Abajo el Puente

Place and the Politics of Progress in Santo Domingo

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Ph.D., except where indicated, that due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other materials used, and that this thesis is less than 100,000 words in length.

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Abstract

In recent years there has been substantial research on Dominican migration and transnationalism, yet these studies have largely overlooked both the manner in which globalisation generates new localisations and the continuing salience of the state as a mediator between the global and the local. Based upon fieldwork in La Ciénaga, a poor *barrio* of Santo Domingo, this thesis argues that *emplacement*, rather than transnationalism, is paradigmatic of the experiences of poor Dominicans and provides their primary source of unity. Race, ethnicity and social class have long been promoted as structuring the experiences of Caribbean people, but my analysis suggests that these operate more as sources of differentiation, rather than of identification in Santo Domingo's barrios. I examine the strategies and practices deployed by residents to create value in place, overcome their localisation and achieve *progreso* (progress) within the bounds of the state. These include transforming the material environment and its symbolic meanings, elaborating certain social hierarchies and contesting others, and developing locality-based political organisations.

In the Caribbean, it has been usual for studies of cultural oppositions or dualisms to effectively constitute a different genre to studies of class, race and globalisation. My ethnography indicates that this distinction is false. Residents of La Ciénaga deploy cultural oppositions and notion of difference to define a place in the social hierarchies of the barrio and city, while simultaneously recognising the moral value and identical structural position of those around them. Popular politics in Santo Domingo are characterised by this tension between social stratification and the elaboration of cultural value in place. This thesis develops a political and social economy of value that addresses both the bases of stratification

in the sphere of production *and* the ways in which projects of self-creation, such as through consumption, allow for the elaboration of cultural value and meaning for individuals and social groups. Given the importance of locality to popular politics, I argue that this integrated approach is necessary to any assessment of the transformative potential of community organisations and other political movements in Santo Domingo.

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Introduction: *Abajo el Puente*

The visitor arriving at Santo Domingo International Airport enjoys a pleasant taxi ride into the capital city along the well-maintained Las Americas expressway that runs parallel to the calm, blue Caribbean Sea. Along the way, monuments and sculptures promote the nation as a cultural destination, while billboards advertise local products: Maggi stock, Presidente beer, and Brugal rum. Dusty lots of three-storey, pastel-coloured, concrete-rendered apartments sit separated from the sea by the bustle of cars, minibuses and motorbikes. Concrete barriers guard pedestrians from the road. However, the barriers are continually breached by people searching for a shorter route between bus stops, to a vendor's stall, or from an apartment to the coconut-lined paths along the rocky shore.

The heart of the city lies on the far side of the Ozama River. Most tourists are introduced into the city via the floating bridge that leads straight into the *zona colonial* (colonial zone) the old Spanish city and the capital's main tourist destination. Other traffic crosses into the national district via the twin bridges, Juan Bosch and Duarte, the former named after the Dominican Republic's first but short-lived democratically elected President and the latter after the nation's founding father, Juan Pablo Duarte. Looking left from these bridges, one sees the colonial zone with its fine colonial

architecture, shopping and restaurants. It slopes down toward the *malecón*, a long stretch of waterfront and the centre of Santo Domingo's social life with plenty of places for tourists and locals alike to enjoy a cold beer. It begins where the *zona colonial* meets La Ciénaga and the Ozama River and runs past the zona colonial along the Caribbean Sea for ten kilometres or so.

Looking right, one sees a cluster of tiny tin-roofed Caribbean houses, partially hidden by tropical greenery. They seem as though they are poised to slip into the river. This is La Ciénaga, a squatter settlement and one of the poorest *barrios* in Santo Domingo. The area is referred to as *abajo el puente* (under the bridge) because its main entrance is located under the Duarte Bridge. As Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof notes in his account of Santo Domingo and New York, 'because it was visible to anyone crossing the … bridge, La Ciénaga became emblematic to Santo Domingo residents who commonly referred to any marginal settlement as "under the bridge"' (Hoffnung-Garskof 2008:169). La Ciénaga is therefore known despite itself.

Bridges and highways have stood as symbols of *progreso* (progress) in the Dominican Republic since the American occupation of the 1920s. Looking from the bridge implies looking from a position of relative progreso to sites that are seen as its antithesis. To outsiders, La Ciénaga contradicts notions of what the modern city – and the modern nation – should be. It challenges the state's long-held dreams of development that would permit the nation to take its rightful place on the world stage. La Ciénaga is not just a local development problem: it symbolises the difficulties involved in realising national and individual prosperity and autonomy. As a threat to an ideal social order, it evokes strong emotional responses and a discourse that seeks to emplace and classify the barrio and others like it. Naming marginalised barrios located in proximity to the bridge as "abajo el puente" locates them in the social order, rendering them comprehensible, naturalised, and mute. It is *unnatural* that the poor reside in the city, and if they are there, then they should be contained at sites that are marginal to progreso. La Ciénaga's high visibility is thereby transformed from a symbol of rupture requiring a response to a symbol of difference and distance. The barrio becomes the home of people who reside in another place and another time.

Figure 1. View from the Duarte bridge of La Ciénaga (bordering the Ozama River) and Guachupita (at the top of the cliff).

Figure 2. View of Puente Juan Bosch from the River Ozama next to La Ciénaga.

For those who live under the bridge, the view is rather different. *Cienigüeros* (residents of La Ciénaga) tend to view the relationship inversely: they propose that it is natural for the poor to migrate from the country to the city. The city is the primary site of progreso and it is quite unnatural for the poor to be excluded from it. After all, they are the people who are likely to benefit most from both economic and civic advancement. The disjunction between these two visions of social order generates some interesting interpretations of belonging, legitimacy and the value of people and places. Cienigüeros resist the naturalisation of their poverty and their discursive exclusion from progreso, yet they also reproduce hierarchies among themselves, drawing on a regime of value tied to material wealth, citizenship, gender, race and age. They objectify these distinctions in space, while using place politically to realign their community with the bridge as icon of progress. For those who reside in La Ciénaga, the politics of place abajo el puente is central to their struggle for progreso.

Entering the Field

I originally went to the Dominican Republic to study the impact of notions of race and class on the operations and efficacy of labour and community organisations. Historically, race has intersected with class in the Caribbean to generate enduring divisions with a range of regional permutations. Owing to its specific style of nationalist politics, the Dominican Republic had not experienced the black pride movements that took place elsewhere in the region. Under the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961), national culture was defined in terms of *hispanidad* (Hispanic-ness) and *antihaitianismo* (anti-Haitianism), characterised by an alliance with Europe and whiteness in opposition to Africa and blackness. Trujillo's dictatorship and the subsequent authoritarian rule by the historian Joaquin Balaguer (1966-78 and 1986-96)) left very little space for oppositional politics. During a brief period of democracy in the 1980s and after Leonel Fernandez won the presidency in 1996, political opportunities opened up. For a while this led to a range of flourishing labour, professional and other popular movements (Espinal 1995). Through Ferguson's (1993) work, I knew of the United Confederation of Workers and the Collective of Popular Organisations. I also knew that in more recent years they had become fragmented. Nonetheless I thought that these

organisations might be the focus of my research. I was interested in how politics was being re-shaped, whether or not notions of race had become more explicit, and critiqued, and to what extent the poorest Dominicans engaged with these changes. Coming from a strong Labor family in Australia, I subsequently realised that these interests seemed natural given my background. I took it for granted that this *was* politics and that a focus on unions (weren't they always there?) would take me quickly to the heart of issues among the poor.

Soon after my arrival in Santo Domingo, the *Pontifica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra* (PUCUMM) organised for me to stay with a mother and her daughter in the middle-class suburb of Gazcue, not far from the Zona Colonial, while I undertook archival research and planned my fieldwork. I intended to live in a poor community and conduct research with a labour organisation. I consulted with the Dr Radhamés Mejía, the Vice-Rector of the Universidad Católica, who received my ideas with enthusiasm. He advised me to concentrate on popular organisations rather than labour ones. Given that I had no previous experience in the Dominican Republic and needed to engage an organisational field within my research time frame of eighteen months, he suggested that this was more feasible. Certainly the Vice-Rector confirmed the views of Escobar (1988) and Ferguson (1993) concerning political schisms in the labour movement. He may also have considered my gender and my newness to his society. Whatever the particular factors involved, I also found that, among cienigüeros, the more durable organisations had been popular ones based on community, rather than workplace, participation. The prominence of the former is predictable given the size of the Dominican Republic's informal sector and the growth of Santo Domingo's *barrios marginados* (marginal barrios) since the early 1980s. Much of this has come through rural to urban migration (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, I learned that the Catholic church was closely involved with many of these city-wide organisations and built local grassroots organisations in a number of barrios around the city, including San Andres where Gregory's (2007) fieldwork was based. My consultations at the outset opened up a different type of social experience and politics for me - the struggle for space that came with residing in a barrio, and the politics of place in Santo Domingo. This became my research focus.

Dr Mejía arranged for me to meet with Father Mario Serrano, the director of the Centro de Estudios Sociales Padre Juan Montalvo (The Father Juan Montalvo Social Studies Centre, or CES). After some consideration of my topic, Father Serrano advised me to live in the community of La Ciénaga, one of the poorest barrios in the city. La Ciénaga had been settled since the late 1960s and had a tumultuous political history. Its residents had experienced two state *desalojos* (evictions) in 1977 and 1991, and had worked closely with a number of popular organisations over the years. The *Comité Popular para la Defensa de los Barrios* (COPADEBA) had long been active in the barrio and continued to campaign for land titles for residents (to date no resident of La Ciénaga holds a title to the land they occupy). New organisations such as *Ciudad Alternativa* (Alternative City) were involved in planning community development, and the CES had set up the *Comité para el Desarrollo del Barrio de La Ciénaga* (CODECI) in September 1998. Since this barrio had been so central to popular politics over the past few decades, it seemed like a good place to observe popular political, cultural and social responses to recent changes in the Dominican political climate.

My decision to heed Father Serrano's advice was reinforced as I planned to move from my middle-class residence to the barrio. The woman I lived with in Gazcue, and many of the other people I had come to know, were shocked that I was going to live abajo el puente. Given that I had already visited the barrio with Father Serrano and felt it to be friendly and relatively safe, I was surprised at the strength of this response. I asked my acquaintances to explain their concern and learnt that there was a growing sense of social crisis in Santo Domingo. People were worried about social unrest linked with the structural adjustments brought by recent economic recession. They linked this with a growth in crime, especially in robberies and violent crime (see Chapter 6). La Ciénaga, with its material poverty visible from the bridge, was indicative of the crisis and also seen as a source of the unrest.

When I moved to La Ciénaga in January 2005, I found that there was also a sense of crisis in the barrio, but it was neither new nor concerned entirely with the problems of the middle class. Abajo el puente, residents were certainly worried about crime, but this was not the sum total of their politics. Their primary concerns were to make a living and achieve a decent standard of living. Cienigüeros

were still struggling for land rights and basic services, experienced discrimination in the workforce and had limited mobility through traditional vehicles such as education. Local and citywide organisations, run directly or indirectly through the CES, were playing a key role in liaising with various levels of government and NGOs to obtain these basic facilities. However, most residents were not involved directly in these organisations, leaving the work to the politically inclined. Since these people were generally neighbours who engaged with each other on a regular basis, most people were aware of developments within their community organisations. They discussed the issues among themselves and the less involved passed their opinions on to those who attended meetings.

In La Ciénaga, it was community needs that shaped the organisations' goals rather than vice versa. The politics of the barrio was pragmatic and tangible. Moreover, not being a workers' movement, participants, in the main, did not view themselves in class terms. Many barrio people would describe themselves as *gente pobre* (poor people), but they would never describe themselves as *clase obrero* (working class). Nor did they view their structural position in a racialised way, although the residents of the barrios were on average darker-skinned than residents in wealthier areas. The work of Dominican scholars such as Juan Bosch (1992) and Roberto Cassá (1982; 1984; 1991a; 1991b; 1995) on social class, and Silvio Torres-Saillant (1998; 2000) on race, had clearly not taken hold in the idiom of barrio popular politics. Yet, from an analytical viewpoint, 'class' and 'race' clearly shape the experiences of poor barrio residents. Residents of La Ciénaga certainly constitute a social class in the Weberian sense of sharing life chances, and racial discrimination was identified by cienigüeros themselves, albeit obliquely (see Chapters 5 and 6). How, then, did residents view their place in the city's larger social order, and how did this inform their politics?

This question shaped my research agenda. I realised that I was now asking how and which forms of value and meaning are generated and sustained in barrio life. I set about studying the neighbourhood's social relationships and political organisations to find out how locals view their position from abajo el puente, and what politics means for the severely impoverished and marginalised. I found that in the main, they work to secure a house, services and freedom from

violence in order to claim the status of being respectable and to gain secure employment for themselves or their children.

In recent anthropological studies, especially those concerned with politics, these types of issue have not been especially prominent. The choice of topics has been influenced more by notions of resistance or transgression than by struggles for respectability and a modicum of security. Where group struggle has not been present, ethnographers have often focused on personal transgression (such as daring sexualities and performative practices) and the criminalised economy based on drugs or armed neighbourhood gangs. In the terms of Peter Wilson, whom I will discuss below (see Chapters 1 and 5), 'reputation' has loomed much larger than 'respectability.' Yet my research suggests that the majority of the urban poor do not view themselves in terms of transgression and resistance; on the contrary, their politics involves claiming legitimacy in the city's social order, and securing lives that give them dignity as citizens. The sharp edge in their lives, and that around which community organisations revolve, is the difficulty they face in claiming and securing conditions that others take for granted. Cienigüeros aim to access resources they see around them by using the vehicles of progress that are available. In the process, they critique the state's distribution of resources, but not the role of the state itself, or those of other organisations, including the church, through which they try to bring pressure on the state.

For those who are economically extremely disadvantaged and unable to migrate, is the struggle for a place, and rootedness and respectability simply a collaboration with the powerful? This thesis does not seek to resolve this issue theoretically. It does, however, locate struggle in place and seeks to bring a steady gaze to the experience and organisations of highly marginalised barrio life.

Ethnography, Archival Research and Surveys

Upon my arrival in La Ciénaga[2], I was welcomed into the house of Altagracía,[3] a seventy-two year old woman who lived alone. She immediately introduced me to her extended family members who lived in the same street. There was a great deal of daily traffic between the three houses in which they lived. From the very first day I was included in their circle and would spend time in each location. The house of her cousin Pedro, in particular, was a centre of social activity. In the afternoons his two sons and other members of the extended family would congregate in the backyard to drink sweet black coffee and gossip. Altagracía and Pedro's wife, Felicia, would visit each other every day. Because Altagracía sold products from home, she had a regular stream of visiting neighbours who would often sit down for a chat. Besides her sales, members of the community would often come in to inform Altagracía of political developments in the community. I was introduced to many community workers simply through being present in Altagracía's house. As a result, this family group became the locus for my entrée into the community. The family members also represented a range of different approaches to community living and strategies for livelihood. Therefore comparing the family members became an important method for identifying the specificities of barrio life.

In order to get a sense of community structure, I spent much of my first month attending various community meetings and religious organisations. Soledad, a neighbour of Altagracía and the local representative of COPADEBA, was particularly helpful in taking me to meetings of COPADEBA and CODECI. Amélie, a Haitian woman who has lived in the Dominican Republic since 1981, searched me out to take me to church events and to walk around the barrio. Throughout my stay I continued to attend meetings of COPADEBA, CODECI and the *Junta de Vecinos* (Neighbourhood Council). I attended mass at least twice a week, sat in on prayer groups, and helped out with the church's group for pregnant women. I attended the Pentecostal church on a number of occasions and observed their outdoor *cultos* (lit. "cult", but meaning "worship"). I also helped the CES by

[2] I spent ten months in La Ciénaga after four months in middle-class Gazcue, a total of fourteen months' fieldwork.
[3] All names of La Ciénaga's residents have been changed.

translating their website into English and attended a variety of local workshops and press conferences. My observations of a range of meetings held by different groups gave me an understanding of the groups and strategies developed to address the immediate problems of poverty, as well as the ways in which community workers understood themselves and these problems. All these activities helped embed me in the community and provided me with a sense of the social in place. I became integrated into existing networks, particularly among the community women, and would often visit these women in their homes.

Much of my participant observation was undertaken on the street, as cienigüeros tend to spend time outdoors in the afternoon and evenings socializing and catching the evening breeze. Since residents tend to leave their front doors open, there is a great deal of movement between house and street. I was able to wander freely between groups and sit with whomever was willing to talk to me. I made it a habit to write brief field notes on pieces of paper in the evenings. During that period there was rarely electricity in the night so I would wait until the following morning to type up my notes on my laptop.

The disadvantage of the barrio's sociability was that it made it difficult to record interviews due to noise levels and lack of privacy. I also learnt that my immediate neighbours did not take appointments too seriously. Therefore the ability to visit people freely was indispensable in finding a suitable interview slot with minimal noise and disruption. Despite these conditions, I managed to produce thirty-four substantial semi-structured interviews[4] with community workers, neighbours, and friends. Altagracía, the woman with whom I lived, was extremely helpful in creating a suitable interview environment. She would often close the front gate and sit outside the door so that I could conduct interviews in peace inside the house.

To supplement my observations and interviews, I sought out printed material about La Ciénaga and surrounding neighbourhoods. I collected publications and booklets about La Ciénaga and city

[4] All interviews were conducted in Spanish. Quotes from participants throughout the text have been translated to English by the author.

development. I made extensive use of Centro Bonó's wonderful document archive, where I had access to a decade of newspaper articles sorted by location. Looking back at newspaper reports of events that took place in La Ciénaga allowed me to understand better what my neighbours were trying to tell me about their life in the barrio and what the community organisations were (and still are) fighting for. Representations of La Ciénaga and its inhabitants in newspapers, on television, in the reports of non-government organisations and in the compilations of the National Statistics Office (ONE) form part of a 'history-as-representation' that holds clues to how class ideologies are created and presented as official history (Yelvington 2002). My historical approach was also influenced by Michel Trouillot's brilliant book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), in which the author demonstrates what can be learnt from recorded history's silences.

In August of 2005, I conducted a barrio-wide survey with the help of two research assistants, Marco Quiroz Rodríguez and Yoselyn Espinal. We surveyed 50 residents in each of the six sectors of La Ciénaga, making a total of 300 surveys. There were 46 questions in the survey, divided into sections on general information, education, family and migration, work, religion, culture, migration, information, community and community organisations. The aim of the survey was to ensure that my data covered a wide range of residents, not just the opinions of people in my immediate locale. I wanted to gauge people's ideas on a number of issues that were mentioned often in casual talk and/or local meetings. Remarks recorded in these surveys appear as quotes throughout the thesis.

The survey gave me the opportunity to assess residents' perceptions of the barrio in contrast to those produced in texts, and to hear their view of what should be done to 'develop' the barrio. While many of the survey's results confirmed my predictions, there were also some surprising results, which I deal with in the following chapters. Before I left La Ciénaga I prepared a report in Spanish and left copies of it with local organisations, the CES and any individuals who requested one. I undertook a second, small survey on the malecón (Santo Domingo's waterfront) to gauge public views of the barrios that might be compared with media reports. These surveys and the Spanish language report on the results from my barrio survey can be found in the appendices.

A Chapter Summary

The thesis consists of an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion. Chapter 1, "A Political and Social Economy of Value", reviews literature relevant to the thesis. It also outlines my theoretical objectives: to offer an account of forms of value and aspiration in everyday barrio life, and show how they are shaped by an ongoing politics of place.

In Chapter 2, "A Society, A City, and La Ciénaga", I outline the history of class and racial ideologies in the Dominican Republic to demonstrate how organisation around land has been historically important for the poor. I also discuss the development of the Dominican Republic into a 'modern' nation. The chapter introduces the long-standing tension between poverty and development in Santo Domingo and introduces La Ciénaga, the field site of this thesis.

Chapter 3, "The Struggle for a Place", introduces the history of La Ciénaga. I describe how the community was populated and residents' initial attempts to transform the land from *monte* (wilderness) into an inhabitable area. After decades of struggle, including two state evictions in 1977 and 1991, the barrio finally gained services with the installation of a sympathetic federal government in 1996. I briefly describe the community organisations that grew out of these struggles and the on-going problems the barrio faces today.

Chapter 4, "Constructing House and Habitus", describes the primary place-making strategy in the community, the construction of a house. The ability of residents to gain land at little or no cost, and to construct their own house, was central to the formation of La Ciénaga. It allowed residents to escape the tough city rental market, expand their living areas, and construct their own dwelling over many years as finances permit. This autonomy has been the primary factor in the elaboration of familial and social relations in the form of a community. The house constitutes a life strategy for the reproduction of the family and the autonomous development of community.

In Chapter 5, "*Arriba* and *Abajo*: 'Dualism' in La Ciénaga", I contrast this sociality with the elaboration of hierarchy and difference within the community. I describe how residents mobilise an

idiom of *arriba* (above) and *abajo* (below) to classify and value spaces and the people who occupy them. I compare this dualism to Caribbean debates about Peter Wilson's (1973) opposition between 'respectability' and 'reputation.' I argue that while this dualism is apparent in discourse, people are by necessity multivalent in practice, engaging with both respectability and reputation in an effort to make a living and carve out a place in the city's social order. Moreover, I question the assumption that 'reputation' is resistant while 'respectability' reflects hegemony. I argue that a discourse of respectability in fact contests the ways in which cienigüeros are situated in city-wide imaginaries of place.

Chapter 6, "Violence, Social Classification, and the State", discusses the violence that is referenced in a city-wide classification of place, and how a fear of violence informs the imaginaries of both rural and urban people. A Dominican moral geography de-naturalises poverty in the city, holding that the poor can only be moral if they are located in the countryside. This moral geography has serious repercussions for poor people in the city, describing them in ways that marginalise them from the workforce and justify their victimization by viewing them as the primary source of crime and social disorder. Cienigüeros have an ambiguous relationship with the state and police, who are simultaneously protectors and oppressors. I argue that state violence has been a crucial factor in limiting political activity, and that it continues to shape community politics and notions of progreso.

In the final chapter of the thesis, 'Transcending Circumstance: Religion, Practice, and *progreso*", I ask what progreso means for cienigüeros and detail some of their strategies to achieve it. The vast majority of residents would like to move to a more 'respectable' barrio but do not have sufficient resources; hence, they turn to vehicles of progress that they can access from within their locality. Some of these strategies aim to transform the community to render it more respectable, and hence change its place in the city's hierarchy. Other strategies are aimed more at transforming the position of the individual. The Catholic church and its political organisations are particularly important in both these strategies. Education also figures strongly, though attaining employment is limited by a competitive labour market and negative images of the barrios and their residents. I compare the church and the state in providing spheres for political action. I argue that while the church's notions

of unity challenge the racism on which Dominican social hierarchy is built and remind the state of its responsibility towards the poor, the state's relative power limits church politics to ameliorating the position of the poor. Despite its diffusion in locality, *progreso* remains primarily a state project.

In the conclusion I return to my original research question to ask whether the politics of place has a broader transformative potential. The conservatism of the state belies the broad spectrum that characterises popular politics in Santo Domingo. Many residents of La Ciénaga are aware of the detrimental effects that globalisation can have for the poor, and throughout Santo Domingo I observed a trend toward recognising a commonality of structural position among marginalised peoples, including both Dominicans and Haitians. I suggest that recognition of commonality could enable a political platform from which to transform both the ideological and material environments in which these struggles are played out. I now turn to a review of the main literature that informs this thesis.

Chapter 1

A Political and Social Economy of Value

> ...the social function and meaning of space, far from losing its significance under conditions of globalisation, is a key stake in the struggles of laboring people against the space-fixing practices of capital and the state (Gregory 2007:239)

In his ethnography of the beachside resort town Boca Chica and its poor neighbouring community of San Andrés, Steven Gregory (2007) explores the effects of globalisation on poor residents as they struggle to make a living. Critiquing the tendency of globalisation discourse to focus on 'movement', he writes about '...the lives, livelihoods, and struggles of people unable to move and "fixed" in space by economic hardship and by spatial practices restricting movement, citizenship rights, and access to a living wage' (Gregory 2007:6). Residents of San Andrés have daily contact with global flows through their work in tourism and export manufacturing, but they have little chance to achieve for themselves the mobility of others that they witness. Instead, they are incorporated asymmetrically into a 'spatial economy of difference' in which privilege is protected and hierarchy reinforced on a daily basis.

Gregory's study is a much-needed counterbalance to the vast literature on Dominican international migration (see, for example, Ferguson 2003; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Vicioso 2000), which far outweighs studies of Dominicans at home. While an important object of study, this profusion of

interest in *dominicanyork* and other transnational identities ignores the fact that the majority of Dominicans cannot migrate due to the unfavourable position of the Dominican Republic in the global economy, and of the nation in the global moral order. Even if the residents of San Andrés were to save enough money from their meagre wages to buy a ticket to the United States, they would stand little chance of gaining even a visitor's visa due to their lack of plausible securities. For the residents of San Andrés, *movimiento* (movement) does not signify international migration but rather their limited chances of economic and social mobility within their local communities. Their localization testifies to the power of the transnational economy.

Taking a lead from Gregory, the present study is intended to add to the literature on Dominicans at home. It illustrates ethnographically a less acknowledged side of globalisation, entailing localization rather than diaspora. But unlike Gregory's study, the residents of La Ciénaga (located half an hour's drive west of San Andrés) do not make a living in global industries such as tourism or factory work. Instead, they work overwhelmingly in the city's service industry as domestic servants, security guards, construction workers, and street vendors. However, their experiences of both globalisation and localization are similar. Cienigüeros migrate from the country to the city in search of a modern life and possibilities for progress, but the vast majority find that the barrios act as a terminus for their aspirations. Despite a profusion of international links, remittances, migration experience and relatives abroad, *progreso* beyond the barrio is difficult. Barrio residents find themselves 'shackled to space' by virtue of their position in the lowest stratum of those who nonetheless depend on a global economy.

