was down so far that it made his ears stick out at right angles. Elwin once confided to me that he displayed his dreadlocks on the beach to attract tourist women but kept them covered at other times to avoid problems with the police, who associated the “Rasta” look with drug dealing.

I had met Elwin one year earlier and interviewed him soon after. He had told me to meet him at a German-owned restaurant on the beach where he sometimes worked as a *fisgón* (tout). The job paid little, but it provided him with a venue to meet foreign tourists. Elwin arrived for the interview with a teenager, whom he introduced as his assistant. The boy was from the capital, a distant cousin, and Elwin was showing him the ropes of *la vida playera* (life on the beach). Elwin had dressed for the occasion: neatly pressed jeans, a black vinyl hat, and a white shirt, buttoned to the neck. It was clear that he wanted to convey to me both his success and the appropriateness of his presence in the heavily policed *zona turística*.

Born in a small pueblo in the Cibao valley, Elwin moved to Boca Chica with his family in 1990, where his father found a job as a security guard at the Boca Chica Resort. The family had been farmers but could no longer make ends meet in the countryside. For four years Elwin worked at a bakery in Los Coquitos but, to the dismay of his parents, was attracted to life in the streets. When he lost his job at the bakery, he began hanging out on the beach and in the bars and discotheques on Calle Duarte. For a time, Elwin earned money as a *chulo*, a pimp of sorts, procuring Dominican women and sometimes men for tourists. He also set himself to meeting foreign women by working as a male escort, or “Sanky Panky,” taking them around town and to the capital and providing amusement and other services.

Not long after my interview with Elwin, I was accosted by his “assistant,” Junior, in the capital. Only moments before Elwin and his protégé had been escorting two women from Germany on a shopping trip in the Colonial Zone when Elwin was nabbed by a police lieutenant for not having a *cedula*. Junior wanted me to speak to the officer and vouch for Elwin’s identity. We raced down El Conde and caught up with Elwin, handcuffed and pleading his innocence, and the officer near Parque Independencia. I approached the officer and explained that I knew Elwin from Boca Chica and could vouch for his identity. I presented him with my New York University business card. “It doesn’t matter,” the officer replied curtly before depositing Elwin into a police car. After a night in jail and a fine of 500 pesos, Elwin reappeared in Boca Chica the next day.

By the age of twenty, following the retirement of his father, Elwin was supporting his household through his informal economic projects, creating what Tripp (1997) has termed a relationship of “reverse dependency” with his parents. In the 1990s and early 2000s many young people and women working in the informal economy earned more income than did the adult male wage laborers in their households, leading to a reversal of economic obligations and prerogatives from men to women, on the one hand, and from parents to children, on the other. Tripp, addressing an analogous situation in Tanzania, noted, “In creating these reverse dependencies, the new direction of resource flows gave women and even children a greater amount of freedom and autonomy within the household than in the past as a consequence of their economic leverage” (4).

During the interview, Elwin explained to me his attitude toward wage labor and, by contrast, how he made his living:

I don't work, Esteven. I don't ever work. I don't want to work anymore. Because you know what happens with the jobs here. You work so much for very little money. So when I don't have money, I look for a little snack (*una picadera*). I speak to people, bring out the chaise longues for the tourists so that I can make some money. And if I want to nibble (*picar*), I go down to the beach and find whichever white woman I can and talk to her quietly. This is working in a way that one can have fun. Because there are many women, tourists, who come here for the black man. You understand? To pay them. Whichever little brown guy (*morenito*) they like, they take him to the hotel and pay. It's almost like prostitution. I've done it a lot of times—many, many times. But now I'm more tranquil because, like I told you, I have a girlfriend. But two years ago, you would not have seen me here relaxing, because I was searching. I was stronger then. I nibbled. I was more *tiguere*.

This contrast between working (*trabajando*) as a wage laborer in the tourist economy and “snacking” (*picando*) on the source of its profits (the tourist dollar) was often drawn by workers in the informal economy. It illuminates culturally constituted ways of thinking about the labor process and economic justice and highlights a critical axis of class antagonism and conflict that pitted the laboring poor against capitalist enterprises and the state. This was not a struggle between capital and labor but a more foundational antagonism resulting from the structuring of the division of labor itself—a process that implicated not only the organizing and disciplining of labor power but also the social construction of power-laden definitions concerning the nature of productive labor and the bodies in which it was to be found. For in rejecting wage labor and

subverting the wage-labor relationship, many workers like Elwin also challenged race-, gender-, and class-based stereotypes that relegated them to performing devalued and highly exploitative work in the capitalist economy.

For example, Elwin's activities as a Sanky Panky (or, as he would prefer to be called, "guide") violated the organization of the labor process in the tourism industry not only by avoiding wage labor (instead, short-circuiting, or snacking, on the source of its profits) but also by transgressing the symbolic order on which it was based—one that constructed the tourism experience, economy, and spatial order in race-, gender-, and class-inflected ways. As a black Dominican with little formal education, Elwin told me, his only opportunity for steady work was in the construction industry. "But to work like that," he said, "in construction, or cutting cane, is to work like a black slave (*esclavo prieto*)." By contrast, to work in tourism-related activities, formally or informally, was to avail oneself of knowledge, skills, and relationships that would enable one to overcome (*superarse*), to move ahead (*moverse*), and to turn things around (*resolverse*)—verbs that stressed movement and change, as opposed to the coerced stasis of a slavlike slot in the social division of labor.

One by one Elwin's guests began to arrive, most of whom I knew or had seen in and around Boca Chica. Like Elwin, most earned their living snacking in various ways on the tourism economy. Ramón, for example, worked as a tout and helper for a scuba diving shop but made his money selling marijuana to its clients. Flaco and Leonel (the former, a *deportado* from the United States) worked occasionally as *motoconchos* and organized unlicensed tours for tourists to nightclubs in the capital, taking advantage of their English-speaking abilities.

One of the last to arrive was Bunny, a tall man with shoulder-length dreadlocks who had taken his nickname from the Jamaican reggae great Bunny Wailer. Bunny spoke Spanish in a slow, cadenced manner that mimicked the linguistic style of Jamaican Rastafarians. He peppered his speech with such expressions as "Jah love" and "Hail Rastafari" and, like his role models, referred disparagingly to the police and authorities as "Babylon." This simulation of Rastafarian style was as much an identification with rebel cultures as it was a lure to attract tourists, some of whom found the image of the dreadlocked man on the beach (the so-called rent-a-dread) familiar, if not appealing (see also Ebron 1996). Moreover, for Rasta-style *tígueres* such as Bunny and Elwin, the counter-

cultural, antiauthoritarian, and pro-African reputation of the Rastafarians indexed historical, cultural, and political referents that were external to, and subversive of, the symbolic economy of the tourism industry.

Bunny arrived at the party with three German women whom he had met the night before at the Coral Hamaca Beach Hotel's discotheque. Elwin and the others brought out chairs and offered the women drinks, fried chicken, and Moro rice. The women were from Frankfurt and had arrived in Boca Chica the day before on a ten-day charter. Elwin introduced everyone in English and told the women that it was his birthday, that they were his guests, and that they should enjoy themselves without worries. "Everything is perfect here," he said, using a favorite phrase. "Here we are all friends."

"One love," Bunny added, throwing his dreadlocks back with a shake of his head. Bunny whispered into the ear of one woman, and she reached into her backpack and took out a 500 peso note, which he used to buy a half gallon of McAlbert whiskey.

Elwin and the others explained to the women that this was "the real" Dominican Republic and that the Coral Hamaca was "a trap" (*una trampa*)—an elaborate scam to get tourists to pay exorbitant prices for food, drink, and amusement. "Here," Elwin added, "you can see how the people really live. Everything tranquil, everyone having fun." Bunny translated his words into German. The women smiled, nodded their heads, and then gaped in wonder at the mayhem around them.

*Tranquilo* (tranquil or at peace), often heard as a response to a greeting, was a word that peppered the everyday speech of the poor. Beyond the sense of tranquillity, the word connoted a more specific sense of being relatively free from pressing economic needs and unmet familial obligations.

I asked Bunny where he had learned to speak German. He explained that he had lived in Zurich for three years, and then he pulled an expired Swiss driver's license from his wallet to show me. While working as a waiter at the Hotel Don Juan, Bunny had met a Swiss woman, and the couple had fallen in love. During the woman's third visit to Boca Chica, they were married. Bunny went to live with his new wife in Zurich, but the marriage ended after a year, and Bunny found a job as a bouncer at a bar and brothel in Zurich's red-light district. At the brothel Bunny fell in love with a Brazilian sex worker and persuaded her to return with him to the Dominican Republic. When the manager of the bar refused to return the woman's passport until she had settled her debts, a fight ensued, and Bunny stabbed the man, though not fatally. Bunny was

arrested, imprisoned for one year, then deported to the Dominican Republic.

Midway through the story, a pickup carrying three policemen, armed with shotguns and dressed in gray camouflage uniforms, passed the *colmado*. We watched the brake lights flash as the truck stopped twenty meters away, before slowly backing up to where we were sitting.

“*Ven acá!*” (Come here!), the officer in the driver’s seat commanded. Elwin jumped from his chair and approached the open window with his *cédula*. As he spoke, he turned toward us, gesturing with his arm as if to explain the tableau before them. The door swung open, and the police sergeant stepped out, tugging at his belt.

“What hotel are you staying at?” the sergeant asked the women.