I argue that in Santo Domingo this emplacement becomes paradigmatic of the experiences of the poor and their most meaningful source of unity. Race, ethnicity and social class have long been promoted as structuring the experiences of Caribbean people (see, for example, Austin 1984; Smith 1982; Williams 1991; Yelvington 1995), yet in Santo Domingo's barrios these operate more as sources of differentiation than of identification. This tension between difference and common purpose is the sine qua non of practice among *cienigüeros* (residents of La Ciénaga) as they struggle to overcome their localisation and attain progreso. They deploy cultural oppositions to define their

own place in the barrio's social hierarchy. At the same time, they recognise the moral value and identical structural position of those around them. That the path to progreso is fraught with such ambivalences and contradictions is testimony to the power of the transnational economy and the Dominican state as they mediate and shape the contours of local lives.

In the Caribbean, it has been usual for studies of cultural oppositions or dualisms and studies of class, race and globalisation to constitute almost different genres. In this thesis I argue that the struggles of Caribbean people cannot be understood fully with reference only to structural and pragmatic accounts of class and race, or to renderings of local value and its roles in classification and self-creation. This study seeks to integrate these concerns and to focus on the struggle for 'progress' and a respectable place among the residents of the barrio. I explore how politics, social class and the racialised order of *dominicanidad* mediates the production and distribution of cultural value. This struggle reflects in turn the economic, social, and political constraints of a marginal and local life in the context of globalisation.

Modernity and Struggles for Self-Creation

The struggles of people in Santo Domingo's barrios are concerned in the first instance with livelihood, followed closely by dreams of progreso and the attainment of a certain sort of 'modern' life that has not been universally realised in the Caribbean, despite centuries of engagement with modernity. As Mintz and Price note:

> Long before the common features of the industrial West (imported foods, time-conscious work regimes, factory production, impersonal work relations, etc) had spread through much of Europe, they were commonplace aspects of life for Caribbean slaves. (Mintz & Price 1985:9)

That is, an emergent capitalist mode of production instigated modern working conditions for slaves on plantations. This entailed a radical social alienation of enslaved Africans and their objectification

as property. Race became inextricably linked with one's productive labour, naturalising the socio-economic order. The relations of slaves to modernity were of a mechanistic and highly stratified variety, a far cry from notions of modernity as universal progress that are promoted by Caribbean nations today. The end of slavery heralded an expansion of modernity's possibilities as its technologies could be put to use to construct new societies and elaborate culture. Yet the extent to which Caribbean societies were able to break with the stratifications of the past and the global order which produced them remains a question posed repeatedly in accounts of different states and regions.

Daniel Miller's (1994) work on modernity and material culture in Trinidad presents some interesting insights into the problems of modernity and self-creation. There are two primary ways in which his work has influenced this thesis. The first concerns his more general writings on material culture and objectification, and the second relates to his writing on the issue of dualism as it pertains to the Caribbean. Miller argues that the struggle to differentiate the self in modernity is exemplified in the Caribbean in both consumption and forms of cultural dualism. Where the first is concerned, it is Miller's contention that a focus on consumption and the process of objectification in modern life reveals the strength of modernity and capitalism: that it generates much wider choices and possibilities for objectification and self-creation. In La Ciénaga, where one of the central issues of self-creation concerns the construction of a house, Miller's views are pertinent. Similarly, Miller's argument that dualism in the Caribbean has its roots in the experience of modernity seems to carry weight in a Dominican context. This thesis pursues these two themes in order to explore how people create value as they engage with both the promises and constraints of modernity.

Miller gives an account of modernity based on consumption and objectifications of the self through consumption, not the particular features of capitalist production. Contra Marx, Miller argues that alienation and rupture are *not* the outcome of being divorced from the products of one's labour. Rather, alienation should be understood in terms of a rupture of temporal consciousness. However, alienation does not have to result from the condition of modernity. Rapid change and the experience of transience limit people's ability to depend upon social relations in shaping their identities. As a

result, values and meanings are increasingly objectified in things rather than social relationships. Although our objectifications remind us of our modernity and represent a rupture with the past, mass consumption gives us a greater range of possibilities for self-creation and freedom than ever before. Through such objectifications we realise ourselves as individuals and as social beings and thereby escape alienation. The latter is most likely to occur when people are unable to appropriate products, to consume freely. Nonetheless, mass'produced goods, rather than being a symbol of oppression (through their production) or inequality (through their distribution), hold potential for greater freedom through self-realization.

Miller is correct to argue that mass consumption has changed the lives of people all over the world, yet his optimism seems somewhat premature when applied to Dominican dreams of a modern life[5]. Mass consumption may have brought benefits to many people, but millions of others are limited in their possibilities for self-creation by their place in the production process. Factory workers in San Andrés who earn less than a living wage producing goods for offshore consumption certainly express themselves through objectification in material goods, but fall far short of realizing the ideal modern life dreamt of in Dominican social imaginaries (see Taylor 2004). For example, their irregular electricity supply, substandard housing and their daily struggles to feed their families are indicative of this shortfall. As factory workers, their experiences of modernity still resemble the sort described by Mintz and Price (1985) for plantation workers, and their capacities to take advantage of modernity's benefits are limited. Their freedom, though apparent in the ways they choose to dress and to decorate their houses, is only partial as long as their stratification is seen as a natural outcome of an impartial economic system – as an accident of birth rather than as part of an ongoing process of stratification in a global market that is driven by real human subjects.

Miller is certainly aware of these inequalities. For example, in his ethnography of modernity in Trinidad, he recognizes that wealth is important in the struggle toward the respectability of transcendence. His intention is not to deny inequality, but rather to point to how consumption as a

[5] Notwithstanding Miller's argument that consumption is not 'some new domain of choice, but in a sense the contrary – that increasingly people have no choice but to focus upon consumption as the only remaining domain in which there are possibilities of sublation' (Miller 1987:221).

central feature of modernity has been overlooked in favour of production (1994:252). In this thesis, I draw upon his work to show how the objectification of the self and social networks in material form, particularly the house and barrio life, is a central strategy for poor residents of Santo Domingo in their struggles to put down roots in the city and forge possibilities for progress. For cienigüeros, consumption and aesthetics are integral to their understandings of what a modern life entails. The material environment, in both its transient and enduring aspects, facilitates self-creation and social life. I show how these objectifications can also be political when they conflict with forms of value and regulation imposed by state and society.

Miller also notes how consumption involves processes of differentiation. He discusses this in terms of cultural dualism, which has been identified in a number of different contexts in the Caribbean, most notably in Peter Wilson's (1973) ethnography *Crab Antics*. According to Wilson, life on the island of Providencia, off the coast of Colombia, entails two parallel value complexes. One is 'respectability', characterized by European-derived indicators of status such as education, monogamy, church attendance and an upright family life. The second is 'reputation', characterized by flexibility and ingenuity in order to get by, promiscuity and street life. Wilson argues that 'reputation' is a genuinely Creole system that emerged to provide an alternative to European values. This dualism emerged from the differential power of the colonial system and its features were defined by local cultural specificities.

On the basis of his ethnography, Miller suggests that the source of Wilson's dualism may not be the differentiation of two value systems. Rather, its source may lie in modernity itself and its articulations with Caribbean history. Modernity is characterized by a temporal consciousness of ephemerality, but also by a concomitant search for rootedness, found in traditions. This split does not result inevitably in dualism everywhere, but has appeared in the Caribbean due to its intensive experiences of the processes of change and rupture, including the alienation of slavery and economic instability. Dualism becomes manifest in social distinctions such as ethnicity, rather than the ethnicity providing the basis for dualism. Miller recognizes that relations of production in slavery and indentured labour led to rupture and alienation, but argues that essentially Trinidad has

been able to overcome its legacy of the past, insofar as Trinidadians no longer define themselves in relation to a colonial power. Instead, they have developed a unique national identity that is based on ethnic dualism and realised through consumption. Consumption presents a path for the resolution of the dualism, as objectifications can simultaneously express both tradition and change.[6]

My concern is not to join the long quest for the source of Caribbean dualisms either in cognitive or social structures, but rather to point to some dualistic idioms in the Dominican Republic and indicate how they reflect rupture and change. In Santo Domingo, dualism has emerged under similar conditions to those described by Miller. He relates how a sense of rapid change and insecurity created by Trinidad's oil boom (circa 1976-1983) and its demise heightened a search for rootedness, or transcendence, amidst modernity's transience. In Santo Domingo, a series of economic crises from the early 1980s resulted in polarisations of the poor and wealthy, which are expressed idiomatically in terms of *arriba* and *abajo*, high and low spaces corresponding to social status. Similarly, a national ideology separating *dominicanidad* from *haitianismo* emerged out of the violent separation of the Dominican Republic from Haiti in 1844. Its ideas were renewed with force during the Trujillo's dictatorship which Junot Diaz has recently described as involving a Haitian genocide (Díaz 2008:218). My ethnography diverges from Miller's in suggesting that Santo Domingo's dualism is not just a differentiation but also a stratification through which certain social sectors marginalise others (see Austin-Broos 2008). Furthermore, these stratifications suggest a perpetuation of the alienation and racialisation that were present on Caribbean plantations. Objectifications cannot resolve the contradictions of this dualism because they do not address their basis in asymmetric power relations, which limits the realisation of modernity's freedoms.

In her review of *Crab Antics*, Constance Sutton contends that Wilson's dualism collapses the distinction between social and cultural structure, 'thus one cannot readily ask questions about the linkage between ideology and social structure, or about how changes in power and control of economic resources influence values, categories of thought, or the persistence of cultural dualism'

[6] Note that Miller writes of a 'non-dualistic model of the relations between people and things… achieved by approaching objectification as a process of development in which neither society nor cultural form is privileged as prior, but rather seen as mutually constitutive' (1987:18).

(Sutton 1974:189). That is, by locating the source of dualism in local cultural values, Wilson de-emphasizes the power relations and externalities that shape life on Providencia and masks the conditions under which cultural values are shaped and continue to be practiced. In creolising the cultural value of reputation, Wilson gives it cultural authenticity, which is then read back onto Providencia's subjects to classify them as a certain sort of people with values that are opposite to the dominant colonial ones. Yet, as Miller points out, the *source* of reputation could easily be *colonial* rather than Creole (Miller 1994:261-2). Conflating culture and structure, as Sutton suggests, obscures the role of the transnational economy in the creation of cultural value and the reproduction of the social order.

In my explanations of dualism in Santo Domingo, I endeavour to keep this analytical distinction in mind: to honour the individuality and specificity involved in the creation of cultural value, while examining the broader historical social structures within which these processes take place. I believe this is a necessary method for analysis of *any* socio-cultural system, but particularly so for the Caribbean where structural processes have resulted in so much violence, yet culture is deployed so creatively. The existence of structural violence clearly does not deny cultural creativity (see Austin-Broos In press; Farmer 2003:40). It is not a contradiction that production systems have dominated, and continue to dominate, Caribbean social structure and experience, but that Caribbean people respond imaginatively, using vehicles such as consumption to mediate identity and autonomy. Rather, they are fields that interface as social life plays out. Indeed, this articulation between production and consumption may be seen as the *source* of modernity's contradictions, as an explanation for how people simultaneously experience transience and transcendence. It could also be viewed as the primary *resolution* of these contradictions as people attempt to reconcile their search for progress with their desire to put down roots through engagement with the spheres of both production *and* consumption. My aim is to bring these dimensions of a social and political economy of value in Santo Domingo into one broad framework.

Political Economy and Self-Creation

Having outlined my approach to Miller, I now turn to the arena of political economy and race. As a balance to Miller, I present some of the ideas of Don Robotham on modernity as characterized by production and as the primary source of identity. Miller and Robotham's perspectives have several similarities. Both view modernity as a real experience located in the material world, and both view the material world as a route to resolving modernity's challenges. Furthermore, Miller (1987:223) explicitly recognizes the importance of production and the need for studies that examine it alongside consumption. But whereas Miller proposes that modern individuality is realised through objectification, Robotham argues that the radical global division of labour is our most salient experience of modernity and our primary source of identity, since specialization provides a source of social differentiation. Robotham argues that this global division of labour links people together more tightly than ever before in what Robotham terms a 'global sociality'. It is this global sociality, then, which is the *basis* of the modern individual's experience.

Furthermore, the global division of labour is responsible for the vast array of forms available for consumption. The continuation of these past asymmetric relations means that while globalized finance capital lays the foundation for a new individuality, it also makes its realization impossible because it generates inequalities and conceals their source. Forms of 'spontaneous consciousness' created in the market are not only uneven, but also mask a 'hidden abode' of production, where stratifications, especially class, are actually created. Creating identity in the marketplace is therefore problematic, because it divorces inequalities from their material basis. The market reduces all forms of value to a common currency that can be consumed through the creation of 'identity'. In their edited book *Millennial Capitalism*, Jean and John Comaroff discuss the reduction of material differences to the terms of identity:

> As neoliberal conditions render ever more obscure the rooting of inequality in structures of production, as work gives way to the mechanical solidarities of "identity" in constructing selfhood and social being, class comes to be understood, in both popular and scholarly discourse, as yet another personal trait or lifestyle choice. (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001:15)

Their observations could be extended to cover all sorts of differentiations and stratifications. Race in particular has been presented in terms of a self-identification rather than as a category constructed historically according to geopolitical interests (see following section). While such self-identifications certainly have their political import, especially in inverting the values given to these categories, rendering race/class as an individual process risks losing sight of the profoundly social processes that underpin them as technologies of stratification. By locating the source of modern individuality in the global division of labour, Don Robotham averts a rupture between experience and context, allowing for individual self-creation (such as through consumption), while recognizing the basis upon which it rests. For the individual to flourish under neoliberalism, the sources of inequality must be unmasked. This requires not so much appropriation of objects, but more importantly control of the 'determining social forces' that create them (Robotham 2005:88). Unless the bases for structural inequalities, located in the sphere of production, are appropriated, self-creation will continue to be constrained by one's position in the global division of labour.

Production, Consumption and the Local-Global Order

Regardless of whether one's focus is production or consumption, the notion of a 'global sociality' suggests that self-creation is closely associated with global processes. In recent years, there has been an efflorescence of scholarly work on this topic. The long history of Caribbean connectivity with other places, and the proliferation of these connections in recent decades, has made the region a particularly fruitful area for research.

Carla Freeman (2001) describes how higglering allows Barbadian women to circumvent some of the gender constraints of Barbadian society and resituate themselves as traders and consumers. The rural female higgler (marketeer) has long been a fixture of the West Indies, but a new form has developed among lower middle class or upper working class urban women which takes advantage of transnational connections (see also Ulysse 2008). In most of the cases that Freeman (2001) cites, transnational higglering is not an explicit identity or form of work, but rather an economic strategy to supplement their wages from their days jobs (such as in data entry). However, higglering is

clearly not just about economics: the women Freeman writes about use their transnational trips for leisure and consumption as well as for business. They may go with female friends on shopping expeditions to other Caribbean countries or to Miami, taking empty suitcases to spend a long weekend shopping and engaging in tourism. The goods they collect are mostly ones that are associated with, and purchased by, women: clothes, household products and toys. On returning to Barbados, the higglers sell these goods among their networks of friends, family and work colleagues.

In this way, transnational higglers take advantage of both the production *and* consumption aspects of transnationalism to engage in novel activities, gain a level of autonomy from their boyfriends and husbands, and expand their social networks. In a later article, Freeman (2007) points to how 'entrepreneurial flexibility' through the entry of women into occupations previously deemed the domain of men (such as running adventure tour companies) can provide a road to social class mobility. Although she notes that this flexibility has its limits because 'the mandate for respectability periodically yanks some adventurous young women back into what has long been understood to be their "proper place"' (2001:262), Freeman argues that women's contestations of respectability and reputation are redefining the cultural meaning of neoliberalism in Barbados. For these women, transnationalism has provided space for the crafting of self-realization on various social levels. Ulysse also argues that ICIs (Informal Commercial Importers) in Kingston 'are avid participants in the global market as contributors to local, national and global economies,' notwithstanding the gender and race constraints that they face (Ulysee 2008:172).

In Jamaica, Don Robotham (1998) describes how a nation-building project that re-valued blackness as central to Jamaicanness faltered in the 1980s because this project failed to transform the economy. Robotham describes how this was followed by a turn toward transnationalism. This new orientation included the exodus of the middle class to the United States, an emphasis on a fun-loving, Caribbean-style brownness in place of a more political blackness, the creation of an informal transnational culture and the growth of transnational industries. That is, when the state appeared to lose salience and power, Jamaicans turned elsewhere for livelihood and identity.

Robotham describes how, through transnational trade, 'the marginalised – those who refuse to passively accept their allotted place in the global or national labor market and in the global ordering of ethnicities, cultures, and nations – create a rhythmic space for themselves' (1998:319). This culture, built upon blackness and defiance, 'carves out its own identity space in the regional and world marketplace' (Robotham 1998:319).

Deborah Thomas (2004) views this shift as having a significant impact upon Jamaican nation-building and identity. She argues that Jamaicans have become cynical about the "race-as-nation" exercise promoted around the time of independence in 1962. In her view, young Jamaicans are identifying more with blacks in the United States and South Africa than with the Jamaican nation. This is a truly 'modern' blackness because it is transnational. According to this view, the process of self-creation no longer depends upon the locality in which one lives: this transnational 'nationalism' opens up a greater range of possibilities for sociality and self-realization. While Robotham's description of the relationship between the Jamaican economy and its culture would appear to support such a shift in orientation, he cautions against dismissing the place of the state in people's lives. He argues that this culture shift 'uses transnational experiences and resources, not so much to champion transnationalism as to reinforce nationalism' (Robotham 1998:319). As Thomas notes, it diffuses nationalism across borders; yet the state remains the centre of this process of identity creation.

This emphasis how globalisation does not in fact dislodge the state, and can reinforce nationalisms as much as transnationalism, presents a parallel to the way in which globalisation has also produced new localisms. This is evident in the Dominican Republic with regard to *dominicanidad* and its complement, *antihaitianismo*. By the 1930s, Haitians provided the main source of labour on Dominican sugar plantations because it was cheaper than Dominican labour (Martínez 1995). The movement of Haitian plantation workers has always been, and still is, subject to strict regulation. Martínez explains that working conditions on *bateyes* (sugar plantations) are so poor that company surveillance is used 'to slow to a trickle the potential flood of labor from the estates' (1995:10). Moreover, Martínez writes that every year the Dominican police arrest undocumented Haitians and,

if they cannot pay a bribe, send them to sugar bateyes to work against their will (1995:9). The police depend upon embodied indicators of nationality, especially skin colour and accent, to identify potential illegal immigrants. Those who evade the police work informally in the lowest niches of the labour market, such as vending in street markets, working in construction, or braiding the hair of tourists on the beaches. Their illegal status restricts their movement to particular localities where they are tolerated by Dominican civilians and authorities, especially where they can contribute to the economy by doing work that Dominicans find undesirable (see Gregory 2007).

It is interesting to contrast the Haitian position in the Dominican Republic with Dominicans in the United States. Ironically, many Dominicans in the United States face marginalisation in the workforce. The US Census reports that just 64.6 percent of Dominican men and 52.9 percent of Dominican women were employed in 2000 (Ramirez 2004:12). Grasmuck writes that, in 1980, around half of the Dominican population in New York were employed in the garment industry (Grasmuck & Grosfoguel 1997:348). As manufacturing declined throughout the 1980s, the number of Dominicans employed in the industry dropped to around twenty-five percent and unemployment increased dramatically. In 2000, the Dominican labour force was still unskilled, with only 17.3 percent of Dominicans in the United States holding managerial, professional or technical occupations (Hernández 2003:4).

Dominicans in the United States also face a challenge to their racial identity. Dominican self-identifications as *indio* (Indian-coloured) are difficult, if not impossible, to uphold in the United States. In her recent book *Black Behind the Ears*, Ginetta Candelario (2007:25) writes how Dominicans are increasingly taking up a black identity ‘as a gesture of solidarity’ with other people who are discriminated against because of their appearance. She cites census statistics that 40 percent of Dominicans in Washington D.C self-identify as ‘black’, compared to 26 percent in New York City (Candelario 2007:22). However, she questions the extent to which Dominicans can *choose* their own racial identity. Dominicans in the United States who continue to identify as indio may be considered black by others, and also be seen to be in denial of their blackness. The adoption of a black identity, though politically motivated, may also be problematic because ‘whatever one

concludes when engaging in racial categorization inevitably draws on presumptions that derive from colonial histories and racist ideologies' (Candelario 2007:6). The category of latino or hispanic has become the primary alternative to polarising definitions of race, allowing Dominicans to attain a regional identity that gels with notions of *dominicanidad* as non-black.

There are many other cases where migration presents challenges to Caribbean people. In his ethnography of crack dealers in Harlem, Philippe Bourgois (1996) describes the attempts of young Puerto Rican men to improve their socio-economic position in American society, with at times tragic consequences. He writes how their parents or grandparents migrated to New York to take up stable factory jobs in New York's manufacturing sector, but the demise of this industry made many Puerto Rican migrants and their children into a redundant labour force. Prevailing notions of Puerto Ricans as an undesirable ethnicity exacerbated their economic marginalisation. A lack of social and cultural capital confined young Puerto Rican men to low-status employment. Bourgois writes of how some of these young men turned to the drug trade in search of autonomy, wealth and power, developing what he terms a 'street culture of resistance' in opposition to mainstream society. He remarks, 'This "street culture of resistance" is not a coherent, conscious universe of political opposition but, rather, a spontaneous set of rebellious practices that in the long term have emerged as an oppositional style' (Bourgois 1996:8). Bourgois views this as an example of the assertion of agency in opposition to structural constraints. In this case, however, these acts of resistance further entrenched a marginal position, rendering those involved as agents of their own destruction and of the communities around them.

This example demonstrates the difficulties in assessing the extent to which social structures determine cultural life. It also draws attention to the transnational context of Caribbean people's struggles for self-creation. For Puerto Ricans in Harlem, the market ultimately decided their fate as workers by moving to a cheaper labour source. The notion of 'free labour', dubious at the best of times, appears meaningless if migrant labour is unable to follow capital and sell its skills, becoming marginalised, even ghettoised and 'surplus to requirement'. Consumption may help these young men elaborate their social identities, but it is their marginalisation in the labour force that structures

their most fundamental social experiences. Their transnationalism, far from permitting realization of modernity's promises, leads to alienation and disenchantment.

While transnationalism is certainly an important aspect of Caribbean life, the scholarly work devoted to its study is often out of proportion to the actual level of transnational practice. This is particularly true for the Dominican Republic, of which very little ethnography has been published. Apart from occasional forays by Sidney Mintz (1971), who was mostly preoccupied by Puerto Rico, and a more sustained effort by Harry Hoetink (1982; 1988; 1994), predominantly on issues of race and class, the Dominican Republic has largely been ignored by non-Dominican academics. Presumably they have been discouraged by the political turmoil and pseudo-dictatorships that followed the failed revolution of 1965. Dominican anthropologists have largely been concerned with researching the country's indigenous past, forms of popular culture and performance, and issues of race (see Andújar 1999; Deive 1975; Torres-Saillant 2000). In contrast, recent studies of Dominicans overseas include studies of Dominican migration are numerous (see Bray 1984; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Hoffnung-Garskof 2002; Sassen-Koob 1979; Vicioso 2000). Two further books focus on Dominican social relations between Santo Domingo and New York: a history of relations between the two cities (Hoffnung-Garskof 2008), and a book about racialised notions of beauty as they are practiced by Dominicans (Candelario 2007).

Recent ethnographies of the Dominican Republic by non-Dominican anthropologists have focused on transnational relations. For example, Stephen Gregory's (2007) book on transnational industries in Boca Chica, Mark Padilla's (2007) book on male prostitutes in Santo Domingo and Denise Brennan's (2004) ethnography of female prostitutes in Sosúa are all concerned with Dominicans working in transnational industries. Given that the Dominican Republic's economy depends so heavily on its transnational industries, and that these contexts may be the most visible or accessible to foreign visitors, this academic focus is not surprising. Furthermore, by focusing on transnational industries within the Dominican Republic, they call attention to how, in Zygmut Bauman's words:

> What appears as globalisation for some means localization for others; signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate. Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values - and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times. (Bauman 1998:2)

Gregory's ethnography in particular draws attention to how the 'freedom to move' is a major, perhaps *the* major, stratifying factor under globalisation. Owing to its localizing effects such as growing social and economic distance between social strata, increased implementation of material and symbolic boundaries, and the shrinking of public space, the classification of people into social groups increasingly takes on spatial dimensions. Boca Chica and San Andres are divided into what Gregory refers to as a 'spatial economy of difference', with (mostly *blanco* [white]) tourists enjoying waterfront hotels, restaurants, and a constant electricity supply, while (mostly *indio*/*Moreno* [Indian-coloured/brown]) Dominicans in San Andres live with few services, small houses and irregular employment. The 'spatial economy of difference' that Gregory describes involves the inscription of difference onto space according to classifications of value such as wealth, nationality, race, and gender.

The *zona turística* (tourist zone) is policed by private capital and state police. Gregory explains how 'Struggles over the meaning, organisation, and social uses of space typically pitted the tourism industry, supported by an assortment of State agencies, against the labouring poor and the neighbourhoods in which they lived' (Gregory 2007:52).[7] Dominicans are discouraged from entering the beaches in front of those hotels by private security guards. They must have licenses (distributed and policed by POLITUR, the region's tourism police) to sell goods to the tourists on the beaches, suggesting 'that the significance of the nation-state and, more generally, of place in structuring a sense of belonging and political commitment is far from settled in the global economy'

[7] Joel Streicker (1997) writes how spatial segregation in Cartagena is increasing as patterns of residence and architectural design are geared toward the tourist industry. Cartagena is marketed to tourists as 'Caribbean', rather than 'Colombian', to reassure tourists who seek a Caribbean-style exoticism without the violence associated with Colombian poverty.

(Gregory 2007:52). POLITUR are active in discouraging tourists from talking to Dominicans even away from the beaches. Gregory cites an incident where he was at a Dominican party to which a young man brought along three German tourists. When police spotted the tourists, they convinced the young women to return with them to the resort zone, arguing that it was not safe for them to hang around in that area. Socially, this policing marks out the 'spatial economy of difference' separating people by race, class and nationality. Economically, this policing makes it difficult for poor Dominicans to earn a living, as tourists are encouraged to buy everything they need in the resort zone. One young man complained to Gregory that he used to charge US$45 to take tourists to the capital for a day, but that with the rise of all-inclusive resorts, on-site tour operators had taken over and were charging as much as US$50 per head (Gregory 2007:3).

A bureaucratic demand for evidence of citizenship is also used to police the poor. Gregory explains that '...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' (Gregory 2007:39). Dominican migrants from rural areas, or children born of Haitian parents, often have difficulty attaining a birth certificate, which is necessary to apply for a national identity card. Children often cannot attend school without a birth certificate. This card is essential to everyday life: without a *cédula*, one cannot apply for a telephone connection, a job in the formal sector, or a passport. People put a great deal of effort and money in trying to attain them, often without success. As a result, they are limited to informal sector employment and thereby also the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy.

Gregory's ethnography demonstrates how deprivation is not just about being denied access to 'greener pastures', but also that the locality itself has changed. Those localised by globalisation are worse off than before, because their capacities for self-determination are eroded by the stratification of place and the policing of boundaries. Asymmetric relations are objectified onto localities, which thereby become the objectification of struggles for social control between political actors. The local and the global are mediated by the state, which is at once a provider and an oppressor: it has

possibilities for tapping into global wealth and providing for its citizens, but it also polices the distribution of resources and privileges, at times violently.

Under these restrictions, race becomes the major idiom to talk about difference and inequality and is *also* the primary unifying factor among people within a locality. The current structures of our 'global sociality' thereby bind people to place, anchoring differences and similarities, rather than diffusing them across time and space. The flexibility of capital is met with the inflexibility of labour regimes and state bureaucracy; transnationalism nationalises, and proximity rather than connectivity continues to govern our projects of self-creation and the elaboration of our social identities.

Order in the Modern City

The localising effects of global capital are most visible in the modern city, even though most poor urban residents have no direct links to it. For Austin-Broos, the city of Kingston is revealing of the spatial hierarchy inherent in modernity:

> Kingston is one of those … cities at once displaced from metropolitan life and yet so much a part of that world that we really understand what "the modern" is: a system that created hierarchical space even as it links the "near" and "far away". This is so for the different quarters of Kingston: for the suburbs of the hills; for the savannah's New Kingston; and for the ghetto milieu downtown. Each space is defined through a sense of hierarchy and through avid communication. (Austin-Broos 1995:162)

In cities such as Kingston, Santo Domingo and Rio de Janeiro, which are at once firmly embedded in modernity and yet make tenuous claims upon it, space is the subject of intense competition: it is a resource that can either bring one closer to the modern centre or condemn one to the symbolic periphery. Poor communities in particular have been contested spaces throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, and there are numerous ethnographies dealing with problems such as marginalisation (Perlman 1976; Perlman 2003), development (Safa 1974), the construction of

squatter settlements (Díaz Barriga & Kleiber 1996; Holston 1991), the maintenance of boundaries (Caldeira 2000; Streicker 1995; Streicker 1997), and links between race, class, and place (Austin 1984; Goldstein 2003). In the rest of this chapter I outline some of the politics surrounding the valuation of poor communities and the responses of people who live in them.

Urban squatter settlements are often the result of capitalist restructuring, such as the dispossession of peasants to make way for large sugar plantations (see Chapter 2). The city is linked with global capital and power through banks, ports and forms of enterprise that provide various services, including financial and leisure services. The rural poor migrate to the city to try to tap into this centre of wealth and power, hoping to make a living and also tap into modernity's benefits, especially education, services, consumption, and culture: in one word, the city's *movimiento* (movement) But they often find the city to be a terminus for their dreams and aspirations, since employment is scarce and socio-economic mobility is limited. The tenuous position of urban migrants was made worse in many Caribbean and Latin American countries by 'structural readjustment' programs that devalued local currencies overnight, resulting in massive inflation in the prices of goods, including staple foods.[8] Concurrently, employment expanded only in pockets and not among those with limited skills.

The economic struggles that poor people face in the city are exacerbated by their social marginalisation. From the favelas of Brazil through the ghettoes of the United States to Jamaican slums, poor neighbourhoods are seen consistently as dangerous spaces, characterised by underdevelopment, disorder, and violence (see Austin-Broos 2005; Bourgois 1996; Caldeira 2000; Jacubowicz 1994; Perlman 1976). Poor urban migrants are often only welcome as long as they are seen to be fulfilling a legitimate economic function, as informal industries are seen to disrupt social and bureaucratic order. Many cities have 'squatter' settlements located in the city centre or adjacent

[8] For more information on IMF (International Monetary Fund) structural adjustment programs in the Caribbean, see, for example, Ferguson, J. 1993. Pain and Protest: The 1984 Anti-IMF Revolt in the Dominican Republic. In *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present* (eds) H. Beckles & V.A. Shepherd. Kingston, Jamaica: I. Randle Publishers; London: J. Curry PublishersRobotham, D. 2005. *Culture, Society and Economy: Bringing Production Back In*. London: Sage PublicationsThomas, J. 1995. *Surviving in the City: The Urban Informal Sector in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press..

to wealthier suburbs. These visible communities are often barely tolerated by the state and middle classes, as their material appearance is symbolic of low status and social disorder. Sprawling slums of shacks built out of found materials, constructed on spaces deemed legally unliveable (by President Balaguer) such as steep hillsides, ravines and river banks, jar with visions of the modern city as a civilized, technologically advanced and, above all, an *ordered* space.

In his writing on partitioned cities, Peter Marcuse argues that 'neither cities nor places in them are unordered, unplanned; the question is only whose order, whose planning, for what purpose, in whose interest' (1995:244). Marcuse's contention is vividly illustrated by Setha Low, who has developed a comprehensive anthropology stretching from the poor in Guatemala City to the gated communities of the United States (see Low 1995; Low 2003; Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003). In recent decades, this question has been of utmost importance to spatial politics in Brazil. For example, representations in the media and public opinion portray rural to urban migrants as backward and lacking the survival skills necessary to successfully adapt to city life (Perlman 1976). Their presence in the city threatens the social order and the path of 'development' that leads to prosperity and modern living. In Brazil and elsewhere, views of the rural poor are often allochronic, presenting them as living a traditional lifestyle that is temporally and spatially distant from modern urban life. This is also a *delegitimation* of their place in modernity, and has resulted in slum clearance programs in many Latin American cities throughout the twentieth century, especially since the 1960s (see Perlman 1976).

Failing slum clearance, the poor are bound in marginal spaces in an attempt to control and limit their presence in the city. Donna Goldstein is among a number of anthropologists who describe how *favelas* in Brazil experience a greater rate of violence than wealthier neighbourhoods and are subject to police violence as a form of social control, 'where documented incidents of brutality have reached absurd proportions' and people who speak out against police abuses are viewed as supporting crime (2003:205). This brutality exacerbates a view expressed by the working and middle classes that the lower classes are the source of violence and propels the construction of walls, fences and other boundaries in wealthy communities (Caldeira 2000). Caldeira rejects this

popular view, arguing that violence is the result of social exclusion that is exacerbated by the construction of walls and barriers. She observed that, as spatial segregation increases in Sao Paulo, the poor become further marginalised and class conflict, including crime and violence, also increases. A discourse relating poverty to crime therefore increases the very danger that was feared in the first place. Ironically, as Bauman points out, in an attempt to keep the poor *out*, the wealthy bind themselves *in*:

> The elites have *chosen* isolation and pay for it lavishly and *willingly*. The rest of the population *finds itself* cut off and *forced* to pay the heavy cultural, psychological and political price of their new isolation. Those unable to make their separate living the matter of choice and to pay the costs of its security are on the receiving side of the contemporary equivalent of the early-modern enclosures; they are purely and simply 'fenced off' without having been asked their consent, barred access to yesterday's 'commons', arrested, turned back and facing a short sharp shock when blundering into the off-limits regions, failing to note the 'private property' warning signs or to read the meaning of the non-verbalized, yet no less resolute for that reason, the 'no trespassing' hints and clues. (Bauman 1998:21-22)

Communities which are bound out 'respond with aggressive action of their own; they try to install on the borders of their ghettoised home ground 'no trespassing' signs of their own making.' (Bauman 1998:22) They express autonomy and agency through the elaboration of cultural and social difference, such as in the practice of rituals, dress, attitudes, breaking rules, and challenging the law. But, as Bourgois' (1996) study of Harlem shows, these attempts are usually characterized as illegal rather than attempts to make territorial claims heard. Challenging boundaries thereby contributes to their fortification. Caldeira argues that the bounding of spaces goes against the *ideal* of the modern city, in which

> …different citizens negotiate the terms of their interactions and socialise despite their differences and inequalities. This ideal of the open city, tolerant to social differences and

> their negotiation in anonymous encounters crystallizes what I call the modern and democratic public space. (Caldeira 2000:303)

Caldeira's vision of the modern city certainly does not apply to Brasília, if Marshall Berman's description is correct. He writes that the new capital was designed to convey a sense of awe at the nation-state's hyper-modernity, while excluding public debate over what modernity should mean. Through failing to incorporate public spaces such as the traditional plaza or leave room for organic growth, Brasília's architecture discourages communication and democratic participation. He argues that 'This problem is especially acute for a modernism that forecloses or is hostile to change - or, rather, a modernism that seeks one great change, and then no more' (Berman 1982:7). If the city is built in such a way that it is complete, then there is nothing left to do and it cannot develop from within. Brasília may signify the hopes and dreams of the people at the time it was built, but the places people dream of building are not necessarily those that they want to live in.

Creating Place and Value in Locality

Bound in localities that are valued negatively, residents engage in a social and political struggle to reclassify themselves and the places in which they live. 'Squatter' settlements have been particularly important in the struggles of lower class urban residents for livelihood and autonomy, as they permit families to construct their own housing and live rent-free (Holston 1991). Attaining land is rarely the 'disorderly' process that it is represented in public discourse. Rather, the creation of informal settlements is often done in a coordinated and regulated manner. As has been the case in Santo Domingo, would-be 'squatters' are often sold the 'right' to occupy a piece of land by an existing occupier or local official. Holston (1991) describes how, in Sao Paulo and Brasília, networks of family and friends would stake out a vacant piece of land on the outskirts of the city that may be untitled or earmarked for development. They would make detailed plans as to how to divide it up between them, incorporating roads, lots and public spaces. They would then move onto the land in the middle of the night and construct makeshift shacks with the aim of replacing them with concrete houses over time as resources permit.

Holston uses the term ‘autoconstruction’ in preference to ‘squatter settlement’ to denote the quasi-legal nature of many such settlements. Besides providing a rent-free place to live and the possibility to construct a concrete house over time, autoconstruction allows residents to exercise agency through creativity, the elaboration of social relations and the creation of value. Holston describes how Brazilians actively engage in the design of their house, ‘making domestic architecture in Brazil a privileged sign system for a literate public’ (Holston 1991:457). A house in construction signals its owner’s intentions and is a symbolic means of displaying membership in a moral community that is promoted through architectural and domestic elements such as televisions and shelves. But meeting the basic criteria of what a house should be does not bring distinction: it is necessary to be creative. In contrast to Bourdieu (1984), Holston argues that the poor do not simply make the “choice of the necessary” by pursuing pragmatic choices, but think about style and distinction. The houses are original copies and their inspiration comes from a wide variety of sources, including television, magazines, other people's houses and the experiences of the poor working in homes of the wealthy.

Of course, constructing a house in an illegal settlement is also a political and social act. These ordered takeovers are significant because they have forced the state and public to rethink their perceptions of poor spaces and people as “disorderly”. Many of the communities that Holston describes have fought for, and received, legal title to the land they occupied. The process of gaining land title teaches people about the state’s legal system**,** and politicises communities. Holston writes that if such action is conceptualised in terms of rights, rather than merely material possession, this politicisation can be transferred into ongoing political struggles by grassroots political organisations for local infrastructure such as electricity and water supply, or broader political benefits that affect the lower classes collectively. Issues of land title and community development therefore come to underpin popular politics in such a way that ‘It may not be an exaggeration to say that in contemporary Brazil issues of residence more than those of labor galvanize long-term collective interests among working-class people’ (Holston 1991:452). Holston’s view resonates with my own observations in La Ciénaga, where local politics has basic services delivery as a central and much contested component.

Gregory's (2007) description of a protest in Altagracía, a community located across the highway from Boca Chica and San Andres (thirty kilometres from Santo Domingo), also emphasizes how political struggles and consciousness are often tied to living conditions and how their resolution depends upon local resources. Altagracía had been waiting many years to be connected to the city's water supply to replace the improvised pipeline and communal tap they had installed themselves. The water service had been installed four months earlier, but it had not been connected. To draw attention to the problem, residents blockaded the community's main access road with rubbish and burning tyres. Community leaders called the local television service, Turivisión, to inform them of the protest.

Gregory describes the protest as a type of performance, in which local residents used the camera to give testimonies and play up the very real drama of their situation in order to gain the moral sympathies of outsiders and shame local politicians. As the camera bore witness, local women pretended to fight over access to the tap. Gregory explains, 'The improvised altercation among the women at the water pipe theatrically displayed the social repercussions of scarcity to an audience that could not imagine them: it had to be dramatically re-enacted' (Gregory 2007:114). The report did not reach national media, but was replayed on the local station on three consecutive afternoons, generating public discussion on the problem. One week later, Altagracía's water supply was connected. These kinds of successes point to the importance of local social movements in an economic climate unfavourable to trade unions (see, for example,Sklair 1998).

The formation of community and the valuation of place also have a less political side in the form of a sociality that is grounded in the everyday. Ulf Hannerz's classic study, 'Soulside' (1969), describes life in a 'ghetto' of Washington, D.C. in the late 1960s. The picture he paints is of a community that has a reputation for violence and whose residents must cope with a great deal of uncertainty in their lives. Yet, despite conflicts and dangers, the ghetto exhibits a sociality that generates a certain loyalty to place. This sociality is built upon the problems of ghetto life as much as its benefits. The marginalisation of residents and their poverty limits their social connections with other parts of the city and their ability to move, creating relative stability. People come to

depend upon each other in difficult times, and men's 'street corner society' in particular provides a forum for social networking and support. A proliferation of storefront churches also provide a source of socializing.

In certain sectors of the community, their sense of shared experience through emplacement links up with wider politics. For example, Hannerz writes how small or medium-sized businesses owned by black people would write 'soul brother' on their windows in times of political unrest such as after Martin Luther King's death in April, 1968, 'to establish themselves as a part of the ghetto moral community, an effort which has more often than not been successful' (1969:29). However, these sorts of broader political activities were limited to particular sectors of the community. Further political action was limited by a law disallowing Washington D.C. residents from voting in federal elections. Hannerz describes the ghetto residents as a "people without a politics", whose voice is overpowered by the white voice of federal power.

Gregory (1998) writes how studies of the 'black ghetto' in the 1960s, such as Soulside, emphasized differentiation in ghettos as a corrective to the homogenizing 'culture of poverty' thesis. However, in focusing on difference they tended to render mainstream activities as 'in the ghetto but not of the ghetto' (Gregory 1998:9), thereby continuing to represent ghetto life as culturally different to the rest of American society. Focusing on style and informal relations, rather than social and institutional structure, reproduced the prevalent view that the urban poor are unable to organize to help themselves (Gregory 1998:10). This critique does not discount how a particular sociality and style in poor urban communities creates loyalty to place, and is thereby important. Rather, it makes the point that the distinctiveness of ghetto life is not simply in style, but also in asymmetric relations. Viewing black ghetto culture as simply a matter of style, rather than also as political action, trivialises the experience of difference. The present study considers both these issues.

Back in New York, Arlene Dávila (2004) discusses political struggles among Latino and black residents to cope with - and perhaps take advantage of - Harlem's gentrification. She writes of a very different Harlem from that presented in Bourgois's (pre-Rudy Giuliani) ethnography roughly

ten years earlier. Its aesthetics are no longer characterized by decaying lots and boarded up houses. The average wage has gone up, though it is still primarily a poor barrio whose residents rent their apartments. Harlem has been the subject of urban renewal programs since the 1940s, but this increased in the Giuliani period. Giuliani is known for being the person who reduced crime in NY, including targeting the mafia. He has been criticized for the heavy-handed policing and abuses that characterized the period. His role in reducing crime has been contested by people who say that the drop in crime was due to other factors, such as crack going out of fashion. Regardless of whether the crime rate dropped due to Giuliani or not, Harlem was a target of these policing programs, which sent the drug trade underground. Furthermore, Giuliani encouraged increased investment in upper Manhattan: his policies were 'geared toward transforming Upper Manhattan communities into tourist destinations with cultural, entertainment, dining, and recreational attractions' (Davila 2004:12). The dotcom boom of mid-late 1990s benefited New York City's financial sector, so there was more money around for investment in public works, such as the redevelopment of Times Square.

Dávila's ethnography examines how residents cope with these changes. Many supported redevelopment and dreamed of a neighbourhood that is both gentrified *and* Latino. However, the development of Harlem entailed its privatisation, not the provision of services. Neoliberal discourses and policies were touted as the salvation of El Barrio. The redevelopment of Harlem pushes up housing prices and forced Latinos out, and leaves those who stay with fewer services. Dávila comments:

> One of the central contradictions in East Harlem is the treatment of culture as industry to attract jobs, business, and profits and the simultaneous disavowal of ethnicity and race as grounds for equity and representation. (Dávila 2004:2)

The culture of East Harlem is the very thing that is being marketed, yet that marketing process presents a meaning of 'Latino' that is different from that held by residents. By presenting East Harlem as multicultural, it conflates the different identities in the neighbourhood – a

‘resignification’ of the neighbourhood as something that is cultural without being too different. Its ‘culture’ was packaged and marketed in a way that rendered it safe and desirable, a commodity that could be sold to tourists.

Dávila connects these changes with New York’s position as a global city. In economic terms, changes in the global economy favoured New York and fuelled gentrification in Harlem. In political terms, Davila argues that ideas of what a global city should be fuelled policy development. Furthermore, the reason why migrants are there in the first place is because New York has always been a global city. And, as Grosfoguel and Georas (2001) demonstrate, how these migrants are understood as belonging or not belonging to social life in the city depends upon notions of race and ethnicity still rooted in regional colonialisms. So, a range of transnational factors intersect in New York to ‘make’ Harlem. However, Harlem is clearly not just the product of its transnational positioning. It has a rich history within itself and a great deal of cultural production happening within its locality. While Dávila points to global issues, she also emphasises the importance of the local in understanding place. Indeed, the struggles of Harlem residents throughout her book seem very much about how the local deals with the transnational as people struggle to maintain some sort of locally-produced cultural authenticity against a homogenizing outside force. Yet this is not a simple case of resistance against a dominating force: Many aspects of the redevelopment of Harlem are highly desirable for residents and they can utilise them for their own ends.

Dávila’s study of the various political voices in Harlem identifies three important points. First, that the power to define a locality’s ‘culture’ is inextricably linked with power and wealth. In Harlem, geopolitics, New York’s economy, private investment and state regulation had a major impact on the constitution of El Barrio’s branding, supporting Harvey’s contention that ‘...those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance’ (Harvey 1989:234). Gaining some control of space – whether symbolically, through the anchoring of culture in people or place; morally, such as with Gregory’s community in Altagracía; or legally in terms of Holston’s autoconstructed communities – is a precondition for further forms of political agency.

Second, Dávila's work (like Gregory's, notwithstanding their differences) draws attention to the fact that localities are *always* linked up with the outside world. Culture has been deterritorialised, rendering projects of self-creation at once more exciting and more subject to outside control. Indeed, as Miller points out, this circumstance places a burden upon the bearer, since 'Modernity imposes a quite novel but crushing burden upon humanity, to forge for itself the criteria by which it will live. Even more burdensome, it has to forge these principles, knowing that this is what it is doing' (Miller 1994:62). Self-creation therefore always involves a struggle over the power to classify in a plurality of fields of meaning and practice (Bourdieu 1991).

Third, Dávila's study points to the ongoing salience of race, nationality, class, occupation and other historically constituted markers of identity and sociality in guiding the politics of place. These forms of stratification have not disappeared; they have simply been masked by a neoliberal ideology that promotes the freedom of the individual in the marketplace. Being located in the sphere of production, they are embedded in the structures which define our experiences as social beings in local, national, and global fields. Being simultaneously located in the sphere of consumption, they are also available to us as choices we can draw from in our self-definitions, providing us with agency and a form of resistance to, and redefinition of, the structures which shape our lives and actions.

Rather than reduce action at the local level simply to its locally derived meanings, or explain everything in terms of structural constraint, this thesis attempts to address both the contours and the interstices of life - the economies of value - in a barrio in Santo Domingo. I now turn to the Dominican Republic's history in order to provide some background to the structures and material objectifications that play out in La Ciénaga.

Chapter 2

A Society, a City and La Ciénaga

> My mother used to say that a man knows what's going to happen today but he doesn't know about tomorrow (Carlos)

In 2004 the PLD (*Partido de la Liberación Dominicana*) candidate, Leonel Fernandez, campaigned for the presidential election with the slogan *E'pa'lante que vamos!*, a colloquial abbreviation of the longer *Es para adelante que vamos!*, or 'It's forward we go!'. The campaign proved successful, ushering Leonel into his second (non-consecutive) term as President with a clear majority. Leonel's slogan held a dual appeal for Dominicans. It built upon an existing egalitarian discourse of national progress and promised a break from the economic atrophy under the previous President, the PRD's (*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano*) Rafael Hipólito Mejía, whose policies resulted in rocketing inflation and unemployment.

The intended spirit of the political slogan is illustrated on the President's high-tech website (www.epalantequevamos.com). An entry page plays upbeat techno music, while visual bytes move across the page, advertising the Presidency's themes: the word 'Dignity', with a photo of Fernandez with the Pope; 'Education', showing a black child in school uniform using a computer; 'Health',

with an image inside a hospital ward; ‘Work’, showing scientists busy in a lab, and ‘Development’, over a photo of a busy road with an overpass.

After this introduction, the home page shows a welcome message and a prominent colour cartoon depicting a jubilant character who has just finished crossing a bridge. The character is an idealized Dominican: masculine, moustached, light-skinned yet not quite white, and dressed in working clothes, boots and a cap. The scene behind him, on the side of the bridge he has just left, is reminiscent of halloween, with thunder and lightning, darkness and bats, and an alligator baring its teeth. It is labelled ‘Chaos’. The bridge is labelled ‘100 days’ in reference to celebrations for Leonel’s first 100 days in his second term as President. The scene in front of him, which he has just entered, is full of light from the rising sun, grass and flowers. He has three paths in front of him: ‘Order’ to his left, ‘Confidence’ in front and ‘Stability’ to his right. He has his hands in the air and his face lifted up to the sky while he says, ‘E’pa’lante que vamos!’ By depicting the man as having arrived at the other side of the bridge, the cartoon illustrates the government’s main argument: despite repeated setbacks in the past, the nation has already begun its journey back on the road of progress in a mere one hundred days of rational rule.

Figure 3. Cartoon showing a Dominican man on the road *para adelante* (forward). From www.epalantequevamos.com, accessed 14/12/06.

E’pa’lante draws on existing popular usage of the path as a metaphor for progress. Proclamations of e’pa’lante can be heard regularly in the community meetings of poor barrios. At times it is invoked seriously to rally enthusiasm: Dominicans believe that their country can and must progress, and so the slogan symbolizes their hopes and dreams. For example, Bethania, a community activist in her 30s, explained to me that ‘It is difficult to lead the children down a *camino bueno* (good path) while there are so many problems. I think I can *sacar adelante* (move them forward) despite the precariousness of the situation.’ Bethania’s interpretation – that times are tough, but change is possible – is precisely what the PLD’s slogan wishes to convey. In particular, it appeals to residents of poor urban barrios, such as Bethania, who adopt the discourse of progress to claim a place in the national project.

At other times, the slogan is used ironically to critique the longstanding failure of the state to provide the forward movement that it repeatedly promises. Every time the government changes hands, government workers who are supporters of the ousted party can expect to lose their jobs, from the lowest-paid cleaner up to the highest official. Leonel’s Presidential win was met by the half-joking but intrinsically serious lament *¡E’pa’fuera que vamos!* (it’s out we go!) by civil servants who, as members of the incumbent Partido Revolucionario), knew that they were now out of a job. A young man called Tony, who worked in the Department of Education entering data into a computer, was one lucky person who managed to retain his position. One of his colleagues was a cousin and a PLD supporter and helped him evade notice. Periodically, workers would pass his desk and ask, ‘Hey Tony, what are you still doing here?’ Tony would respond ‘Shhh!’ in an alarmed manner, worrying that someone with power over him would overhear, and correctly interpret, his colleague’s comment. Tony was finally ‘caught’ in July 2005 and forced to resign. With the help of a friend, he found a lower-paid job bartending in a restaurant.