“The Hamaca,” Bunny answered. One of the women held up her arm to display the red plastic wristband provided by the hotel.

The sergeant nodded and then, to no one in particular, announced, “These tourists do not belong in this area. This is not a tourist zone. This area is dangerous for tourists.”

“Everything is peaceful here,” Elwin protested. “Everyone is having a good time, without problems, without conflict.”

The sergeant ignored him and addressed the women directly in English: “You must leave this place. It is not safe for you here. We will take you back to the Hamaca for your security.”

There was a flurry of conversation among the women before they grabbed their belongings and climbed into the back of the pickup.

Elwin was livid. As the truck took off down the hill, he stood, arms flailing in the air. “*Coño!*” (an expletive), he yelled at the vanishing truck. “They don’t have the right to do this. We are Dominicans. It’s an abuse.”

A crowd gathered as Bunny tried to calm Elwin, and a discussion ensued about Sergeant Guerrero. A woman, cradling a baby in her arms, proffered that she knew the sergeant’s sister and that the family was originally from Bani. A *motoconcho* related that Guerrero had once shaken him down for five hundred pesos for a missing license plate. “That one,” he said, “is a scoundrel!”

Elwin sat fuming, eyes bloodshot, still peering down the hill. “You know, Esteven,” he said to me. “In this country there is a lack of respect. That one thinks that because I am black, I am not worth anything.” He tugged at the skin of his forearm to show me. “It’s racism. They don’t want us to work with the tourists because they are greedy. They don’t want us to progress, to be at peace.”

“Who?” I asked.

“The police, the rich, all those who have the power . . .”

“Babylon!” Bunny proffered.

Elwin filled everyone’s glass with whiskey and rekindled his good cheer. “But to me that doesn’t matter, because I know that I’m going to overcome all of this. Do you know why? Because I have the knowledge to beat them at their own game.” Elwin lit a cigarette and relaxed his body into the plastic chair.

“Tell me, Esteven,” he continued, tilting his head back and smiling, “what do you think about all of this? About what we are doing here tonight—everybody friends, having a good time. Everything peaceful.”

“It’s perfect,” I replied, not knowing what he was looking for. “It’s like a party of *tígueres*.”

“Exactly!” Elwin exclaimed, grinning. “*Una fiesta de tígueres*.”

If Elwin’s birthday party was a spectacle of transgression, a violation of the symbolic and spatial order of the tourism industry, then the police action was an attempt to reassert that order. Elwin was right to interpret the evacuation of the German tourists, not as a “security” matter, but as an act that reiterated and realigned the system of social distinctions and evaluations that structured, and were structured by, the social division of labor—that is, the allocation of laboring bodies within the political economy of neoliberal capitalism. As such, both its transgression and reiteration exposed, if only fleetingly, the chain of equivalences that fastened the value of laboring bodies to an array of social distinctions within the spatial order of late capitalism.

The *fiesta de tígueres* was very much a spectacle, a theater of the marginalized and poor, which invited its guests to celebrate and indulge in an alternative political and moral economy beyond the pale of the tourism industry—one in which the relationships between “hosts” and “guests,” and the nature of the tourism experience itself, could be contested and renegotiated. Blackness could be interesting, desirable, and, indeed, hospitable, and *tígueres* too could share their good cheer and fortune with foreign guests. At stake for Elwin and the others in their encounter with the police was not merely an opportunity to share in the profits of tourism, an economic “rational choice,” but also an attempt to recalibrate the relationship between who they were and what they could become within the symbolic economy of late capitalism.

This encounter between police and *tígueres* exemplifies many of the everyday “cultural struggles” over the capitalist labor process that pit the state and capital against those who subsisted outside its normalizing

practices (Ong 1991: 281). Clearly, not everyone working in the informal economy brought to those activities the oppositional dispositions exercised by Elwin and his associates. However, what I want to emphasize is that informality constitutes a structural position vis-à-vis the division of labor and its arrangements of power where the discourses and practices underpinning the latter appear in plain view and, therefore, are subject to dispute and contestation. For Elwin and the others, the enforcement of the asymmetrical geography of tourism by the police provoked a recognition of the arbitrariness of the distinctions between formality and informality, legality and illegality, and blackness and its other.

It is to this geography of power and difference, and the spatial practices through which it is constituted, that I now turn. For neoliberal economic restructuring promoted a specific spatial order and spatial politics in Boca Chica. As Jane Jacobs (1996: 1) has noted in a related context, “These expressions and negotiations of imperialism do not just occur *in* space. This is a politics of identity and power that articulates itself *through* space and is, fundamentally, *about* space.” In the next chapter I focus on the spatialization of antagonisms and struggles that were associated with the evolving capitalist labor process in Andrés–Boca Chica—struggles that implicated gender, class, and racial differences, as well as questions concerning the nature and status of Dominican sovereignty under conditions of globalization.