Tony’s story illustrates the ambivalence Dominicans feel toward political promises in a country where clientelism and lack of resources repeatedly undermine social change. Both Tony and his co-workers were acutely aware that the promise of progress would benefit some, but not all, Dominicans. Whereas Bethania used the slogan to claim a place in the state’s development projects,

Tony used it ironically to show how fickle promises of progress are. By parodying the slogan, Dominicans have taken e'pa'lante far beyond its political intentions and transformed it into a multifaceted concept with which to critique the nation. The power of the slogan, as it is used in popular parlance, lies in its very ambiguity as a metaphor of movement. Movement on a path does not necessarily result in social mobility: while some people get ahead, others get left behind or are actively expelled.

Steven Gregory (2007) notes that movement has long been an important metaphor in the Dominican Republic. Writing about the importance of *movimiento* to Dominicans in the tourist enclave of Boca Chica, Gregory argues:

> Movement here is not merely a metaphor for earning a living: it is precisely this movement - whether across the policed landscape of the *zona turística*, or the frontiers of the export manufacturing enclaves, or the international division of labor - that has been the target of neoliberal strategies of accumulation. As capital has become increasingly mobile…labor has become ever more shackled to space - space that has been increasingly disciplined and privatised. (Gregory:239)

The localization of labour for the benefit of international capital is not new in the Dominican Republic. It has been manifest throughout Dominican history, from the forced relocation of Africans as slaves, through peasant struggles to retain control of their land during US occupation, to the entrapment of Haitians on Dominican sugar plantations and evictions of poor urban dwellers from their homes. Dominicans today are acutely aware that being taken pa'lante entails the imposition of a modernity whose promise of inclusion masks a process of sociospatial differentiation. Unprecedented rural to urban migration, transnationalism and occupational flexibility meet their match in low wages, job insecurity, and the fortification of public space. Aspirants encounter multiplying obstacles on the path pa'lante, compelling a struggle to claim more firmly the places in which they have gained a foothold. Distance between the poor and wealthy is particularly visible in the capital city, which is the most important symbol of national progress and

therefore also the site of the greatest struggle to define modernity. But localism in the contemporary city cannot be understood without reference to a history of global linkages that encompass rural areas as much as urban ones.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the historical precedents that lead the poor to defend a space and interpret it within an urban milieu that purveys the hope of progress and self-creation. These precedents can be divided into three broad developments. The first is the advent of a national racism, beginning with slavery but institutionalised as *hispanidad* (Hispanic-ness) under Trujillo and reinforced in recent times. This ideology not only works to juxtapose Dominican progress to Haitian impoverishment, but also mutes the conflict within Dominican society.

The second is a lack of public space for political movements that might contribute to significant change. Popular political activity has been suppressed in a string of moments that have marked the Dominican Republic's 20th century state formation. These include the US occupations (1916-22 and 1965), the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-61), and Balaguer's twelve years of rule (1966-78). In the present time, labour organisation is not actively suppressed, but nonetheless lacks foundations in an appropriate representational politics. In lieu of labour organisation, and in the context of a neo-liberal state, the Catholic church thrives as a medium of transcendence.[9]

The third development concerns the localization of which Gregory speaks - characterised by the primacy of the city and a fractured labour force. Marginalisation becomes emplaced within the city's modernity. This third phenomenon, which I introduce here, is also a major focus of the thesis – the manner in which the making of the self through place becomes a process with political significance.[10] These three factors inform the lives of poor barrio dwellers as they struggle to echar pa'lante in Santo Domingo.

[9] It does this through both ritual and through practical politics where it mediates between the poor and the State.
[10] By 'political' here I mean a process that reflects and also bears on asymmetric relations of power.

Figure 4. Map of the Caribbean showing the Dominican Republic and Santo Domingo

The Making of Hispaniola

The history of the Dominican Republic is one of movement and constraint, from the passage of Columbus across the Atlantic, the enslavement of the local indigenous population, the forced transportation of Africans in the ‘middle passage’, their subsequent enslavement and then free migration. It is also a history of the prioritisation of hispanidad over indigenous, African and creole cultures. Both these histories are said to have begun on December 5, 1492, when Columbus claimed for the Spanish crown the island known to its indigenous population as Quisiqueya, meaning ‘mother of all land’, or Ayiti, meaning ‘mountainous land’. Columbus named the island ‘La Isla Española’. In 1508 King Ferdinand of Spain named the island ‘Isla de Santo Domingo’, but eventually the name Hispaniola prevailed. While Saint-Domingue abandoned their colonial name and past in favour of the indigenous name of Ayiti (now Haiti) on January 1, 1804, to celebrate their successful revolution, the Dominican Republic retains the influence of the metropole as a central tenant of its national identity.

At the time of Colombus's arrival, more than half a million Taino inhabited the island (Knight 1990). By 1530, disease and overwork in Spanish gold mines had decimated the Taino population. Hispaniola's incipient sugar industry faced a labour shortage that was met by the importation of enslaved Africans. Sugar production in the Hispanic Caribbean occurred in two phases: the first for around 75 years, until the late sixteenth century (Hoetink 1985), and the second from around the 1850s, or the 1870s in the Dominican Republic (Hall 2000). In between these periods, the Spanish shifted their main colony to Cuba to facilitate the passage of precious metals from the mainland. The remaining population in Santo Domingo subsisted on fruit, vegetables and cattle, and traded with British, French and Dutch merchants to obtain the textiles, iron goods and weapons they needed (Hoetink 1985:60). The most successful independent colonies operated in the northern part of the island and were eventually destroyed by Spanish forces, who feared that other nations would gain a foothold in the region.

From the 1600s, the British, French and Dutch began to penetrate Spain's stranglehold on the Caribbean. These colonial powers quickly developed a vast, modern sugar industry and, along with Spain, imported millions of slaves until slavery was finally abolished (firstly by Britain in 1833 and lastly by Cuba in 1886). France established the colony of Saint-Domingue in the western third of Hispaniola in 1697 during the island's economic marginalisation by Spain. Haiti's population of slaves quickly outstripped that of Santo Domingo, leading to a 'fear of the black' on the part of elite Dominicans, especially with the advent of Haiti's War of Independence in 1802-3 (Jiménez 1993). Saint-Domingue also quickly outstripped Santo Domingo's economy: it was the leading Caribbean producer of sugar in the decades immediately preceding the War of Independence (Post 1978:23).

Hoetink (1985) argues that during this period the representation of racial divisions became less clear cut. The present 'colour continuum' for representing race began to emerge. Nonetheless, as a focal point of social differentiation, colour stratification would have an elusive role in Saint-Domingue. While colonialism and slavery had a lasting effect on society and economy throughout the Spanish Caribbean nations, Sagás argues that colonialism in the Dominican Republic was probably more egalitarian than that of Cuba and Puerto Rico, due to its economic marginality (Sagás 2000). Lack

of extensive sugar production and the primacy of cattle ranching meant that there were fewer slaves, that the slaves' work was less arduous, and that slaves received better care, if only for the fact that they were too expensive to replace. Owing to the lower death rate and differences in labor, there were more creoles and a higher rate of intermarriage, unlike Haiti where there was a high death rate and therefore more African-born slaves. Moreover, in the Dominican Republic, a shortage of Europeans meant that *mulatos* (children of European and African parents) were allowed to occupy mid-level administrative positions, which were usually closed to them (Sagás 2000). Nonetheless, in accordance with Spain's racial purity policy, these vagaries could be forcefully suppressed in periods of prosperity. Moreover, the social cohesion that state formation would require also encouraged other forms of Dominican racialism.

The Development of *hispanidad*

The second half of the eighteenth century was a period of geographic consolidation in the Caribbean. The first border between Santo Domingo and Saint-Domingue was drawn under the Treaty of Aranjuez in 1777 (Sagás 2000). When the revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haiti a Republic in 1804, the French general Louis Ferrand occupied Santo Domingo City. In 1805, he defeated Dessalines' siege and, as historical accounts now relate, Dessalines' troops beat a relentlessly destructive retreat. In response to the violence on Dominican territory, Dominicans now sought to differentiate themselves in all possible ways from Haiti, reinforcing their Spanish heritage and language. In this they were helped by the Catholic church, who campaigned against voudou: 'From the pulpit and through daily interaction with their communities, Catholic priests instilled white Hispanic values in the colonists, even among the black and mulatto lower classes, which made up the majority of the population' (Sagás 2000:29).

In 1809, the people of Santo Domingo overthrew French occupation and voluntarily reannexed themselves to the Spanish crown. By 1821, it became evident that Spanish rule was not benefiting the colony, and independence for Santo Domingo was proclaimed. It was short-lived: Haiti was much stronger than its neighbour in terms of its economy, army and population, and annexed Santo

Domingo in 1822. Haiti freed the slaves of Santo Domingo but failed to implement further social change. Santo Domingo was never incorporated into the Haitian nation; rather it was treated as a dependency. Furthermore, by the 1840s Haiti was experiencing economic decline and its hold on the Spanish colony was weakening. The elites of Santo Domingo had never supported Haitian rule and led a new movement against the Haitians. They were supported by the general population, but only when they agreed not to reinstitute slavery (Sagás 2000). On the 27th February 1844, Santo Domingo won its independence and its elites regained the privileged positions they had lost with French occupation.

Independence was followed by social and economic changes intended to differentiate the Dominican Republic from Haiti as a modern nation-state. A series of consolidation wars with Haiti saw the rise of antihaitianismo (anti-Haitianism). This was the beginning of a national racism that sought to suppress the similarities between the two nations and position the Dominican Republic as Hispanic (European and civilized) rather than Haitian (African and primitive).[11] Martínez-Vergne proposes that Dominicans described their own culture in opposition to that of Haitians, but 'What Dominicans were describing inadvertently, however, was their version of modernity' (Martínez-Vergne 2005). In this formulation, haitianismo means blackness, Africanness and the primitive, while hispanidad signifies whiteness, Europeanness, and modernity. It is a system of classification that uses an idiom of race to explain and promote differences between nations. Haiti provides a counterpoint to Dominican raciality. Without Haiti's blackness, Dominicans could never stake a claim on the whiter end of the colour spectrum.

The conflation of race and nationality make it possible for Dominicans today to talk about 'the Haitian race' and 'the Dominican race', suggesting that the two societies have vastly different roots. Indeed, it is common for Dominicans to refer to African elements of their society and culture as having been imported from Haiti, rather than as remnants of the slave system in the Dominican Republic. In this social imaginary, there was never a direct link between Africa and the Dominican

[11] For discussions on race, see, for example, Torres-Saillant (2000); Howard (2001).

Republic; rather the latter began white and was tainted by pure-black Haiti during the occupation of 1822-1844 and subsequent movements of Haitian labour migrants.

The division of Hispaniola into two opposing national/racial groups was based upon, but not limited to, national borders. Many newly emancipated slaves in Santo Domingo had supported Haitian rule and were deeply suspicious of the elites' intentions. Antihaitianismo was a key motivational tool in Dominican secession and its prejudices were extended to any Dominican blacks considered to be siding with Haiti (Sagás 2000). To be called a haitiano was – and, as I shall illustrate later in the chapter, still is - to be doubly outcast as a traitor to the nation and as a different race.

Spaces within the Dominican Republic also became signifiers of national-racial hierarchy. Martínez-Vergne writes how, at the beginning of the 19th century, the 'composite ideal Dominican was based in the countryside' (2005:21) and included characteristics like colour (valuing white over black), affinity with Europe (as opposed to the US) and love of country (hard work, family and morality). The countryside provided a local foundation for hispanidad. El campo (the countryside) was the site of the great events in Dominican history, such as the 1844 War of Independence against Haiti, the birth of national leaders and the development of folklore (Andrade 1969; Sagás 2000; Torres-Saillant 2000).

However, not just any part of the countryside could stand for the new dominicanidad (Dominican-ness). The large valley in the centre of the Dominican Republic, known as Cibao, was adopted by elites as the milieu in which Dominican culture and history emerged. Its fertility made it a popular settlement site for European immigrants and it housed the capital, Santiago. The region's primacy in Dominican social imaginaries is best observed today in a visit to the national art gallery in Santo Domingo, where decidedly European-style paintings of rural life (though with a Dominican flavour), painted mostly by European hands, adorn gallery walls. They stand out in stark contrast to the 'naïve' paintings sold to tourists by Haitian vendors on the city's footpaths. They are two very different renderings of life in rural Hispaniola: in the former, light-skinned and contented people practice culture amidst plenty; in the latter, blackness labours intensely in the market. Dominican

artists write productive labour out of the picture as though slavery never existed, while for Haitian artists it is a central motif.

A Tentative Independence

While the Republic's triumph against Haiti in 1844 is marked as the nation's official Independence Day, the decades to come would witness further periods of annexation and occupation. In 1861 the Dominican Republic, faced with severe economic problems and internal disorder, again accepted a return to Spanish rule. The reannexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain in 1861 marks the beginning of a viable, export-based sugar industry. Confident of Spain's ability to turn the fledgling nation around, immigrants started arriving from Cuba, Spain and Italy to build a modern sugar industry (Hall 2000). Two years later, when Spanish rule had failed to improve the domestic situation, the Dominican Republic again proclaimed its independence, culminating in the War of Restoration in 1865.

Sugar production flourished in the Dominican Republic during the latter part of the 19th century. It was buoyed by high sugar prices, the Cuban ten-year war (1868-78), the Franco-Prussian war (1870) and the American Civil War (1861-65) (Hall 2000). During 1870-82, Cuban investors built more than 30 modern mills, the first at Esperanza in 1874. From 1882-99, the sugar industry gained political support and a stable environment from the dictatorship of President Ulíses Hereaux, who sought foreign investment as a means of gaining much-needed capital for the construction of machinery and railways. As a result, sugar production doubled between 1888 and 1898. Unable to find sufficient inexpensive labour amongst the Dominican population, sugarcane plantations began to recruit Haitian men as seasonal migrants. Contrary to popular opinion in the Dominican Republic, which holds that Haitians were brought in to do the hard work of cutting cane because Dominicans considered it beneath them, Samuel Martínez (1995) argues that sugar plantations considered Dominican labour too expensive and difficult to discipline. Haitian labour migration increased throughout the 20th century, with governments on both sides of Hispaniola driving the recruitment process.

Social transformations wrought by changes in capital investment and means of production had differential effects upon the Dominican Republic's sugar-producing regions. In discussing peasant protest between 1870 and 1924, Baud writes:

> In the northern region, the processes of change were diverse and relatively smooth...The peasantry was able to pursue its agricultural and social activities without too much outside interference. The cultivation of cash crops, which was an integrated part of the subsistence economy, linked them firmly to the market. Peasant resistance therefore focused on the terms of trade and credit and was meant, above all, to maintain its independence vis-à-vis the regional mercantile class. (1988:136)

The northern region, which housed the capital, Santiago, had been settled primarily by European migrants. But 'In the southern provinces, the sugar industry had disastrous consequences for the peasant economy. The region seems to show the classic plantation-peasant antagonism, in which the peasantry is swept off its land by predominating capitalist-enterprises...In the western frontier region, peasant behaviour reflected the disoriented and marginalised position of this region' (Baud 1988:136). Baud's analysis suggests that, while peasants of European descent were largely accommodated within new economic policies, Dominican blacks were subordinated to the interests of international capital. Baud's comments also suggest that politics among the poor was of a petty bourgeois rather than labour type. The racialisation of plantation labour within Dominican society, along with the comprador capitalism of the plantation, were supported by the Dominican elite and allowed little viable space for a popular politics.

United States Occupation

The sugar boom of the late 19th century was short-lived. During the 1890s, beet sugar production in Europe increased, resulting in a 30 percent decrease in sugar prices. The Hereaux government, having invested heavily to attract foreign investment, found itself faced with an enormous foreign debt. Ten mills shut down, Cuban investors sold out to US buyers and Hereaux was assassinated on

26 July 1899 (Hall 2000). The Dominican Republic entered the 20th century with an empty treasury, European creditors at its heels, and in a constant state of political turmoil.

The new bourgeoisie of the early 20th century proved unable to stabilize the nation's governance and economy. In 1907, the Dominican Republic's debt led it into customs receivership under US control. The sociologist Emilio Betances explains, 'Its [the embryonic bourgeoisie's] structural weakness inhibited its ability to organize a modern state that could respond to the imperatives of international and local capital accumulation. This weakness prompted the U.S. occupation in 1916 and the establishment of a military government that organized and centralized local political power' (Betances 1995). The Dominican Republic now perceived a dual threat: fear of invasion by Haitian migrant labour and the increase of foreign dominance in internal affairs.

The Dominican government was unable to meet the conditions imposed by the US, and so in May 1916 US marines invaded Santo Domingo. According to Calder (1984), the US occupation in 1916 was primarily strategic rather than economic. The population of the Dominican Republic was less than one million people, and the nation represented only a small part of American interests in the region. Calder writes that the goal of the US was to protect their geographic hegemony over the region, especially from Germany: 'Of distinctly minor importance was the specific desire to protect U.S. control of the Dominican economy, of its trade and resources, which were insignificant relative to U.S. interests elsewhere' (1984:xii). The United States' preoccupation with World War I further diverted their attention from the Dominican Republic.

Lacking a clear policy for occupation, the United States depended upon the experience gained by their personnel in previous occupations: Panama (1903), Nicaragua (1909 and 1912), Mexico (1914), Haiti (1915), Cuba several times, and the Philippines. Calder remarks that 'In almost every case...US officials set up programs to expand education, improve health and sanitation, create constabularies, build public works and communications, initiate judicial and penal reforms, take censuses, improve agriculture, and accomplish a wide range of other reforms' (1984:xxi). During the eight years of their administration, the United States built national networks of highways,

deepened the harbour of Santo Domingo to allow docking of large ships, improved port facilities and implemented education programs. Their activities shifted Dominican notions of modernity from concerns with national identity toward a focus on infrastructure and the economy, and set the tone for the Dominican Republic's modernization project throughout the 20th century.

The United States expanded sugar production at the expense of other crops or industries, making the Dominican economy increasingly monocultural. Hall writes that 'Legislation enacted by the US military governor increased the amount of land devoted to sugar cane production, fostered US influence over the sugar industry, and lowered sugar export duties' (Hall 2000:14). According to Hall, US companies or conglomerates owned roughly 80 percent of the land devoted to sugar cultivation and eleven of the twenty-one sugar mills by 1924. Although most of the profits flowed overseas, the Dominican government supported the growth of the sugar industry because it depended upon revenues from exports.

The promotion of sugar over other export products had profound effects on the local population and political activity. As I will show in the following section, the expansion of sugar displaced peasants from their land, leading to general unrest in certain regions of the country. Those peasants were not, by and large, incorporated into the sugar industry because they were considered to be an exceedingly expensive and undisciplined labour force. Instead, plantations privately imported wage labour from Haiti to undertake the arduous work of cane cutting (Martínez 1995).

The US implemented a policy of white-only immigration, but the demands of the sugar industry meant that Haitian migration continued during this period (Sagás 2000). Contracts between the Dominican Republic and Haiti set levels of labour migration under which the Dominican Republic paid Haiti for each labourer sent to its sugar estates. Scholars dispute whether the US administration had an active role in Haitian labour migration,[12] but they certainly did not actively discourage it.

[12] See Martínez (1995)

From the Haitian side of the border, they levied a tax on recruitment, and after 1924 they required recruiters to carry an official license (ibid.)[13]

Once in Dominican territory, Haitian braceros (cane workers) were extended few rights, and the threat of deportation without pay was sufficient to stultify any attempt at organised political resistance. The few Dominican workers on plantations held more prestigious positions, such as overseers, and viewed the Haitian braceros as outsiders. Outside of the plantations, peasants' aspirations were petty bourgeois: they sought access to trade, finance and tariffs. By this time, Haiti had long been less powerful than the Dominican Republic and so 'Now Haitians were increasingly stereotyped as poor, illiterate migrants who had to sell their labor for starvation wages, doing slave-like work in a foreign country. Instead of fear, Haitians now provoked contempt among Dominicans, who felt racially and culturally superior' (Sagás 2000:41). Haitian immigrants, and their children born in the Dominican Republic, were blamed for taking work away from Dominicans (although Dominicans shunned this type of work), depressing wages, exhibiting foreign cultural traits and spreading voudou amongst Dominicans in the border regions (Howard 2001).

By fragmenting the labour force along racial/national lines, sugar plantations largely evaded industrial action in the Dominican Republic's largest industry and, effectively, in the entire economy. The conditions for class confrontation were limited because the Dominican economy was dominated by comprador capitalism rather than by a class of domestic owners. Political resistance remained regional, tied to local caudillo (strong man)[14] political systems, and unable to seriously affect national governance.

Unlike Haiti, which emerged as a state from revolution, or the English-speaking Caribbean, which emerged from European colonialism, the Dominican Republic emerged first as a modern nation-state within the context of Haitian dominance. Tension between Haiti and Santo Domingo meant

[13] The United States invaded Haiti in 1915 and withdrew in 1934.
[14] For an explanation of *caudillismo* in Latin America, see Wolf (1967).

that Dominican elites actually sought Spanish protection until the 1860s and cultivated an ambivalent relation with the creole world of the Caribbean. Later, US occupation fostered Dominican authoritarianism and a focus on a development agenda, but not a popular political one. This is not to say that alternative visions of the state and nation did not exist within Dominican society. The forces that took the society from occupation to US withdrawal and a Dominican dictatorship were nothing if not the attempts of Dominicans to express their own aspirations.

From Occupation to Dictatorship

The US marines had encountered little opposition upon entry to Santo Domingo, but subsequently were faced with resistance from two sides. In the cities, primarily Santo Domingo, they faced a criticism by intellectuals in the form of anti-US publications and a campaign abroad. More seriously for the US, they faced a guerrilla resistance from peasants in the eastern regions, who had been pushed off their land due to the expansion of sugar estates. While the US managed to handicap urban resistance through censorship of oppositional publications (Calder 1984), peasant resistance in the east of the country was much harder to control due to the strength of the region's caudillo political system and the extent of changes in socio-economic organisation that the occupation entailed. It took the US forces some five years to contain peasant resistance sufficiently enough to bring the region under administrative control.

Calder (1984) argues that revolt came from the East for two main reasons. Firstly, the region was in the midst of an economic, and therefore social, revolution that saw the adoption of modern methods and capitalism. Secondly, the traditional caudillo political system still remained in the east, which involved strongman rule over regions, based largely on military capacity. Unfortunately little is written about this revolt: the guerrillas were labelled as 'bandits' by the US and largely ignored by Dominican intellectuals. Dominican historians of the time wrote primarily about the activities of their own class, and the historical record was never clarified under the dictatorship of pro-American Trujillo between 1930 and 1961.

Calder suggests that a failure of the urban and rural classes to unite was a factor in the failed resistances. He claims that it is likely that urban Dominicans lacked information about what was happening in the East, partly due to censorship by the US, but also due to existing deep class divisions and urban-rural divisions. He writes, 'While urbanites were generally wealthier and lighter-skinned, rural residents tended to be poorer and darker. Within rural areas, the divisions that existed between people were based on their relationship to the land. Aside from a tiny minority of wealthier persons, most rural inhabitants were peasants, squatters, or the landless' (Calder 1984:xxviii).

The rural versus urban divide was experienced as a class and race divide, with each group holding rather different aspirations. In the city, a growing petty bourgeoisie promoted the modern nationalism developed by Dominican intellectuals in the latter part of the 19th century (Martínez-Vergne 2005). They sought greater industrialization and the replacement of *caudillo* politics by democratic governance. In rural areas, peasants who were dispossessed from their land had little concern for a national ideology, likely knowing full well that the urban elite could not provide for them. Indeed, the urgency of their situation accounts for the duration and intensity of their resistance. The class divide between the two groups was further exacerbated by a colour difference that was read as a difference in capacity for civilization (Martínez-Vergne 2005). But I would suggest that while peasants fought against the expansion of large-scale, modern plantations, they were not fighting against modernization. Instead, they sought a certain mode of insertion within their changing society. Swapping traditional farming methods for back-breaking wage labour in the sugar fields in the manner of (anti-modern) Haitian braceros was not an appealing sort of modernity.

In the end, it was not so much organised resistance but rather domestic matters in the United States that were the catalyst for their withdrawal. Difficulties in maintaining control and a change in US administration led the US to seek an exit strategy that would allow them to retain involvement in the Dominican Republic's financial affairs (Kryzanek & Wiarda 1988). In October 1922, a Dominican provisional government was formed, and on 12th July 1924, a newly elected government

of Horacio Vásquez took office (Calder 1984). By September 1924, US military forces had fully withdrawn. In 1920, Vásquez changed the constitution to allow himself to stay in office until 1930 (Logan 1968:66). The five-year period leading up to the presidency of Trujillo was relatively uneventful compared to much of Dominican history.

During these years Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina rose in the police force to become Chief of Police. His position, along with general discontent in Vásquez' rule, provided the power base for a coup d'etat in 1930 (Knight 1990). Trujillo was elected President of the Republic on the 16th May 1930 amidst allegations of fraud. His military support was strong, and he soon dominated the political scene with the backing of the US. Early on in his rule, and despite his nationalist tendencies, Trujillo developed friendships with the managers of the US sugar estates (Hall 2000). Their political support and revenues were necessary if Trujillo were to consolidate his power. Hall describes how Edwin Kilbourne, the administrator of the West Indies Sugar Corporation, expressed the position of business interests, saying that 'We are content to place in his hands our financial interests with the conviction that they could not be placed in better hands' (2000:18). Trujillo quickly took measures to ensure that the Dominican economy was under his control. He eliminated taxes on machinery imports with the aim of increasing production and therefore state revenue necessary to finance extensive public works, including railways to transport sugar. He used funds to expand the military and embezzled public funds into Swiss bank accounts. By 1938, Trujillo had amassed a personal fortune of over US$30 million, and this was boosted further by high sugar prices during World War II (Hall 2000). By the end of his rule, 'he owned almost 80 percent of the land, 45 percent of the sources of production, and the banks, services, and utilities' (Moreno 1970:14).

Such a regime brooked no opposition. In a short space of time 'there were no labor unions, no political parties, and no free press, radio, or television' (Moreno 1970:15). Any attempt at resistance was ruthlessly crushed. In the words of James Ferguson, 'The Trujillo empire was held in place by a ruthless use of violence and intimidation. Political murders, torture, deportations and blackmail were commonplace' (Ferguson 1992:23). Trujillo developed seven intelligence agencies to control

the population, elected his friends and family to elite position and, made citizens surrender their passports upon return from abroad (Hall 2000). The entire nation – its economy, politics, religion, social life, even family life – became a stage upon which Trujillo could play out his plans for greatness (as described in Díaz 2008; Vargas Llosa 2000). In Santo Domingo, the neon sign displaying the words *Dios y Trujillo* (God and Trujillo) suggested Trujillo's style of rule: nothing was too great or too small for his attention.

Trujillo's Modernity: *Dominicanidad* and Ciudad Trujillo

Throughout the thirty-one years of his dictatorship, Trujillo expended a great deal of effort to build up his own vision of *dominicanidad*. Progress would be European-derived, not creole, and represented in triumphant city-scapes. For Trujillo, *dominicanidad* played a dual role: it functioned as a national ideology that reinforced his power, and it proposed a break with an undeveloped past in favour of a Western modernity. For Trujillo, the latter would have its greatest expression in the city.

Antihaitianismo was an essential part of Trujillo-styled *dominicanidad*. Trujillo's predecessor, Vásquez, had signed a border treaty with Haiti in 1929, 'which eventually established the first formal border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic' (Sagás 2000:43). Trujilllo made the border an issue when in October 1937 his military forces massacred thousands of Haitians residing in the border regions. Estimates of the dead range from 12,000 to 25,000 (Derby & Turits 1993). While the incident brought international condemnation and a crisis in relations with Haiti, Trujillo downplayed the massacre domestically, claiming that it was a dispute between Dominican farmers and Haitian labourers. The massacre led to a surge in the creation of state propaganda and scholarly works for the purpose of justification.

To reposition the Dominican Republic in a favourable historical light, Trujillo created the *Academia Dominicana de la Historia* (Dominican history academy) whose most important scholar was his right-hand man and future President, Joaquin Balaguer. Balaguer and Manuel A. Peña Battle were

the two main intellectuals of the regime responsible for providing scholarly justification of *antihaitianismo* (Sagás 2000). Battle 'towered well above all the other intellectuals of the Trujillo regime for his scholarship, coherence, and impact on the policy-making process' (Sagás 2000:48). He claimed that Haiti impinged upon the development of the Dominican Republic and rewrote Dominican history to exclude racial conflict and scarcely mentioned slavery. Battle claimed that Trujillo was necessary to protect the Dominican Republic against Haitian domination, blaming Haiti for lack of democracy in the Dominican Republic.

Balaguer held a number of positions under the Trujillo regime and was President at the time of his death. According to Sagás, Balaguer's book *La realidad dominicana* (*Dominican Reality*, 1947) implies that Haitians and Dominicans are in fact different races (ibid.). Haitians, Balaguer argued, descended from barbaric, pagan Ethiopians, whereas the few slaves brought to the Santo Domingo came from the more peaceful coastal regions of Africa (Sagás 2000:51). Indeed, Balaguer largely blamed the existence of blacks in the Dominican Republic on the Haitian occupation of 1822-44.

State historians received vast resources to carry out the State's project as 'Attention to the past was encouraged as the key to the way in which the national culture was to be formed' (Cassá 1999:401). The state's historians wrote blackness out of Dominican history by replacing it with a Spanish-Indigenous past to explain colour variations. This Dominican national identity was defined in opposition to notions of Haiti as primitive, black and African. Cassá comments:

> This was a theory that would once and for all settle the essence of the nation. It determined that the survival of this Hispanic nation would depend on its success in overcoming the perceived danger of the Haitian nation, representing as it did everything untamed and everything African, and whose leaders were continually threatening to destroy the Dominican nation. The confrontation revolved around a negation of the humanity of blacks, while affirming the character of Dominican "*blanco y mestizo*". (1999:401)

The consolidation of this national ideology had dire consequences for both Haitian immigrants (legal and illegal) and for dark Dominicans. Sagas explains:

> As an ideology, antihiatianismo treats Haitians as the scapegoats of a society that considers them racially and culturally inferior aliens who are barbaric and undesirable. But antihaitianismo is also an ideological method of political control. It is directed not only toward Haiti and Haitians, but also toward Afro-Caribbean members of Dominican society, who tend to be poor, forming the subordinate class. Antihaitianismo denies dark-skinned citizens, and the poor generally, their own sociocultural space and intimidates them from making demands or otherwise participating in politics. Thus antihaitianismo is a deliberate creation: it is an authoritarian, dominant ideology, with the objective of defending a narrow status quo. (2000:4)

If racism was nationalised before, Trujillo institutionalised it in the mechanisms of the state as a tool to control the population. The compulsory national identity card (*cédula*), which all citizens were required to carry, stated its owner's colour. However, categorizing someone as 'black' was avoided, wherever possible, by the use of the definitive, yet wholly fictional, category of *indio*, that is, of an indigenous style colouring (Sagás 2000). By requiring all citizens to carry a cédula, Trujillo severely curtailed movement between the country and the city. Peasants (often darker skinned than urban dwellers) caught trying to enter the capital city without the proper identification were incarcerated for days or weeks as punishment.[15] Haitians had no identity card and no option for legitimate travel: they were held on plantations as virtual slaves, often paid only at the end of harvest season (Martínez 1995).

Santo Domingo perhaps represents the greatest fiction of Trujillo's rule. Derby (1998) describes how Trujillo utilised the devastation wrought by Hurricane Zanon as an opportunity to redesign Santo Domingo. At the time Trujillo came to power in 1930, new, mostly white upper class,

[15] The older residents of La Ciénaga remember vividly the problem of identity cards. Interestingly, one old man told me that he was locked up in La Victoria, the Dominican Republic's most notorious prison, by both Trujillo and Balager for this offence. Dominicans are still required to carry an identity card today.

suburbs such as Gazcue sprung up west of the colonial zone. Poor immigrants from the country lived in shantytowns along the waterfront, disturbing upper class residents' aesthetic sensibilities. North of the colonial zone, squatters blocked the expansion of the middle class. Just three weeks after Trujillo's ascendancy to power, Hurricane Zanon flattened Santo Domingo. The military rounded up residents from the flattened shantytowns and relocated them to the city's northern boundary, replacing the shantytowns with wide avenues and parks (Derby 1998). To celebrate his success, Trujillo renamed the city *Ciudad Trujillo* (Trujillo City).

By discriminating on the grounds of class and race, Trujillo aimed to keep the city amenable and presentable to an international audience. During the thirty-one years of his dictatorship, Trujillo built venues in which the lighter-skinned elite could enjoy a European-style 'high culture', while ensuring that the darker-skinned working and peasant classes were educated in the 'national culture' promoted by the regime (see also Hoffnung-Garskof 2008 regarding 'progreso' and 'cultura'). In an attempt to prevent poor people from inhabiting the centre of the city, Trujillo also issued a series of decrees banning settlement on the banks of the Ozama River (Santana 2004). He also built entire new suburbs to reward the loyalty of the mulatto middle class, and separated private space from public space (Derby 1998). The result was a city with a domesticated core, but a periphery of the poor who constructed their own new settlements and provided their own services, as well as servicing the city.

As the national centrepiece, Ciudad Trujillo was the objectification of Trujillo's brand of modern nationalism: totalitarian, grandiose and exclusive. While Trujillo's newly modern city may have impressed foreign diplomats and appealed to the lifestyles of the petty bourgeois, it peripheralised many people. To be excluded from access to Trujillo or his city was to be excluded from the nation. In time, Trujillo peripheralised too many sectors of society and his totalitarian dream proved unsustainable. The demise of Trujillo signalled the beginning of new ways of insertion into modernity for Dominicans of all classes.

The 1965 Revolt and its Aftermath

Julia Alvarez's novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) recreates the lives of the Mirabal sisters, code-named *las mariposas* (the butterflies), who were part of a resistance network planning to depose Trujillo. The murder of three of the sisters by Trujillo's special police is said to have been the tipping point that definitively turned public opinion against Trujillo. Today, it stands as a symbol of the regime's cruelty. The sisters were murdered just months before Trujillo's assassination, at a time when the dictator was losing ground on many fronts. At home, his monopoly on the Dominican economy had put the petty bourgeois offside and the Catholic church finally started preaching against Trujillo's totalitarian methods. Overseas, the US banned imports of Dominican sugar following Trujillo's sponsorship of the attempted assassination of the Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt in 1960.

On the 30th May, 1961, Trujillo was assassinated in Santo Domingo by a group of five to seven middle-class men, allegedly with the support of the CIA (Ferguson 1992; Wiarda & Kryzanek 1992). Little changed in the Dominican Republic immediately following Trujillo's assassination, as his son Ramfis Trujillo inherited power along with the incumbent President, Joaquin Balaguer. All but two of the assassins were caught, tortured and executed upon the instructions of Ramfis. The thirty-year dictatorship left both the economy and society in tatters: 'With his death, Dominican society experienced a massive collapse of leadership and a political and institutional vacuum. Few Dominicans remembered anything except life under Trujillo. With him gone, the country had to redefine its identity and chart a new course, and it had neither the leadership, the institution, nor the guideposts to do that' (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1992:38). But within a short time of Trujillo's assassination, exiles returned from abroad and formed political parties. Faced with domestic and international pressure to democratise, Trujillo's family fled into exile with the contents of the national treasury.

A Council of State was inaugurated on January 1, 1962 to oversee democratic elections (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1992). These took place in December 1962 and were clearly won by Juan Bosch, the leader of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and an exile returned from twenty-five years in

Cuba, Venezuela and Costa Rica (Moreno 1970). Bosch's party had promised social change and its first task was to implement a new constitution that included provision for agrarian reform, better health, housing, education and work. It soon faced criticism on a number of grounds, including accusations of being pro-communist. A military coup overthrew the Bosch government in September 1963. It installed a civil junta lead by businessman Donald Reid Cabral, in the process alienating almost all sections of Dominican society, including businessmen, leftist students and the PRD. The political space that had briefly opened with the death of Trujillo had closed again.

A popular uprising in support of a return to the 1963 constitution broke out in April 1965. It was organised by civilian leaders, but was supported and joined by many young military men:

> The main battles between rebel and loyalist forces were fought in the city of Santo Domingo. Since the generals had superior equipment, they hit the city with tanks, airplanes and gunboats. From April 26 to 28, nearly three thousand people, mainly civilians, died in the streets of Santo Domingo. On April 27, the rebels sought the mediation of the American embassy. Ambassador William T. Bennett urged them to surrender and declined to accept any mediating role. The rebel officers went back to the battlefield while some civilians sought political asylum in foreign embassies. By that evening, however, the loyalist troops were practically defeated. (Moreno 1981:317)

The uprising was prevented from becoming a full-scale revolution only by the intervention of US troops upon the invitation of Cabral's ousted military regime. US forces invaded on April 28-29, 1965, extinguishing the rebels' hopes of success: 'With 40,000 American troops in the city, American planes flying overhead and American warships in sight, the chances of a military victory for the rebels were suddenly reduced to zero. All they could opt for, as of that moment, was physical survival and some political concessions' (Moreno 1981:317). Nevertheless, the rebels held out in Santo Domingo for four months against the loyalists and US troops. They were helped by the people of the city, who fought alongside them, smuggled in food and provided them with shelter.

Eventually, the rebels capitulated and signed an agreement guaranteeing their freedom, with the proviso that they give up their arms (ibid.).

Moreno (1981) views the 1965 revolution as an attempt by Dominicans to break with historical patterns of foreign domination and internal dictatorship. He contends that it was a liberal-democratic revolution, but that it had some potential to become of a more radical orientation. However, the leftist nature of the revolution was certainly overplayed by all sides. The social changes that revolutionaries fought so hard for did not bear fruit in the post-revolution period. Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo's favourite historian and mastermind of antihaitianismo, easily won the 1966 presidential elections. Balaguer had a strong support base within the Dominican Republic and was viewed as a moderate, not a Trujillite. His Presidential campaign was assisted by the virtual absence of Bosch, who scarcely left his house due to harassment and assassination of other PRD leaders (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1992). Balaguer maintained office until 1978, and this period is known as *los doce años de Balaguer* (the twelve years of Balaguer) (Sagás 2000:99).

The twelve years of Balaguer's rule from 1966 to 1978 were a period of considerable socio-economic change. After Trujillo's assassination in 1961, migrants from the country began to settle in the centre of Santo Domingo more consistently, despite the continued issuance of decrees by President Balaguer banning settlement in certain areas. Their arrival was made possible by greater political freedom, but also a greater availability of work in the city relative to the country. This was especially true after the 'miracle years' of 1974-8, when Dominican sugar fetched high prices in the US market (Ferguson 1992:59).

Balaguer dominated Dominican politics for another decade from 1986 to 1996. Aged eighty and nearly blind, he was re-elected as President for a fifth term in 1986 and a sixth in 1990. Racism, disguised as antihaitianismo, was strong in the 1990s and played a major role Balaguer's defeat of Peña Gomez in the 1994 election. Gomez was the popular candidate and a black man. Sagás comments, 'Racial prejudice is not as rampant in the Dominican Republic as in South Africa, the United States, or even neighboring Cuba. As we have seen, a person is not considered black just

because he or she is not purely white' (2000:107). But while indio Dominicans were not generally the subject of discrimination within the Republic, *negro* (black) ones certainly were. Peña Gomez was black, and Balaguer ran a slander campaign against him that proposed that Gomez was of Haitian descent and practiced voudou (ibid.). Edited and dubbed video, allegedly showing Gomez participating in a voudou ceremony, was widely circulated in the media. Just in case the public had not been convinced by the message, 'A series of videos were shown on state-controlled television networks illustrating Peña Gómez as a hot-headed, irrational man, shouting and arguing at political meetings - alluding to his savagery and uncivilized behavior' (Howard 2001:175).

Before the elections, 'A Gallup poll stated that 25 percent of those interviewed would not vote for Peña Gómez because he was "violent and uncontrollable", his aggressive nature usually being linked to the assumed savagery of his Haitian heritage' (Howard 2001:162). Gómez was not Haitian but was assumed to be because of his colour. But Gómez failed to directly challenge the racism surrounding his campaign. Howard suggests that Gómez underestimated the influence that Balaguer's race campaign would have on the public. Furthermore, 'the emphasis on personalistic politics gave no political space for an effective and thorough anti-racism policy to flourish at the party level. No parties have displayed clear policies concerning citizenship or immigration, despite the key issue of anti-Haitianism' (Howard 2001:180).

In this way, Balaguer became President for a seventh term in 1994, amid strong allegations of fraud (Sagás 2000). Before the elections, Balaguer was not cooperating with the international embargo against Haiti, but upon his victory he changed his policy and so Bill Clinton's administration overlooked the allegations of electoral fraud. Political turmoil followed this, resulting in changes to the constitution so that no candidate could hold consecutive presidential terms. As a result, an election was held again in 1996, and Balaguer was not only out of the race, but refused to campaign on behalf of any other candidate. Peña Gomez won the popular vote but not the 50 percent that was necessary to take office. In the run-off election in June, a slander campaign orchestrated by Balaguer and two major political parties, the PLD and the PRSC, caused Gómez to lose to Leonel Fernandez. Peña Gomez is said to have lamented that 'Dominican society is not yet ready for a

black president' (ibid.). Gomez died on the 10th May 1998. Meanwhile, Balaguer continued to deport blacks who the government identified as Haitians, sending 'home' 15,000 between November 1996 and January 1997 (Howard 2001).

The cases of Peña Gomez and countless Dominican-born deportees illustrate how antihaitianismo is not just a discourse of nationality but rather one of race that affects Dominicans as much as Haitians. Antihaitianismo and hispanidad are two sides of the same racial coin, the former denoting blackness as primitivism, the latter privileging whiteness as civilization. Together, they mask the racial nature of socio-economic inequality through a national ideology that privileges whiteness. Because hispanidad allows for a racial mixture, Dominicans can exhibit a broad range of physical characteristics, yet be considered typically Dominican. However, hispanidad's apparent openness stops short at the darkest end of the colour spectrum, as blackness is associated with Haitians. This national racism is at its most visible in the cities, where residents of poor barrios are noticeably darker skinned than the residents of wealthy *residenciales* (planned neighbourhoods). I turn now to Santo Domingo, where not just national racism, but also political repression and localism had their most profound effects.

Santo Domingo, Politics and Place

In the past four decades, Santo Domingo has experienced growing land pressures due to rural to urban migration. Today, around 47 percent of the Dominican Republic's poor live in urban areas (Fay & Ruggeri Laderchi 2005:41). The flow of labour to cities and towns followed a pattern similar to that of primary cities throughout Latin America as agricultural export income was overshadowed by that from the *zona francas* (industrial free zones, or IFZs), tourism and family remittances (Portes et al. 1997).

When sugar prices dropped in the late 1970s, wage labour diminished greatly. The rural situation was exacerbated by the diversification of the economy away from monoculture, which undermined peasants who farmed traditional crops (Ferguson 1992). Since land was scarce and rural

communities under-serviced, migration to the capital was an attractive option despite the government's hostility to the urban poor. Although Santo Domingo was not an industrial city, it was a growing global city with an important port, and so provided a range of low-skilled employment opportunities. Forms of employment that existed then were similar to those that exist today. For women, it included domestic service and store clerks; for men, construction, street vending, transport, and limited work in manufacturing. More recently, growth in tourism has resulted in jobs such as tour guides and hotel workers. However, compared to the resort zone of Punta Cana, tourism has provided limited employment in the city centre.

Migration from the country to urban sites increased rapidly since 1985 when *zona francas* began appearing in most Dominican towns. According to Ferguson (1992), the IFZ boom was the result of the Caribbean Basin Initiative of 1984 (which gave duty-free access to the US market) and the rapid inflation of the Dominican peso (which lowered labour and other costs). Santo Domingo has two major IFZs on the eastern and western margins of the city. Because the wages for factory work are very low, residents of Santo Domingo tend not to work in the IFZs unless they live nearby, otherwise the cost of daily transport makes factory work economically unviable. Thereby Santo Domingo has never been an industrial city, but rather a port and service centre in which forms of service have diversified greatly in the past 30 years. The fluctuating fortunes of this type of economy mean that Santo Domingo has become what Trujillo and Balaguer tried so hard to avoid: a city with a highly stratified population symbolized in terms of colour shade and material inequalities. Moreover, the latter are clearly mapped onto the urban landscape.

The three main types of neighbourhood are *barrios*, *residenciales* and *ensanches*. The Spanish word *barrio* literally means neighbourhood, but in Santo Domingo it refers to the poorer parts of the city. Often the term *barrio pobre* (poor neighbourhood) is used for emphasis. *Residenciales* are secure apartment blocks that have locked entrances, bars on all windows, and often security guards at night. They are the main form of residence in the city centre and are inhabited by the middle class. In my survey of La Ciénaga, when asked where they would prefer to live if they could leave La Ciénaga, most respondents answered 'residenciales': 'The residenciales are tranquil because you

have to show identification to enter and there is a high level of security. You can sleep outside if you want and wake without fear in the morning that no-one is going to come and attack you' (Samuel). The word *ensanche* means 'widening' and refers to suburban developments characterised by separate houses, modern services and small parks. The ensanches in the east of the city are inhabited by the middle class, while those in the north are inhabited by the upper class. The middle class has been displaced across the river to the east. The upper class has sought refuge in the north of the city, where they are sandwiched between lower class neighbourhoods.

There is evidence that urban primacy and spatial polarization have declined in recent years due to the development of labour sites on the periphery of major cities or in other locations (Portes et al. 1997). The two major manufacturing zones to the east and west of the city have blocked the expansion of the middle class and also contributed to a reduction in spatial polarization. A combination of structural developments, together with urban flight, has led to a situation where proximity to the city's main features is little indication of wealth. Type of housing and access to services (such as water and electricity) are more reliable indicators of wealth and status than distance from the centre of the city or water views. David Howard argues that 'Social and economic exclusion rather than residential segregation characterize Dominican society' (Howard 2001:66). However, this is not entirely accurate as most of the city's poor reside in areas that are highly homogeneous in terms of the income of residents. Santo Domingo's poor are not consigned to the outskirts of the city, but their communities are nonetheless segregated from wealthy ones.

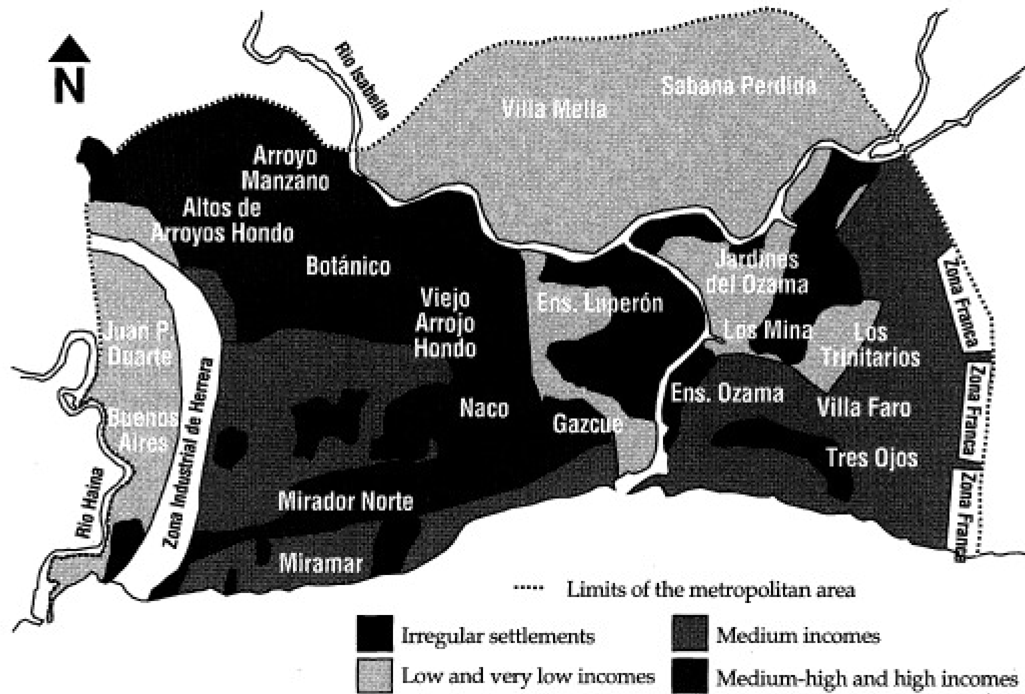

Figure 5. Income by residence in Santo Domingo (adapted from Portes et al. 1994:23)

While the working class occupy the periphery to the north of the city, shantytowns occupy the prime riverside land near the centre of the city that Trujillo and Balaguer sought to protect. There the poorest city residents retain a very similar place to that which they occupied 100 years ago. They are segregated into separate geographic spaces, squatting on contested land, and with limited access to employment or welfare. They are primarily, although not exclusively, dark-skinned rural migrants who moved to the city seeking the greater opportunities that an urban milieu can provide. According to Fay and Wellenstein, 11 percent of Santo Domingo's population (approximately 300,000 people) reside in these inner city slums around the Ozama River (2005:97). Services in these areas are irregular and many sections are dangerous:

> Santo Domingo's central city slum spans several worlds, with varying vulnerability to flooding and landslides. When it rains, the risk of flooding ranges from 6 percent for households on higher, consolidated ground to 45 percent for households near the river or along the 11 main drainage systems and *cañadas* (gullies). Knowledge is common about

> which areas of the neighbourhood are at risk of landslides. Rents (actual or imputed) reflect location safety and are almost twice as high in the safer areas than near the river or gullies. Housing quality also reflects risk perception, with simple wooden shacks in areas at risk for regular, catastrophic floods and multi-storey homes of durable materials in the consolidated part. (Fay & Wellenstein 2005:103)

The area also poses higher than average health risks, including mosquito-borne diseases due to poor drainage and proximity to the river, disposal of sewerage into the river and other water contamination. Yet very low rents and the ability to construct one's own house continue to draw rural migrants to the city's squatter settlements.

The issues facing the urban poor came to a head in the anti-IMF riots on the 23rd of April, 1984, under the presidency of Salvador Jorge Blanco (Sagás 2000). They occurred following a government and IMF agreement that imposed a program of austerity on the Dominican Republic with the aim of addressing an external debt of US$2,400 million (Ferguson 1993). The program caused a steep rise in the cost of living, with the price of pharmaceuticals increasing by 200 percent and a range of staples by 100 percent (Ferguson 1993:566). The peso, previously tied to the US dollar, was devalued and wages were cut.

While the deal allowed the Dominican Republic to meet its rescheduled debt payments, it failed to boost the domestic economy. Ferguson asserts, 'Despite the enormous cost to poor Dominicans, it is debatable whether the IMF-approved policies really improved the Dominican economy. Certain sectors profited handsomely from the devaluation, most notably foreign and domestic entrepreneurs with interests in export-led industries and tourism' (Ferguson 1993:568). The revolt consisted of a 12-hour strike and riots that left 112 people dead (most shot by the security forces), 500 wounded and 5000 arrested (Ferguson 1993:566). The riots destroyed the last remnants of the PRD government's popularity, brought to the world's attention the economic problems of the Dominican Republic and fortified the popular movements (ibid.). Middle class groups, consisting mainly of service professionals, also began to agitate for better conditions.

A number of popular organisations grew out of the 1984 revolt. *Comités de la Lucha Popular* (Popular Struggle Committees, or CLPs) were established in an attempt to coordinate different forms of national action. According to Ferguson, the strength of these popular movements lay in their aspiration to canvas issues that the government would not. Significantly, these organisations often included people who were marginalised from the political process, including women, youth, the unemployed, and informal sector workers. Their action managed to produce improved living conditions in some barrios. Union representation received a fillip from the 1991 formation of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (United Confederation of Workers, or CUT): 'Although still numerically weak, the CUT nevertheless marked a new departure for the Dominican labour movement' (Ferguson 1993:573). However, the appearance of this organisation was a long way from an industrial movement or the forms of class consciousness envisaged by Juan Bosch in the course of his very brief tenure as president (Bosch 1992). By the early 1990s, disagreements led to the emergence of a powerful break-away union, the Collective of Popular Organisations (COP). Yet internal division and lack of involvement in the national political process have limited their success to the local level (Ferguson 1993). Ferguson argues, 'The central paradox of the popular movement is that it wields enormous political power but has so far been unwilling and unable to use that power within the established political system. It has no electoral ambitions, nor does it envisage a revolutionary seizure of power. Instead, it articulates the daily needs and aspirations of those who have been most clearly failed by the political system' (1993:572).

However, it is not clear that the failure of popular organisations to wield power presis in fact paradoxical, given the persecution of political opposition in the Dominican Republic under Balaguer's leadership. There is ample evidence that Balaguer used his own power to violently suppress political opposition, particularly in Santo Domingo's barrios (see, for example, Ferguson 1993; Wiarda & Kryzanek 1992). Furthermore, from Bosch's overthrow in 1963 until Gomez's 1996 election defeat, politics revolved around the three main parties that offered little to the marginalised and the poor. In lieu, the Jesuit Order provided an alternative to secular political organisation, at least for some of the poor. In the Centro Bonó, located near the city's busy commercial district, Jesuits run a social research centre, a library and university level classes. The

Centre publishes its own journal, the *Revista de Estudios Sociales* (Journal of Social Studies) and operates a Haitian Refugee Service. Their *Centro de Estudios Sociales Padre Juan Montalvo* (Social Studies Centre Father Juan Montalvo, or CES) conducts research in five of Santo Domingo's barrios and also in San Andrés (see Gregory 2007). The Centre supports the activities of umbrella organisations within these communities and provides training courses for their leaders. It also publishes pamphlets and books on the topics of poverty and justice. Catholic *comunidades de base* (base communities, or CEBs) are thriving in Santo Domingo and have become a vehicle for social justice initiatives in Boca Chica and around the perimeter of the national district. In the context of a repressive state, some elements in the church have sought to represent the poor and pursue a role of benign paternalism. However, this provides only limited organisational capacity for significant social change.

The history of the Dominican Republic is replete with the full range of social classes – from peasant to rural and urban working poor and from rural property owners and regional professionals to a local group of modest trans-national finance capitalists. Yet major economic fluctuations, US intervention and state repression, often mediated by the dual nationalist ideologies of antihaitianismo and hispanidad, has precluded typical forms of enduring organisation that shape the experience of being enclassed. This has led the working poor and the marginalised of Santo Domingo to identify as the urban poor; in terms of *los barrios* and as *gente pobre* (poor people) who share similar capacities in the labour market and life chances in the neighbourhood. Their experience is shaped, in significant part, by their location and by the social and material objectifications of their position in society. What also shapes their experiences is the fact that they are not Haitian. This identity as non-Haitian is an encompassing experience that crosses class lines. It brings ambivalence because, while barrio residents wish to contest the middle class, they also wish to distance themselves from the lower end of the social order.

Securing space to build a place and valuing it in a positive way becomes a politics for 'the poor'. They come to Santo Domingo to secure a foothold in the vanguard of modernity – the city of new horizons. However, rather than being the means for mobility pa'lante, Santo Domingo's barrios

often become a terminus located beneath the PLD's imaginary bridge to progress. Barrio residents find that they are localised in the city by quotidian demands, a lack of enabling organisations, and by what Gregory (2007) calls a 'spatial economy of difference', that is, a hierarchy of colour, class and moral worth held in place by the state and its policy and practice. Moreover, the economic ruptures of 1984 and the early 2000s have entrenched a sense of uncertainty. Consequently, Leonel Fernandez and his slogan *E'pa'lante que vamos!* provide a conservative vision that appeals to many Dominicans, including many of the poor. Like many generations before them, they believe in progress and that *echando para adelante* (lit. throwing forward) depends upon the ability of individuals, families and communities to create the means. These are the precedents and the urban parameters of the residents of La Ciénaga whom I introduce in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

The Struggle for a Place

> Those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance. (Harvey 1989:234)

Night has fallen and for once the electricity supply to La Ciénaga is functioning. It came on just before the eight o'clock soap opera, arousing cheers of *llegó la luz!* (the light arrived!) from residents who were passing time socializing with neighbours on the street by the light of candles, kerosene lamps or a neighbour's battery-powered supply. People immediately jumped to life, snuffed flames out and switched on the television or stereo. Competing sound sources began to pump reggaetón and merengue into the street.

In the sparsely starred night sky appears a Christian cross, etched in light. It is the beacon of the *Faro a Colón*, the inland lighthouse built by President Balaguer in Santo Domingo's west to honour the 1992 quincentenary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. Its symbolism is unmistakeable: the cross blends official history with mythical time in a reminder that Dominican national identity is European and Catholic. The cross is also a mnemonic for the nation's long quest for modernity. The Faro was constructed on land usurped from the poor as part of a larger project to ready the nation

for its moment of quincentennial glory. Residents were to be evicted from the squatter settlements around the Ozama River. The targeted communities are still there today, and as they stand on prime land by the river and close to the city's centre, their locale could be worth billions of US dollars if it was developed (Fay & Wellenstein 2005). La Ciénaga was one of the communities targeted for modernization. It survived as a barrio for the poor through a combination of state ineptitude, resident protest and circumstance. Below the Faro's beacon and under the bridge, La Ciénaga does not conform to the state's modernizing project. Nor does it fulfil its residents' diffuse aspirations for progress. Yet the imaginaries of state and barrio do not necessarily converge. Although *cienigüeros* (residents of La Ciénaga) desire development and modernity, they have also resisted the State's efforts to dictate their lives. A brief overview of the barrio today introduces the residents' struggle for La Ciénaga.

Figure 6. Street scene in La Ciénaga.

La Ciénaga: A Place at the Centre

La Ciénaga is the popular name for a squatter settlement that is located in the National District of Santo Domingo. It is situated in the floodlands of the Ozama River, hence the barrio's name, which means 'the swamp'. The Juan Bosch and Duarte bridges demarcate the southernmost point of the barrio, while a stormwater canal forms the northern border that separates La Ciénaga from neighbouring Los Guandules. Together the two barrios make up the census district Domingo Savio. The main road into La Ciénaga is located under the Juan Bosch and Duarte bridges. A cliff separates La Ciénaga from the rest of the city, and pedestrian access is via narrow concrete stairs that wind between small, precariously placed houses. La Ciénaga is centrally located in the city. It takes around ten minutes to walk from the edge of the barrio to the street markets of Los Guandules, the commercial centre on Duarte and Paris streets, or the outskirts of the *zona colonial* (colonial zone).

Geographically, La Ciénaga is composed of four main residential areas: the cliffside, the low ground (*abajo*), the high ground in the centre of the barrio (*arriba*) and the riverside. Of these four areas, the most desirable place of residence is the high ground, since it does not flood and is not at risk of landslides. The riverside is considered to be the most dangerous area to live because residents perched at the edge of the river are at high risk of flooding during the wet season. The riverside and low ground that is away from the main entrance road can be difficult to access as well. Most houses in these areas do not have street frontage, but rather are reached via narrow, winding lanes. People's access to the city therefore differs depending upon their area of residence.

In 2000 there were approximately 18,000 residents in La Ciénaga living on 35.71 hectares; about 504.06 residents per hectare (Tejeda 2000:21). 50 percent of residents are less than 20 years old (ibid:25). Despite the high population density, most houses are single storey. They are packed together with minimum of yard space between them. Ideally houses are constructed out of concrete blocks with flat concrete roofs, but in practice most houses have a tin roof. Moreover, around 60 percent of houses are actually made of wood and other reclaimed materials, such as particle board

and sheets of tin. The early settlers paid for their blocks of land, but the entire area is subject to a lengthy ownership dispute. Not a single resident of La Ciénaga holds formal title to land.

La Ciénaga and Guachupita form the Catholic parish of San Martín de Porres. The Catholic church is by far the largest and most frequently attended organisation in La Ciénaga. According to my household survey,[16] around 63 percent of residents are Catholic (around 12,000 people), 14 percent are Pentecostal (around 2500 people) and roughly 8 percent belong to minor denominations. Almost 14 per cent reported no religion. About 20 percent of surveyed residents attended church at least twice a week. The community has an active and visible religious life, with both the Catholic and Pentecostal churches conducting multiple weekly services, at least one of which takes place outdoors in full public view each week. Given the frequency and accessibility of church activities in a community with a lively outdoor life, it is not surprising that many people attend (or at least watch) services regularly.

The centre of the barrio includes a medical centre, a police station (which was not finished while I was resident) and a sewerage treatment plant that had been abandoned for a decade but is being refurbished. The four-storey primary / secondary school serves as a community hub. The Catholic church holds services in its hall and it is the venue for a variety of community meetings. The office and meeting place for the Coordinación para el Desarrollo de La Ciénaga (Coordination for the Development of La Ciénaga, CODECI) is not far from the school.[17]

The daily life of the average cienigüero depends on their employment status and gender. The commonality that all cienigüeros must face is adapting to the irregular services provided to the barrio. The first sound in the morning is the rush of water through pipes as the water arrives at around 5am. It is provided to the barrio for around three hours per day, five days per week, and so the first task that residents have is to collect as much water as they can in buckets, bins and their washing machines. Some lucky residents who have black plastic tanks with pumps on their roofs

[16] Over a period of three weeks I surveyed 50 residents in each of the barrio's six sectors. 34 percent of respondents were male. See Appendices 1 and 3 for copies of my survey and my report to CODECI.
[17] I discuss this organisation later in this chapter.

sleep in, safe in the knowledge that they will have enough water to last a few days. The smell of coffee drifts through the air as women percolate sweet short blacks. Front doors open for the day, letting light, fresh air, and visitors in. Women sweep and wash the concrete paths and the gutter in front of their houses.

Rush hour is between 6:30am and 8am, as men and women head to work and half of the children make their way to the school's morning shift. During this period, the sounds of people leaving dominate, especially the 'vroom' of motorbikes. Their owners charge 20 pesos (around US$0.50) to ferry passengers up the cliff to city buses and *carros publicos* (public taxis). Other residents prefer to walk up the stairs. By 8am, the streets are relatively empty except for groups of chatting unemployed men and children waiting for the school's afternoon shift. Women who stay at home spend the morning in domestic tasks, the most important of which is to prepare *almuerzo*, the midday meal. This is the largest meal of the day and usually consists of rice and beans, and perhaps braised or fried chicken and salad. Since the beans are dried, lunch takes around two hours to prepare. While the beans are cooking, women sweep their houses, make products to sell from home and prepare children for school. If the electricity is on, they will use their washing machines. Women listen for the honking horns of the water truck[18], garbage truck and pickup trucks selling fruit and vegetables direct from the country. Men who work as ambulatory venders return around 2pm to eat. At the same time, children in the afternoon shift go to school.

At around 3pm, adults who have finished the majority of their day's work begin to bring plastic chairs out on the street in order to chat with friends and perhaps play a game of dominoes. Many adults and young people spend time *paseando*, (the popular practice of walking around the barrio to socialise). The street scene is hectic after 5pm, when the children get out of school and the rest of the adults come home from work. If the electricity comes on, everyone cheers as generators start to hum and radios blast. Street life remains active until around 10pm or 11pm, when the *colmados* (small grocery stores) shut. At this time people finally bring in their chairs, bolt their doors and put

[18] Most people buy purified water at AU$1.50 for ten litres each rather than drink the tap water. Every day or so, trucks from different companies pass through the barrio. Residents take out their bottles to be refilled from the truck's hose.

their children to bed. The streets turn pitch black and quiet. Occasionally, fights or the sound of a siren shatters the peace of the night and residents peer round doors searching for the cause of the commotion.

From 11pm to around 5am, street space is relinquished to the brave, the foolish and the dangerous among the young. Men and women who return from work or entertainment at a late hour almost always pay a *motoconchista* (motorbike taxi driver) to bring them from Guachupita down to La Ciénaga. Only a handful of *motoconchistas* work the overnight shift, and they ride as fast as they can to avoid possible ambush. For those who come on foot, the most feared places are the stairs that wind down the cliff through a narrow space between houses. On the weekends, there are more young people on the streets, as they make their way to and from the *club de billard* (La Ciénaga's only indoor dance club) and the *colmadones* (grocery stores with open-air dance floors). Gunshots occasionally disturb the barrio as enthusiastic youth display their arms. Spent bullets lie around the streets.

The spatial proximity of La Ciénaga to the city, and the economic opportunities this centrality offers, are crucial to the barrio's existence. Most cienigüeros dislike their living conditions and aspire to escape the barrio, but not at the cost of living on the periphery of the city. However, in other ways, La Ciénaga is marginal to the services of urban life. There is no bus service (*guagua*) into the barrio, so most movement is by foot or via motorbikes. Taxi drivers are reluctant to enter the barrio because they are concerned they will be ambushed. Another road leads into the barrio from Los Guandules, but it is narrow and does not lead directly to the main road. To get to the rest of the city, residents must either hike up the cliff (a sweaty task in Santo Domingo's humidity) or pay double fare to catch a motorbike to the bus routes at the top of the cliff.

The limited access isolates the barrio from other crucial services. During my fieldwork there were a number of house fires caused by candles lit during the barrio's many blackouts. Fire engines would arrive at the barrio quickly, but they often spent time driving fruitlessly around the periphery, trying to approach the engulfed house buried down the barrio's narrow alleys. One resident, Samuel,

mentioned his concern for his children a number of times – that they might be ill in the night or that there could be a fire in the house. Transport issues also make it difficult for cienigüeros to participate in events that take place outside the barrio in the evening, including meetings, adult education, going to the cinema, working, and socializing. Free cultural events, such as waterfront *merengue* concerts, the yearly drama festival at the Palace of Fine Arts, and regular art openings, are also seldom attended by cienigüeros. Most residents never go to public festivals and rarely go to the cinema. Notwithstanding being at the centre, La Ciénaga is marginalised from the city's public life and services. This also has a temporal dimension: during the day, many negotiate their circumstance, but after dark most residents are forced back into a confined space for fear of the dangers in the barrio.

The central location of La Ciénaga does not, by any means, guarantee employment. The National Statistics Office (ONE) estimates national unemployment at around 18 percent.[19] In La Ciénaga, just 22 percent of residents over 15 years of age hold regular employment, making the rate of unemployment and underemployment nearly 80 percent (CES 2004:14). According to the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, 45 percent of occupied persons nationally work in the formal sector and 54 percent work in the informal sector (Banco Central de la República Dominicana 2003). My household survey established that at least 90 percent of occupied people in La Ciénaga work in the informal sector[20]. Consequently, cienigüeros experience rates of unemployment and job insecurity that are among the highest in the Dominican Republic. Participation in export manufacturing and the more profitable areas of tourism are usually beyond them (cf. San Andres as described by Gregory 2007).

The main occupation for women is to work as domestic servants in the homes of the middle class or as vendors of home-made juice, ice cream, beauty products, or non-perishable items, which are often sold from home. Men work as ambulatory vendors in the city, take passengers on their motorbikes from La Ciénaga to the top of the cliff, labour in the construction industry, run grocery

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[19] Data from http://www.one.gob.do/, accessed 24-01-07.

[20] There has been some disgreement over whether domestic workers should be considered part of the informal sector as they receive a wage and do not produce items for sale. See Thomas (1995)

stores within the barrio, or work as security guards for apartment blocks and offices. There are, of course, exceptions. La Ciénaga has its own small group of professionals including an engineer, lawyers, secretaries, teachers, and computer technicians. However, generally the status and remuneration of barrio residents' work is low. In the course of my fieldwork, the highest salary reported to me was 15,000 pesos per month (AU$570) by a carpenter and also by a grocery store owner. Most incomes were in the range of 1500-5000 pesos per month (AU$57-231). One resident told me:

> We have a very bad quality of life here. Everyone that lives here has to leave to look for food [i.e., make a living] because there isn't a Zona Franca [industrial free zone] here, nowhere to make money.

Residents also believe that discrimination is a factor involved in the barrio's high unemployment rate and low wages:

> Well, look, there are many professionals who don't work. How should I explain it? I am poor, right? Working class, but you understand. I can study a career in the university, but what happens? Since I don't have contacts, because I am from La Ciénaga, no-one will give me work. They say, 'Where do you live? Give me your curriculum vitae.' But if I tell them my address, they are going to say 'You live in La Ciénaga!' and I don't have anyone to recommend me to them. And so there are many professionals in La Ciénaga who aren't working. (Antonio)

Cienigüeros do aspire to professional occupations, such as doctor or lawyer, but are constrained by hierarchy and a lack of resources. Blackness, lack of contacts and the moral opprobrium of a 'dangerous' domicile heighten the impact of poverty even on those who pursue education.

Figure 7. Girl selling limes on the street in La Ciénga.

Figure 8. Vendor selling Bon ice cream in La Ciénaga.

Ruggeri Laderchi argues that ‘Access to good jobs is particularly poor for women, both because of their lower skill levels and because the increase in their labour-market participation has come about without significant changes in gender roles or the availability of child care’ (Ruggeri Laderchi 2005:64). During my fieldwork, a typical wage for a female domestic was around DOP$2500-3500 (AU$83-116) per month, and around DOP$3500- 4500 (AU$116-150) for a worker in an IFZ. Although IFZ workers earn more money, they lose their gain in transport costs to and from work. The distance they must travel also makes their working day longer. Many women prefer to work as domestic servants because it allows for flexible hours. Staff can arrive late if necessary, sometimes take afternoon siestas, and are generally provided with lunch. Depending upon their employer, they may receive clothing and various gifts for themselves and children. By contrast, IFZ workers complain that the work is hard and the rules very strict. Therefore, the reduction in domestic employment caused by economic pressure on the middle class has affected La Ciénaga’s women:

> I don’t know why but it seems there is less around here than there was before. Because you see men around here dying of hunger and the women too, there is nothing to do. Not even work as a domestic servant. [Middle class] women have to do the housework themselves because they can’t afford to pay anyone. (Altagracía)

Home businesses are common among women in the community who do not hold regular employment. Women’s work, paid and unpaid, is still predominantly centred on domestic activities. As Martínez-Vergne (Martínez-Vergne 2005) found in the late 19th century and Gregory (2007) in the early 21st century, women’s work is often an extension of domestic work, with many women running small businesses from the home, working as maids in middle class homes, or taking in laundry. In Altagracía’s small street alone there are at least six women’s home businesses, selling a wide variety of products including bread, pre-cooked red beans, jewellery, Avon products, and children’s games. Beauty salons abound. These businesses are viable because the community’s proxemics facilitate social mixing, a factor that is absent in apartment block communities such as Guachupita and La Caoba (where many cienigüeros were relocated to in 1977). Selling products from their home allows women to earn money while they are unemployed or looking after children.

It also contributes to the creation of a sense of community, as these women get to know their clientele and therefore participate in community networks.

Of 103 men surveyed, 21 percent described themselves as unemployed, 18 percent as a *negociante* (businessperson), 6 percent as *chiripero* (street vending or odd jobs) and 6 percent as security guards. Men reported a greater range of occupations than women and generally earned higher wages, but were more likely to describe themselves as unemployed. Only one man described his work as 'in the house', and men who worked from home were more likely to describe themselves as *negociante* or *chiripero*. Examples of activities that men undertook at home or in the neighbourhood included making or altering clothes, fixing televisions, running *colmados* (small grocery stores) or as construction workers on local houses. Wages earned by *negociantes* varied widely depending upon the nature of the business, with colmado owners earning the most at around DOP$10,000-15,000 (AU$333-500) monthly. A business requires an initial investment of capital and so this option is available to few Dominicans, who have neither the opportunity to save, nor the option of borrowing from a bank. Military posts are the most regular jobs and require minimal skills, but are poorly paid, receiving around DOP$5000 (AUS$166) monthly. Other typical earnings included DOP$4500 (AU$150) monthly for a motoconcho driver, DOP$2250 (AU$75) for a tailor, and DOP$5000 (AU$166) for a repairman. In general, both men and women were struggling to earn enough to feed, clothe and educate a family. Two incomes were a necessity for most.

Cienigüeros save money by living with relatives, building extensions on the family home to allow multiple occupancy, building a separate house on any available land they can find, or renting a cheap shack. The high inflation of 2003 depressed wages and caused food prices to skyrocket. Few cienigüeros can afford expensive imported food items, and much local produce sells at prices that are comparable to those in developed countries. Most cienigüeros buy their vegetables, legumes, rice and herbs locally at the street markets that line Calle 27 de Febrero and Calle 17, or from pickup trucks that bring produce directly from nearby farms to the barrios' streets. They wind their way through the narrow lanes, announcing their wares via loudspeaker. Household items, such as cleaning products and toilet paper, can also be purchased on the street (particularly in Calle Duarte)

and Haitian traders dominate the sale of second-hand clothes. Everyday shopping is done in colmados, which sell a large range of products, the staples being fresh bread rolls, mayonnaise, ham, rice, pasta, beans, basic vegetables, canned fish, cold drinks and beer. Supermarkets sell most of these items cheaper than colmados, but are frequented less because they are further away and sell in quantities that many cienigüeros are unable to purchase. Consumption in the city becomes its own site of local struggle.

La Ciénaga is close to Santo Domingo's centre and yet it is marginalised from the city's services. The barrio is a vibrant milieu and yet its residents are limited in their engagement with the city's public life - except in the role of menial workers. Most adults must work and education is valued. And yet most residents are confined to the lowest paying and insecure sectors of the economy. The transnational pull of a global economy seems to weaken at the barrio's door. Through the range of service employment and construction in which they are involved, residents make a contribution to the city's standing as an expanding urban centre. And yet their consumption is localised too due to the conditions of La Ciénaga. A space that is today filled with ambivalence – a denigrated barrio that stands in the midst of urban progress – is also a place that residents have built over 50 years and more. Life is a constant struggle for cienigüeros and yet they celebrate the light, *'la luz'!*

From *el campo* to *el barrio*

The community of La Ciénaga was initiated by poor rural migrants searching for a place to live inexpensively in the centre of the city. Under Trujillo's rule, settlement in the land around the River Ozama was prohibited and migration from the country to the city was discouraged. Residents of Guachupita at the top of the cliff used the swampy ground as farmland. Roberto, a local politician who lived in La Ciénaga between 1966 and 1977, remembers playing in *la ciénaga* (the swamp) as a teenager:

> In the late 1950s we used to go down there to catch crabs and sell them in the city. We would bathe in the fresh water of the river and we made a field to play baseball. In 1964 a

> Puerto Rican engineer filled in the swamp and people started to settle there soon after the 1965 revolution. (Roberto)

Since then, migrants have transformed the farmland of *la ciénaga*, the swamp, into *La Ciénaga*, the urban community. After Trujillo's death in 1961, the land around the river was populated by both people already resident in Santo Domingo and by new migrants, all of whom were looking for a plot of land where they could build a house. The city allowed access to a larger labour market at a time when peasant activity was dwindling (see previous chapter), as well as the chance to take advantage of the benefits of modern city living, such as the chance to educate children.

The first part of La Ciénaga to be populated after Trujillo's death was the southern corner closest to the Duarte and Bosch bridges (CES 2004). Pedro was one of the first people to build on the high ground in the centre of the barrio. Pedro was born in 1925 in Constanza, an agricultural town located in the mountains on the western edge of Cibao. His father was a landed peasant who died when he was around eight years old and the family lost their land. Pedro was not able to attend school, as he and his elder brother had to work to look after their mother and younger brothers and sisters. Pedro first moved to Santo Domingo in the late 1940s and lived in the centre of the city while he worked in the construction industry. In 1972, he married his wife Felicia, who is twenty years his junior and also from Cibao. In the same year, Pedro bought a small piece of land on the central, rocky high ground in La Ciénaga that is known as La Clarín after its landmark radio tower. [21]At the time, his elder brother Roberto was already living on the main road, near the entrance to La Ciénaga. There were no roads or services in the area, and residents have clear memories of the difficulties they faced in the 1970s. Pedro's eldest son Samuel, who was one of the first children to be born in La Ciénaga, explained his family's choice as based on the ability to obtain land:

> We emigrated from the country to the city and the place with the conditions for us to be able to establish ourselves was La Ciénaga, because in contrast to the centre of the city, a

[21] The early residents paid a local resident who controlled the land but did not have land title. As a result, none of La Ciénaga's residents hold title to their land today.

> site so isolated as this wasn't important to anyone. Everyone who came here got land and stayed. It was difficult because the streets weren't paved, the system of electricity was even worse than now, and the water almost never arrived as far as our house, perhaps once per week. (Samuel)

La Ciénaga's essentially rural nature meant that it was difficult to live in. The site was isolated in that there were no roads, and it was this inaccessibility that made it 'unimportant' and inexpensive. Its disadvantages were offset by the opportunity to construct a house inexpensively, use spare land to grow produce, bathe in the fresh water of the Ozama River, and sell their produce or labour in the city. It was a place where any poor person who was willing to put up with the site's inconveniences could obtain a block of land and construct their own home out of found and bought materials, thus avoiding paying rent in the city. Pedro built his own home on high ground in the centre of the barrio. When he had constructed a small wooden *ranchito* (house) with a dirt floor, as well as rice fields and vegetables plots in the unused marsh behind his house, he brought his new wife to live with him.

Also in 1972, Pedro convinced his 38-year-old cousin Altagracía to buy a plot of land in La Clarín, the high ground in the centre of La Ciénaga. At the time, Altagracía was living in Guachupita with her three children in a tiny room that Pedro described as 'a *pedacito* (little piece of space) with just enough room for a double bed and no room to move around it'. Altagracía explained her decision to move to La Ciénaga to me:

> Well, I lived in Guachupita and I was working so hard washing and ironing clothes. I had a tiny house without enough room to build a toilet and I was *luchando* (struggling). My cousin Pedro saw my situation and he said to me, "Altagracía, why don't you buy a block of land there in the *monte* (wilderness) where I bought one, because there one can be tranquil and live well with a lot of space." And I had thirty pesos that I got together so I said to him "well all right, I'm going to go down there." I went down and bought this little piece of *monte* here. There was already a ranchito but it was in a bad state of repair. I went

> up a ladder with nails and a hammer, and I finished it myself. I only put on a roof of *cartón negro* (particle board) because I didn't have enough money to buy zinc. So I moved in here and sold my house *arriba* (above). (Altagracía)

Altagracía sold her house and bought a large block of land near her cousin, where she invested DOP$50 in repairing her ranchito (at that time equivalent to US$50). As a single mother with very limited resources, Altagracía depended upon her work and her reputation as a worker to obtain the credit necessary to buy her ranchito. The sale of her small house in Guachupita funded the repairs she made to the house. While La Ciénaga's remoteness made life there more difficult, particularly in regard to access to water and transport, Altagracía's living space expanded considerably, both inside and outside the house. Altagracía remarked:

> When I arrived in La Ciénaga it was *monte destruido* [destroyed wilderness]. There were very few people here and we couldn't help each other because we were all poor. There were few houses or people, the majority of the place was pure *monte*. We grew rice below in the swamp and around here was pure crabs. We woke up eating crab and every second day I would send my son to sell them so that we could buy food.
>
> When it rained you couldn't go up the cliff into the city and we would have to wear gumboots. We all finished building our houses in the rainy season because the military couldn't come here because there was so much water. But then they came and installed a drainage system so many people moved here and built houses. This was a river before and now there is no water. (Altagracía)

Altagracía's memories of the early days are of a threatening natural environment that lacked the social life that gives a value to space. Her landscape was populated by scuttling crabs that could be caught and eaten or sold in the markets. Altagracía struggled to create a home for herself and her children. Besides growing food with Pedro, Altagracía took in ironing. Most days she would walk up the muddy path into the city to collect freshly washed clothes from her clients and cart them back to her ranchito. At home she had a wood-burning stove on which she heated her metal iron.

For Altagracía, life in La Ciénaga was better than her former home in the city only because there was more space for herself and her children and she could be close to her cousin and his family. In all other respects, Altagracía felt that she was struggling against daunting barriers. Altagracía's comment that she built her house during the rainy season refers to the fact that there was a Presidential decree declaring that the land was to remain uninhabited. Residents could build relatively safely in the rainy season when the military found it difficult to access the high land of the area. These were the early days of the barrio when there were still very few residents, the streets were unpaved, there was no drainage, and no services.

Lidia moved with her *marido* (common-law husband) into the neighbourhood in 1973 when she was a young woman of nineteen years of age. Lidia and her *marido* were already living in Santo Domingo, but had only recently arrived from the South.[22] Lidia had begun to collect building materials, such as sheets of tin, in the hope of finding a plot to build a house. When she heard about La Ciénaga from her father, she acted independently to acquire a block of land. Despite La Ciénaga's continuing drawbacks, and difficulties she has faced since, Lidia is still fond of La Ciénaga as it fulfilled her dreams of building a house of her own. She told me:

> La Ciénaga was good. It was bad that there were so many mosquitoes and frogs. There were many, many, many of those, and we had so many crabs. Oh, la! Every morning we would fill a bucket with crabs that we collected in the house, running over the wooden floor, the zinc roof, we found them in all corners of the house. If I left the door open at night they would run into the kitchen, it was all full up with crabs. La Ciénaga wasn't so tremendous, but it was very quiet. There was a military base nearby and I slept with the door open, I never closed the door … I wasn't afraid. (Lidia)

Unlike Altagracía's perception of a threatening natural landscape, Lidia (who arrived just one year after Altagracía) relates stories of frogs and crabs with a great deal of humour and revelled in the

[22] The South is an administrative region of the Dominican Republic. It is located in the southwestern corner of the country and borders Haiti.

new community's *tranquilidad* (peacefulness). Interestingly, where Altagracía saw the military as a threat to her construction of a home, Lidia views the military as the very thing that kept the new community safe. Given that neither woman has ever had her house destroyed by the military, I suspect that Altagracía's greater fear comes from her experiences of the Trujillo regime. (Altagracía was twenty-seven when Trujillo died; Lidia was only seven.) Many people were arrested, tortured, or killed by the military. Indeed, Pedro claims to have been arrested under both Trujillo (early 1950s) *and* Balaguer (late 1960s) for not carrying an identity card. He says that both times he was incarcerated for a week in Santo Domingo's infamous jail, La Victoria.

Most early migrants were, like Altagracía, *indio*-coloured, Catholic descendents of farmers and were affronted by the blackness that characterized poverty in the city's margins:

> When we arrived in La Ciénaga it was a disaster. There were very few houses or people. We were afraid because we thought that it wasn't a good place, that it was bad, because there were very few white people around here. We were afraid because we were accustomed to seeing people like us. (Nina)

Altagracía felt out of place in La Ciénaga because the area appeared to be abandoned or undesirable. That the few people who lived there were black exacerbated her fears that she had stepped out of a respectable milieu into a domain where only the poorest or most desperate would dare to tread. Her fears were soon allayed. Most settlers in the 1960s and 1970s came, like Altagracía, from the Cibao valley in the centre of the Dominican Republic (which includes the ex-capital city of Santiago). They were predominantly light-skinned descendents of European settlers and fit with Altagracía's imaginary of what Dominican society should look like.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the largest population growth in La Ciénaga's history, with roughly half of current residents migrating to La Ciénaga or being born there in this period alone. The new migrants settled in the spaces that were formerly used for agriculture and filled the swamp with refuse to reduce flooding and construct houses on top of it. By the early 1980s, Pedro and his

cousin Altagracía had given up their farmland to new migrants and Pedro gained steady employment in a local government program to restore colonial architecture. He retired in 1990 and receives a monthly pension of DOP$2000 (around US$60). His wife Felicia continues to work in part-time cleaning jobs and they also receive support from their sons.

Most new migrants came from the arid South, near the Haitian border, and tended to be darker-skinned than the previous wave from Cibao. This second wave was propelled by a faltering agricultural economy in the South, lack of other employment opportunities and damage wrought by Hurricane David in 1979. This was a time of industrialization in Santo Domingo, but it is unlikely that these particular migrants came to Santo Domingo to work in the *zona francas* (industrial free zones, or IFZs) as they are located at some distance from La Ciénaga. The majority of migrants took up employment in the traditional occupations of street vendors, domestic servants and construction workers. Bethania, who was in her late teens when she came to La Ciénaga with her mother in 1985, remarked:

> I came here because in my town, San Juan de la Maguana, there are very few opportunities. One leaves one's town looking for a better life. There in my town it is clean, more hygienic, because there isn't mud like here in La Ciénaga, but there is no way to survive. Here you find work quicker for your family. There in San Juan there isn't any. The only thing to do is shell beans. They call it the granary of the south and work is seasonal. (Bethania)

Bethania's view of country life as healthy but austere is shared by many urban migrants. Her family migrated to the city only after their home was destroyed by Hurricane David and they had spent a few years in temporary accommodation, knowing full well that life in the city is also difficult. Bethania's mother, América, set up a *comedor* (food stall) in the streets of Santo Domingo, but she did not have a vendor's license and lost everything when it was confiscated by the military. In disgust, she retreated to her ranchito in La Ciénaga to sell food to bachelors from her home. She supplements the meagre income this generates with sales of Avon products. América's son, who is an engineer, recently bought her a house. Bethania lives with her husband and their three children

and earns a small wage as secretary for CODECI (Coordination for the Development of La Ciénaga).

Today, approximately 60 percent of cienigüeros originated in the arid south-west of the country, 22 percent from the agricultural centre of Cibao, and just 5 percent from the south east, the country's largest tourist region (Tejeda 2000:33). There are few, if any, foreigners from other countries residing in La Ciénaga, and there are no reliable estimates of the number of residents who originated in Haiti. Colour differences between the waves of migration are marked on barrio space, with lighter-skinned people residing in the areas of the barrio arriba, and somewhat darker-skinned people residing in the areas abajo. The shading of residential space is subtle but nonetheless real for residents. Some like Altagracía claim that abajo is 'overrun' with Haitians.

La Ciénaga, once a swamp, is now a lively barrio. Apart from a stand of coconuts next to the river, few traces of its agricultural or natural past remain. The sounds of frogs and scuttling crabs were rapidly replaced with the blare of radios and the roar of motorbikes. Concrete-paved alleyways joining tin, wood and concrete houses have long replaced the rice fields and grazing grounds. Services such as electricity and potable water are now available, although irregular. Much of the water has been diverted by landfill or stormwater drains, but many residents, particularly those at the edge of the river or in the lower central zone, continue to experience flooding in the wet season. Some names referring to La Ciénaga's pre-urban past remain, include *los cocos* (the coconut stand), *el arrozal* (the rice field) and *pata de vaca* (cow's foot). These names map the barrio's history onto the urban landscape.

La Ciénaga and the State

Rural migrants took advantage of Trujillo's downfall and subsequent unrest to settle in La Ciénaga, but their occupation was not accepted by the State until the late 1990s. The state refused to provide basic services to the barrio, so that even modest improvement came with a struggle. In 1977, Balaguer issued a decree declaring the land around the river uninhabitable due to its tendency to

flood. He sent in the military with the task of evicting all residents of La Ciénaga and Los Guandules. They also aimed to clear the area of housing. It was to become a recreational green belt protecting the river.

When the first evictions occurred in 1977, cienigüeros reacted with ambivalence. Balaguer's government had constructed brand new, concrete apartment blocks in Las Caobas, on the far western border of the city, to house residents of La Ciénaga. Many people, including Pedro and Lidia, hoped to be reallocated to one of these apartments:

> I was very sad when they didn't give me a house, because I truly wanted to leave here. I like my Ciénaga because it was here that I built my first house. They didn't give me anything, but I wasn't going to die, right? I said to my husband, 'What are we going to do?' So here we stayed. (Lidia)

However, other people were strongly averse to relocation. For those who worked in the city, the distance and cost of transport were serious obstacles, while for those who made money from home businesses, the relocation meant loss of established clientele. At that time, there was very little in Las Caobas except for the government's new apartments: no shops, no community, and very little public transport. Las Caobas's three-storey apartments represented a very different style of social life to La Ciénaga's populated streets. While Pedro was prepared to commute the hour and a half it would take him to get to work, Altagracía would have found it very difficult to make a living. Her ironing required proximity to established clients. Furthermore, it would have been difficult for her to sell products from home if she were in a third storey apartment. Today, Las Caobas is a pleasant, quiet neighbourhood that is connected to the city by cheap, air-conditioned government buses that run along a well-maintained highway. At the time, though, there was no way for residents to tell whether the program would bring a net benefit or loss.

As things turned out, few people had a choice: some of those who wished to go, stayed; and some of those who wished to stay, went. Like many government policies, the relocation project sounded

good in theory, but in practice failed to live up to its promise. Rather than an orderly transition in which all cienigüeros were allocated a government flat and given a reasonable time to decide whether or not to accept, the program was characterized by poor planning, lack of communication, protests, corruption and violence. Although the barrio was originally supposed to be vacated completely, the process of evictions soon became selective, with many of the better houses being left alone and only the wooden ranchitos destroyed. Many saw their small ranchito*s* bulldozed to the ground, particularly those around the edge of the river. Pedro's, Altagracía's and Lidia's ranchitos were all located in the high ground and remained untouched. Pedro's son Samuel recounts the events of 1977:

> My family was one of the unfortunate ones that weren't taken out of La Ciénaga in the evictions of the 70s. Many people were taken to Las Caobas, a place with a certain level of comfort, but we weren't even though my uncle [Roberto) was the director of the evictions, but he focused his preoccupation on the people closest to the river because it was assumed that they were in the most danger in case of floods.
>
> We weren't beneficiaries because it became a business in which those without money weren't evicted (*desalojado*). They also sold apartments that were assigned to people in La Ciénaga. When this happened my uncle was no longer working with them, he wasn't a person who would do that. So many people who were supposed to be relocated weren't. They were going to relocate the eastern side of the river and also La Ciénaga. They relocated the eastern part completely without problems, but when they came here it fell into a state of disorder. (Samuel)

In Samuel's view, his family missed out because corrupt officials commandeered Balaguer's orderly relocation plan and turned it into a business. He told me that in some cases, families bribed the military to let them stay in La Ciénaga; in others, military officers rented out apartments meant for residents, and in yet other cases people sold their apartments and moved back to the riverside hoping for a second chance and a net profit. The CES backs up these rumours. In a pamphlet about La Ciénaga, they write, 'In practice, lack of control of these projects distorted their intention, giving

housing to people who did not need it and allowing those who received housing to sell it and return to the barrio to wait for a second opportunity' (CES 2004). Ultimately, Balaguer's *desalojos* (evictions) failed to achieve their purpose of clearing settlements from around the river. In 1978, Balaguer lost the presidential election to Antonio Guzmán of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), and the evictions were not renewed.

The evictions prompted the creation of the Neighbourhood Rights Defence Committee (Comité para la Defensa de los Derechos Barriales, COPADEBA) in 1979. COPADEBA began as an alliance between community organisations and grassroots Catholic groups in a number of barrios around the river. It also included labour unions, displaced families in the north of the National District, and NGOs. COPADEBA's objective was to challenge government displacement of poor people and seek redress for families whose homes were bulldozed without them being provided with alternative accommodation. COPADEBA holds local meetings and sends representatives to the collective office for the northern part of the national district. COPADEBA quickly became the biggest popular organisation in Santo Domingo (Ferguson 1993:570).

La Ciénaga was largely forgotten after Balaguer's electoral loss to Guzmán in 1978. It was clear that the governments of Antonio Guzmán (1978-1982) and Salvador Jorge Blanco (1982-1986) were preoccupied with a series of political and economic crises, and would not interfere in La Ciénaga. Neither helped nor hindered, the barrio continued to develop, receiving the majority of its migrants during the 1980s. This second wave of migrants rapidly filled the vacancies left by dislodged families and virtually every other vacant space in the barrio as well:

> The poor have continued arriving from the country and the only opportunity they've found has been around here. You know that the poor, when they arrive they can't live close to the rich because the rich stop them. But when one arrives to the poor barrios it's because there is a family of poor who can protect them (*amparar*) and place them (*colocar*) and in this way La Ciénaga has been growing and now it's a town. (Jorge)

Jorge's comment suggests migrants to Santo Domingo had little choice but to settle in La Ciénaga. Nonetheless, they found it a welcoming environment. This was facilitated by the fact that many of the early residents encouraged other family members – parents, siblings, children and cousins - to move to La Ciénaga. Lacking the resources to live in a more respectable, better-serviced part of the city, residents constructed a 'family of poor' in which social relations could turn the barrio into a community of their own and partially compensate for their socio-economic marginalisation.

Throughout the 1980s, COPADEBA filled some of the gaps left by the State's absence, working actively in the barrios to improve living standards and represent the poor. They coordinated community activities, such as fixing the wall of the barrio's main drainage channel, and they ran training workshops in leadership and other political skills for barrio residents. COPADEBA now focus their energies on gaining land titles for La Ciénaga's residents. The entire community is at the centre of a court case with the Vicini, an Italian family who used to own large tracts of land in Santo Domingo. The Vicini claim that Trujillo illegally seized this land from them, while the Dominican State argues that the land was transferred legally. Today, there is little threat of eviction and COPADEBA's direct role in the barrio has diminished, but La Ciénaga's current level of organisation is by and large due to COPADEBA's role in raising political awareness during those formative years. Their activities also meant that when Balaguer returned to power in 1986 and sought to continue his eviction policies, La Ciénaga had the numbers, the knowledge and the networks required to implement some organised resistance.

Modernization Revisited

Balaguer's return to power heralded a new project to modernize Santo Domingo in time for the 1992 quincentenary. It also heralded a new wave of evictions for Santo Domingo's poor. Celebrations were to include distinguished guests such as the Pope, and its purpose was to remind the world of the Dominican Republic's historical importance as the oldest settlement in the Americas. The jewel in the crown of Balaguer's project was the construction of the *Faro a Colón*, the massive building in the shape of a cross that is located on top of a hill in eastern Santo

Domingo. According to James Ferguson (1992), almost two thousand families were evicted from eastern Santo Domingo to make way for the *Faro* and its surrounding buildings. The project was criticized for squandering public funds that could have been better spent on development projects (Ferguson 1992; Krohn-Hansen 2001).

The *Faro* actually is not a lighthouse, but a massive tomb purportedly housing Columbus's remains. Krohn-Hansen interprets the tomb as symbolizing the state's memory of Columbus as 'the most important ancestor of the Dominican people' (2001:167). The *Faro's* beacon was never meant to guide ships to safe port. Instead, it reminds Dominicans and visitors of the nation's Spanish-Catholic heritage[23]. It is a monument to the Hispanic side of the Dominican Republic's past and represents the apex of the national project to convince the world that Dominican cultural roots lie with Europe and not with Africa.

Part of the quincentennial project was to beautify the road from the airport to the city. This involved the relocation of the barrios that were visible from the Duarte Bridge. Samuel explains:

> In the lead-up to the quincentenary of the discovery of America, before 1992, Balaguer wanted to clear La Ciénaga again because when you arrive via the bridge, what you see are all these hovels (*casuchas)*. Balaguer didn't want to see a barrio so disorganized right at the entrance to the city; he wanted to quit this image. He tried to clear La Ciénaga again but he couldn't because it had grown too much. (Samuel)

In 1991, the military entered La Ciénaga again, this time to relocate residents to apartments in Cabayona and El Almirante, two suburbs in the north. A woman who lived in the flood-prone lower part of the barrio describes how she was evicted:

[23] But while Trujillo and Balaguer presented the state and Catholic Church as one, many poor people view the state as an enemy and the Church as a friend.

> I was at home with the children and my husband was at work when the military came to our house. They gave us half an hour to pack up our things before putting us into a truck and carting us off to Cabayona, but there were no apartments left for us. When my husband came home from work nobody was there and the house was gone! They had knocked it down. Some neighbours helped him find us and we came back to La Ciénaga and constructed another house. (Andrea)

Experiences such as Andrea's soon generated resistance from residents, local organisations, and the Catholic church. Soledad, a member of COPADEBA, remembers:

> We didn't have good houses because we thought they were going to relocate us out of here, but with the help of Jorge Cela and us the people of the parish, organized people, we managed to stop the evictions. It is true that there was fighting and many young people with broken legs and even dead, but we have left this behind as and we don't have evictions anymore. We managed to build new houses. The police knocked my house down, and as I didn't have a spouse I had to work hard to rebuild my *ranchito*. The men helped me and I built my ranchito again. (Soledad)

Soledad and other residents recounted to me how the Jesuit priest Jorge Cela famously stood in front of bulldozers to stop houses from being destroyed and worked tirelessly to stop the evictions. Father Cela, a Dominican priest who at that time was Director of the Centro de Estudios Sociales Padre Juan Montalvo (CES) is remembered as a hero in La Ciénaga for putting his own safety at risk to help the people of the barrio. Altagracía commented, 'Before Padre Cela, we were nothing, we were just poor people, but Padre Cela is a saint and changed things here'. Indeed, Father Cela's role marks a turning point in the community's political memory. Before Father Cela, COPADEBA were the more influential political group. After Cela, the Catholic church extended its influence in the barrio. Father Cela is an anthropologist and social commentator who has published a number of articles on Dominican society, and a book on La Ciénaga, *La Otra Cara de la Pobreza* or The Other Face of Poverty (Cela S.J. 1997). He is now the Director of an NGO called *Fe y Alegría* (Faith and

Happiness), founded in 1955 in Caracas, Venezuela. Its mission is the transformation of society through quality education for the poorest.

The community was successful in stopping the evictions. The military response, however, was to blockade the barrio's main entrance. This was intended to prevent relocated residents from returning and prevent existing residents from bringing in building materials, furniture and household appliances:

> Balaguer put a military post at the entrance to try to stop people constructing more houses. The idea was that the military would stop people bringing in building materials and the barrio wouldn't keep growing, but the military let you bring in anything so long as you bribed them. So the blockade turned into a toll barrier and didn't work either. (Samuel)

During the five long years that the blockade remained in place, residents paid the bribes demanded by the military or found other ways around it:

> There was a very strong impediment, they wouldn't let us enter with things for the house and there were some very abusive officers. Where the marina is now [at the barrio's entrance), if we wanted to bring in a stove, we had to struggle. I have a son who was a lieutenant in the military but he couldn't help me. But I looked for another way in – we went by a street called Francisco del Rosario Sánchez and came in the back way. (Soledad)

Having failed to find a solution in the usual way – through knowing someone in a position of power – Soledad simply evaded the blockade. A recurring theme in these women's accounts of the evictions is their dependence on social contacts, such as neighbours or powerful people, to counter the ill-effects of the state. Their comments point to a larger theme of sociality as the glue that binds the community together. From Altagracía's fear that her new landscape was populated by crabs and unfamiliar people, to Soledad's memory of a community in which everyone lends a helping hand, it is clear that space is transformed into place by a politics and a practiced and intimate sociality.

Indeed, a major criticism of middle class areas is that residents are 'locked in their houses all day', thereby compromising social relations and even physical health.

A different view of the community's sociality can be seen in the comments of Felicia, a young woman who was born in the barrio and trained to be a nun before studying law. Rather than focus on residents' cooperation, Felicia points to the *corrupción* (moral weakness) of individuals in destroying residents' chances for betterment:

> Many people were selected for relocation. But if you go to the river you'll see that many people are still there. But why? Because the people who were relocated and given houses in the era of Balaguer were people who lived on the river. But these people sold their apartments and returned here again. How are we going to resolve the problem? Well, never! Now there are no relocations because the government won't have anything to do with it. In all the barrios the people are bad, you give them an apartment and they look for more. (Felicia)

Felicia's argument is that because barrio residents have acted selfishly, taking more than their fair share, the government no longer wishes to help the barrios. The state's relocations were desirable, but the project failed due to the immoral acts of a few residents who de-railed progress for all. This idiom of sociality and *corrupción* is also used to talk about the nation's past. *Corrupción* is interpreted as a Dominican character trait that has led to the repeated failure of the nation to achieve political and social stability. The corruption of the Dominican character may be invoked to explain, and justify, long periods of violent rule. It is commonly believed that Dominicans are disorderly and need *la mano dura* (a heavy hand) to make them obey the law and work together for the good of the nation. Ideas such as these make many reluctant to denounce Balaguer even when he targeted the poor.[24]

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[24] The idea that leaders should be able to control their constituents through any means necessary comes from *caudillo* (strongman) politics, which was prevalent in Latin America until the 1930s. While neither Trujillo nor Balaguer were truly caudillos according to Wolf's definition, some characteristics associated with *caudillos* carry over into modern Dominican politics. Wolf writes that caudillaje (the political system headed

After the Blockade

In some ways, the violence inflicted upon La Ciénaga stemmed as much from its invisibility as its visibility. Samuel told me an amusing anecdote displaying the extent of the barrio's invisibility to the State. He said that in approximately 1992 cienigüeros grew tired of the blockade and formed a group to protest outside the Presidential Palace. When Balaguer heard the noise, he asked an aid who the protesters were and what they wanted. When the aid replied, 'They are the people of La Ciénaga,' Balaguer exclaimed, 'La Ciénaga? But it doesn't exist!' Balaguer had turned blind during his long presidency (1966-78 and 1992-96) and could no longer see the site that had once annoyed him so much when he crossed the Duarte bridge. Nobody had told him that the forced evictions had failed to clear the area of housing, not least because the military were making a large profit in bribes from residents who wanted to bring building materials and household goods to the *barrio*.

Whether or not the story is true matters little. It is indicative of the tenuous status of a *barrio* whose *progreso* has mostly been achieved by flying under the radar of the state, but whose security ultimately depends upon the state's recognition. Balaguer's military blockade of the barrio stayed in place until 1996, when Dr Leonel Fernandez of the Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD) was elected for his first term as President. The barrio has changed dramatically since. A neighbour told me:

> In '96 Leonel arrived. We were struggling. We shouted and shouted for him to get rid of this impediment [the blockade], that he would help us. Then they gave us telephone lines, paved the streets, they put pipes for potable water and collected some of the sewerage, because this used to be a swamp full of crabs and trees. But at the arrival of so many people all the trees died, the people have cut down all of them and constructed many houses. We're already a town. (Soledad)

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by caudillos, or chieftans), is 'marked by four salient characteristics: 1) the repeated emergence of armed patron-client sets, cemented by personal ties of dominance and submission, and by a common desire to obtain wealth by force of arms; 2) the lack of institutionalized means for succession to offices; 3) the use of violence in political competition; and 4) the repeated failures of icumbent leaders to guarantee their tenures as chieftans' Wolf, E.R. 1967. Caudillo Politics: A Structural Analysis. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* **9**, 168-179.

Fernandez's government lifted the military blockade that had been constraining La Ciénaga and instigated the first state projects to modernize it. Residents could again bring in building materials and furniture without having to pay bribes, and the government extended services such as running water, sewerage and phone lines to the barrio.

> Leonel Fernandez arrived and ended the decree that prohibited this limitation on the people of La Ciénaga because Leonel understood that it was impossible to dislodge a barrio that had more than 14,000 families, it was impossible because the government didn't have a housing project capable of accommodating all these people. So Leonel understood that it was better to invest in the barrio, and it was then that they paved the first streets, brought piped water to Clarín, organized the electricity a little, and this is the government that has invested the most in La Ciénaga. (Samuel)

Since Fernandez won his first term as President in 1996, the federal government, together with the European Union and local organisations, have invested money in projects to make the area safer and provide more extensive and frequent services. Projects by the government, community organisations, the Catholic church and international aid agencies have included installing telephone lines, paving streets and alleyways, improving housing, installing indoor lavatories, constructing stormwater drains, building the school, and improving access to electricity. The people who benefited most were the minority of residents who have street frontage, as most residents' houses line crowded alleyways and services were not always extended there. Improvements were widely publicized by the media and residents of other parts of the city are generally aware of them.

Figure 9. Calle Nueve in the dry season before stormwater drains were installed in La Ciénaga.

Nonetheless, La Ciénaga continues to be perceived as an underdeveloped and dangerous place. Many of the barriers faced by residents are still in place, such as lack of land title, discrimination in the work force, limited access to education, unsatisfactory sanitation and denial of citizenship rights. This has kept popular organisations active, among them CODECI. A spokesman remarked to me:

> When we came here there was COPADEBA. The other organisations began to appear in 1993. First CODECI appeared, which coordinates all the organisations, then many organisations started to appear, like Vida y Progreso, La Caridad, Frente Comunitario Luz Propia, La Sociedad de Niños y Madre, and a series of organisations that make life. But very few are working or active in La Ciénaga because the leaders get tired and new leaders begin. These new leaders come with more force but the old leaders left their histories and achieved many things. Right now, those who are most working for the development of La

> Cienaga are CODECI, el Comite de Ama de Casa Mama Tingo, el Frente Comunitario Luz Propia y las Junta de Vecinos La Caridad. (Bethania)

The Coordinación para el Desarrollo de La Ciénaga (CODECI) is an umbrella organisation that coordinates all grassroots organisations within La Ciénaga. It was founded with the Jesuits' support in September 1998, after Hurricane George devastated the community. CODECI's purpose is to coordinate community development between the barrio's political, religious and social groups, and to liaise with government and non-government organisations. These local organisations include sporting groups, an association of professionals and a home owners' association. Most concentrate their activities on developing the barrio and raising its public profile. CODECI's activities centre on the installation of urban services such as drainage, sewerage treatment, electricity and water, to bring La Ciénaga into line with the rest of the city. The CES funds and monitors CODECI, sending a civilian employee of the CES to its meetings and running its elections. As a result, virtually all the political activity of the barrio comes directly or indirectly under the jurisdiction of the Catholic church.

CODECI's program was virtually halted between 2000 and 2004 during the presidency of Hipólito Mejía of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD). The Dominican economy took a drastic downturn in 2003, when fiscal mismanagement and the embezzlement of funds from the Central Bank caused the devaluation of the peso against the US dollar by 74 percent (ECLAC 2004). The period saw a rapid rise in inflation and therefore a serious decline in real wages (ECLAC 2004). Cienigüeros still talk about the steep rise in food prices and complain of government corruption during the four years of Mejía's presidency:

> Things are worse in this country because the international price of combustibles is high and we don't produce them. Also it is because the politicians believe that they buy the country for four years, that it belongs to them, and they take everything because for them there is no justice; they haven't been an example, and so they are going to continue like runaway horses, as they say, taking everything that passes through their hands. Here we have a

> serious situation, so calamitous that if fifty million pesos are allocated to fix a problem, forty-two million will disappear and they will invest the remaining eight million. This is very serious. (Carlos)

Corruption prevents a fair and equitable distribution of resources amongst the population. Despite the country's long history of poverty and economic turmoil, most Dominicans do not believe that poverty is necessary. Cienigüeros feel that their contribution to the nation's development is not duly rewarded. They recognize the nation's precarious financial situation, while criticizing wasteful practices such as corruption, clientelism, the concentration of wealth among a small population, foreign ownership, low taxes and extensive incentives to investors. The corruption of the wealthy and powerful has a direct effect on the moral well-being of the barrio, since it affects the ability of families to raise their children in a safe and secure environment:

> There are many lost young people and this hurts me because here there are many powerful people who could do something. There are children in the streets living below the bridge, in the parks, on the benches and here in the country there are many people who could make schools and collect these children and take them to school. The politicians are only interested in politics and making money for themselves; they don't see what is happening in the streets, what is affecting us in the streets.
>
> If you have a headache and you don't go look for medicine you're not going to get better. So if you come here and tell me 'Oh, my head hurts', then I'm going to say, 'Well go look for a pill!' So if I take a pill my headache goes. I had the intention to get rid of my headache. So, the politicians come here campaigning for us to vote for them. After they get into power, if each one built a little piece of street we would live in gold, because here in this country there is money. This is a millionaire country, but there are no good intentions. Here there are millions and millions in the banks but for the street nothing, you see the politicians going around in jeeps but they don't help the barrios. (Jorge)

Carlos and Jorge, residents of the barrio, are acutely aware of the role of the state in their struggle for a place at the centre. Political organisations, including COPADEBA and CODECI, share more than two generations of experience that reveal the circumstance of the poor.

Making La Ciénaga Real

From swamp to contested site of modernization projects, La Ciénaga's exceptional history reveals both the joys and the despair of barrio life. This history also reveals the residents' sense of the state's power and its ability to deny *gente pobre* (poor people) conditions in the urban milieu that others take for granted. Two quite mundane characteristics of the neighbourhood reveal La Ciénaga's precarious status of a real residential place not quite acknowledged yet. The first is its virtual absence on official city maps, which points to how mapping and naming are political processes (see Harvey 1989:233). The second concerns the barrio's long struggle to obtain basic services.

In the national census, La Ciénaga is merged with a neighbouring suburb to create a large sector called Domingo Savio. COPADEBA argues that this merger obfuscates La Ciénaga's demographic features, making it difficult to develop effective policies and plans. Part of the move toward gaining recognition for La Ciénaga as a legitimate community has been to put the barrio literally and figuratively on the map by examining its demographics and surveying the barrio. *Ciudad Alternativa* (Alternative City) and *Proyecto Atlas Barrial* (Map of the Barrios Project) are two non-government organisations that are working to create maps that show every individual dwelling in the barrio with the aim of gaining land titles for residents and developing services. Ciudad Alternativa, an NGO that devises plans for urban development independently of the state and industry, has published a range of booklets detailing the demographics, history and geography of the barrios along the River Ozama. These include Plan Cigua (Navarro 2004), a detailed urban plan that allows the majority of residents to remain in La Ciénaga and Guachupita, while relocating families resident in dangerous areas and making provisions for community gardens, parks and services. Most importantly, Plan Cigua includes surveyed maps that include all streets, alleys and

buildings in the two barrios. Mapping the barrio is a sign of its urbanity and permanence in the city and redresses the social violence of the state (Kleinman 2000).

Cienigüeros are also reminded of their continuing precarious status by the barrio's lack of services. Irregular supplies of potable water are indicative of this. While the wealthy have water tanks and automatic pumps to ensure a constant supply, most cienigüeros must rise at dawn to catch their water. Moreover, waste-water poses a continuing hazard. Until late 2005, drainage of the barrio was insufficient, and so 'black water' would collect in open drains. In the wet season, many homes in the central region would flood every year due to the absence of stormwater drains. Even in the middle of the winter, when rain does not fall for months, some streets would remain under water. A government sponsored organisation called *Sanitación de los Barrios Marginados* (Sanitation of the Marginalised Barrios, or SABAMAR) has now installed large drains to remove waste water and stormwater, making life in La Ciénaga safer, healthier, and cleaner:

> With the project we have converted this into a healthier mode of living. But one time here there came a fever so strong that they were taking out people by the packet to the basketball court. The whole world was sick, because around here was swampy, and there were mosquitoes that gave yellow fever and this was terrible. But over the years, through the struggle of the community, we have converted this into a better mode of living. (Bethania)

Notwithstanding improvements, water continues to flow untreated into the Ozama River. Moreover, rehabilitation of the sewerage treatment plant in La Ciénaga was met with major protests. Residents in that vicinity expressed the view that the plant was a health hazard in itself. It is currently being reconstructed again, although it is unclear whether or not it will treat waste from La Ciénaga.

Electricity presents another conflict between the state and residents. Except for the tourist zone, most parts of Santo Domingo are subject to regular blackouts. The barrios suffer most, because people are often connected to the supply illegally and overload transformers. During 2005, electricity was supplied to La Ciénaga for an average of eleven hours per day, though the actual

times were unpredictable. This has economic consequences: the barrio's carpenters and tailors cannot work while the electricity is off, and women who sell homemade ice, ice-cream and juice lose stock when blackouts are lengthy or occur at unpredictable times. Carlos explained how the lack of electricity makes life difficult:

> The light (*luz*) is behaving regularly now, but we still have terrible blackouts where all you can see are your eyelashes and you can't sleep because it's so hot, since we have a tropical climate. At times the temperature goes up so much that it's scary and people die of heart attacks. (Carlos)

In La Ciénaga the light comes on, but it is often off. Residents have little sense of how future changes of government are likely to affect their domicile. They struggle to make La Ciénaga their place and yet find it unmapped and lacking basic services. This brings a sharp political sense among people who may otherwise seem quite unmobilized. Their critical stance is as palpable as their desire for progress. In the following chapters, I relate how, in the everyday, cienigüeros make their place, defend their space and imagine their future.

Chapter 4

Constructing House and Habitus

> La Ciénaga isn't a good place to live. Everyone who has been able to has left La Ciénaga. We haven't had the chance, so the majority of us have stayed here, because we don't have the *fuerza* (lit. force) to live in another part, and because this is a place where we have been for many years and now we don't *hacer daño* (cause trouble) and we live like brothers. (Soledad)

It was a normal day at Altagracía's house. She fed her neighbour's children *la bandera*, a lunch of beans, rice and chicken and sent them off to school, when Felicia dropped in for their daily exchange of food. Felicia, being fonder of cooking than Altagracía, had prepared flour dumplings, fried eggplant and rice. As usual, Altagracía complained that Felicia's rice was *crudo* (undercooked), while Felicia accepted her return gift with grace. That day, Felicia and Altagracía were concerned about Felicia's 31-year-old son (also Altagracía's second cousin) Antonio, who had not had regular employment for three years:

Altagracía: So Antonio says he's going to join the fire brigade?

Felicia: He says so, and he's found out how to go about it, but the trial period is five months.

Altagracía: Five months? Oh that's long. Well he has to do something, I told him so. Last I heard he was going to move to Puerto Plata.

Felicia: He changed his mind because he didn't have anywhere to stay there, not a bed or anything.

Altagracía: I told him that he needs to do something so that he can have children. I said, you can't grow old without having had children. They're the ones who care for you. If not, you have nothing. He needs to get himself a house.

This conversation illustrates lucidly the relationship between material and social reproduction. The need to have a stable income in order to build a house and have a family is a problem for poor men and women alike. More than any other material object, the house nurtures the family by providing stability and protection. Since 'family reproductive strategies are both constrained and facilitated by house durability and fixity to site' (Birdwell-Pheasant & Lawrence-Zuñiga 1999:27), Antonio must embed himself successfully within relations of economic reproduction and transform them into a spatialized material form in order to reproduce himself socially.

As Miller (1994) notes, this objectification is particularly salient precisely because employment is unstable. Unable to find identity or security in the workplace, the domestic domain becomes a focus of life strategies. The house is the primary objectification of residents' social and economic life, with all its uncertainties and demands. Its construction often takes years, is rarely 'completed', involves numerous family members and friends, and depends upon market fluctuations. The flexibility of this process – the possibility to start and stop construction as resources permit - is crucial to obtaining a basic level of security. Yet creativity occurs at all stages of the production process, allowing residents to develop a style and elaborate social relations through their material environment.

Objectification is central to the politics of place. In the absence of land titles, autoconstruction of the material environment is more than an individual or household strategy. Through putting down roots and creating community, residents act to negotiate and sometimes challenge the power that the state retains over the interpretation of space in Santo Domingo. The habitus that they sustain

thereby contains a politics that facilitates residents coping with 'unforeseen and ever-changing situations' (Bourdieu 1977:72). This chapter describes the construction of house and habitus as central to the struggle for self-creation and autonomy for modern urban residents.

Autoconstruction and the Sociality of the *Barrio*

'Squatter' settlements are often cast as a threat to social order, yet they fulfil an important social and economic role in South America and the Caribbean, where the rate of home ownership is 73 percent, compared to 42 percent in high income countries (Ruggeri Laderchi 2005:92). Home ownership provides the poor with social stability, a chance for upward social mobility and it relieves pressure on the state to provide welfare. Writing on Brazil, Holston (1991) proposes that the term 'autoconstruction' is more appropriate than 'squatting' because the legal status of the land occupied varies, while the aim to build a house for oneself does not. Indeed, thinking in terms of self-help reflects a shift in policy throughout the region. As attempts to remove the poor from the city and curb rural to urban migration have failed, many squatter settlements in Brazil have been legalised and services provided to them in the hope of attaining social stability and a domesticated labour market.

Holston views this shift in policy critically, arguing that while autoconstruction benefits the poor, it also reinforces their subordinate position. On the one hand, Holston draws attention to the creative abilities of the poor to challenge their subjugation, 'replacing these [negative] images with new ones of competence and knowledge in the production and consumption of [modern goods]' (Holston 1991:462). On the other hand, 'the working class are grounding themselves in a spatialized industrialism in which their position at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy is inscribed upon space and reinforced (Holston 1991:450). Holston argues that

Figure 10. A ranchito made of tin and wood.

Figure 11. A wooden ranchito next to a two-storey, multiple occupancy house.

> The paradox of autoconstruction is that it develops through the reiteration of the kinds of property relations that ground the very social order that exploits them as workers. Although this reproduction changes what is reproduced, I argue that it also expands it scope and power by inscribing it in new places. (Holston 1991:448)

Much like Gregory's (2007) notion of a 'spatial economy of difference', Holston suggests that when hierarchy is objectified in space, the ability of capital to control workers is amplified. By engaging in autoconstruction, Brazil's poor are gaining a foothold in modernity and respectability, but they are also reinforcing the very hierarchy that subordinates them. Holston's voluntarist account equates these movements. In my view, the creativity of autoconstruction needs to be given separate voice from the structural conditions that propel it. Through autoconstruction, residents increase their control over both their relationship to a wider social field and their own creative self-realizations. They generate an 'inalienable culture' that cannot be understood simply in terms of domination (Miller 1987:17).

La Ciénaga is a desirable terminus for rural migrants because it provides access to both employment opportunities and land. The ongoing court battle over legal ownership of La Ciénaga has kept the land off the market, allowing poor migrants to obtain plots at a minimal cost. Making a claim to place through autoconstruction is risky because it requires the investment of all of a household's resources into the house without ownership of the land it is built on. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, natural disasters and state evictions can result in total loss of savings. Residents living without legal tenure face a double alienation from socioeconomic life, as marginal to both the labour market and property rights. Residents of La Ciénaga bypass the legal land tenure system to overcome some of the limitations of their marginalisation. Rather than reneging on political processes, this shows how class is played out through place today.

The evolution of the house over time and space is essential to social reproduction among the poor urban classes. The ability to construct inexpensively and flexibly (as resources permit and with few building restrictions) means that families can stay close together. Newly arrived family members

may choose to occupy a neighbouring piece of land, children may build a separate house on their family's lot, or established residents might add an extra room or floor that can serve as a separate apartment. The material house constitutes family life over time:

> As a conservative element of material culture, houses not only shelter co-residing family members and their material possessions, but often outlast the lives of their current occupants and provide them with a sense of enduring security for future generations. Thus, houses constitute objects of considerable familial investment and provide different classes, through the differential deployment of resources, opportunities to secure space for future generations to occupy, and to advertise their status. As inheritance, and by housing several successive generations, the materiality of home typically aids in constituting the family group economically and symbolically over time. (Birdwell-Pheasant & Lawrence-Zuñiga 1999:27)

The above observation illustrates how improving and decorating a house is an ongoing investment of value in a place. As Miller (1994) describes, and my data show, the house has social as well as economic value. Although the house and family do not always correspond exactly, the house is an important site for the practice of kinship and is emblematic of descent. In the conversation I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Altagracía and Felicia suggest that owning one's own home is a precondition for the social reproduction of the family. This is especially true in La Ciénaga since many residents have been able to reconstruct rural family life by bringing their family to live nearby. Social life and economic life are closely intertwined, as families help each other to build houses and obtain work.

With the help of family and friends, settlers secure control of a small plot and erect a simple *ranchito* (small wooden house) of four walls, a dirt floor, and a tin roof. A ranchito is a beginning. It is the most basic form of housing that will provide protection from the weather and differentiated spaces for daily tasks. It is a rural style house that is constructed out of wooden beams that are sunk into the ground and fixed in place with concrete. The walls are made of wooden boards or tin. The

roof is made of tin, perhaps covered with tar to make it waterproof. Ranchitos initially have a dirt floor, no ceiling, one or two bedrooms, a small lounge room, a kitchen and wooden shutters for windows. Inner walls are often covered with reams of material, such as old curtains, and posters or pictures from magazines. A pit latrine and a sheltered bathing area are located in the backyard. The kitchen is equipped with a stove fuelled by a gas tank. The bedrooms are normally equipped with double beds and most clothing is stored in the dresser or between the mattresses.

Over time, perhaps many years, residents improve their homes as resources permit, until they eventually conform to aesthetic (if not legal) norms of what a modern urban dwelling should be. Every ranchito is constructed with the idea of its transformation into a house that would meet the standards of respectability anywhere in the city. Throughout the Dominican Republic, the ideal house is made of concrete block with a tiled concrete floor and a concrete slab roof, a model that provides much greater protection from hurricanes than the wood-and-tin ranchito. It has white metal shutters, bars on the windows and air conditioning in the main bedroom. Residents of the barrios as much as elsewhere in this city aspire to this ideal, although it may take them decades to achieve or be left for the next generation.

Lidia moved to La Ciénaga in 1979, so that she would not have to pay rent. Although she had a partner and children, she acted independently of him in making the decision to relocate to La Ciénaga and construct a house:

> I bought a small piece of land here first, it was me who bought it. The father of my children didn't want to come here, but I didn't want to live renting. We lived in Cristo Rey. But I said to my husband, "No, no, no, I'm not going to pay to rent a house, I don't have anything." Then, on this day, I left with our daughter. I said, "I'm going to look below the bridge." My father had told me that he had built a house for a lady who moved here. He said to me, "Look, in La Ciénaga there are many blocks of land, let's go there." So I said "Let's go", and I left and I liked it here. I bought a piece of land. It didn't have a house. I

> came with a little tin that I had stored in my house, and I bought a little bit of wood, and I came to build the *casita* (little house). (Lidia)

For Lidia, owning a house of her own was important enough for her to defy traditional gender relations in which a husband provides for his wife and children. Indeed, in the coming years, Lidia would continue to defy gender roles in opposition to her husband's wishes. Her husband was a truck driver, often away for days at a time. He did not like her to work but, while he was away, Lidia would sell *palé* tickets (a numbers game) in the Los Guandules markets. Lidia would sit on the street at the edge of the markets from 8am until 2pm, 'turning black' in the sun.[25]

> I had a lot of problems with my husband because he didn't want me to work. So I went to the street. He would say to me, "I work, women don't work." But I went to La Feria, took a bag of quiniela [a numbers game]. I spent three years on the street selling quiniela, a sad life, very sad. I was more black then, doubly more black. Because I would sit there on a seat in the market from seven in the morning and I would still be working at 1pm. (Lidia)

Whereas in theory Dominican men are still the main providers for the family, there is a scarcity of stable work for men. Therefore, in practice, women take up much of the economic burden since. Lidia's relationship with her husband is indicative of the tensions that arise as changing economic circumstances impact upon gender relations. Autoconstruction allowed Lidia to realise an independence that was not available to her through legal channels. Over time, Lidia brought her entire family from the country to construct their own ranchitos in La Ciénaga, including her parents and six siblings. All of them continue to reside in La Ciénaga today, although some of their children have moved away. This reconstruction of her social support network would also have been difficult to achieve in authorized city spaces. Despite the drawbacks of living on the margins of the city, the combination of control over space and autoconstruction gave early residents a great deal of agency over how they configured their social relations and their community.

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[25] 'Turning black' through exposure to the sun is a metaphor for hard work and evidence of hardship. Traditionally, respectable Dominican women work at home, hence Lidia's husband's desire that she not work.

Autoconstruction has resulted in a sociality that is markedly different from that found in legal settlements and is more reminiscent of urban life at the beginning of the 20th century. Until Trujillo came to power in 1930, houses were almost exclusively single-family dwellings with front doors that opened directly to the street. This style of architecture encouraged socialization on the street, particularly in the late afternoon when residents would come out of their house to catch the sea breeze. In her doctoral thesis on modernity during the Trujillo years, Derby (1998) discusses how Trujillo tried to reorganize city spaces to confine social life to the inside of houses. His construction projects aimed at building modern, Western-style housing that prioritized the privacy of the nuclear family. Setting houses back from the streets, with high fences in the front of yards, was intended to discourage socializing on the streets. According to Derby, Dominicans resisted Trujillo's efforts to contain such 'disorderly' and 'anti-progressive' behaviour. Over time, however, much of the traditional Dominican proxemics has been lost to the modernist project developed under Trujillo and Balaguer.

Today, street life is at its liveliest in the city's barrios, where single-storey dwellings placed in close proximity to quiet streets encourage residents to treat public spaces as social space. Austin (1984) found a similar situation in her field sites in Kingston, Jamaica. In working class Rollington Town, the tenement yard provides communal space for everyday social contact, whereas the single family dwellings that prevail in Harbour View generate a more disconnected existence. Of course, it is not so much that working class neighbourhoods have more space to socialise in, but rather their limited private space compels them to share the public space available.

In La Ciénaga, the proximity of family members also encourages social contact. Power over space allows the residents of Santo Domingo's barrios to maintain close-knit family units and a high level of community embeddedness that is disappearing in Santo Domingo. Because the barrios were autoconstructed by small family units and on very low budgets, housing makes maximum use of available space and resources. As a result, almost all housing in the barrios consists of small, individual family dwellings that are in close proximity with each other and to the street. The only exceptions to this rule are two-or three-storey houses whose upper stories serve as apartment

blocks. But even their residents are likely to bring plastic chairs down to the street in order to socialise.

Cienigüeros admire, and aspire to, the modern housing in middle class areas, but they perceive its life to be unsociable and boring. Since I had lived in a middle class area before moving to La Ciénaga, many neighbours of mine asked me whether I found middle class life to be lonely. According to Marcia, 'There in Gazcue the people live well but they lock themselves up in their flats with bars. It's like living overseas!' Felicia's viewpoint is a common one, suggesting that progress is obtained at the expense of sociality. It is a view that is also declared by the middle class about life overseas. The woman I lived with in Gazcue had a Dominican boyfriend who lived in Miami and she had travelled there many times, but she had no desire to sacrifice her Dominican sociality for the individualism of the United States. Whereas middle class Dominicans interpret sociality/individualism as corresponding to nations, the poor also ascribe the division to the maintenance of class boundaries. In this sense, cienigüeros may well suffer from physical underdevelopment but, in their own view, they live better emotional and social lives. Samuel is somewhat unusual in his wish to escape the *bulla* (uproar, noise) of La Ciénaga, complaining:

> The problem with living in the barrio is that there is too much *bulla*. If I sit down in my house to study with a book, a neighbour will drop in, greet me enthusiastically, and ask me what I'm doing. He will want to know all about my book. Or else a group of people will set up a table for dominoes right outside my front door and harass me until I join them. I can't get any work done in this barrio and would prefer to live somewhere more tranquil, where I can be left in peace! (Samuel)

However, he also appreciates the sociality of *barrio* life:

> Our family relations are good because we have always shared our problems and happiness, in this sense it is good. We have always maintained contact. For a while I lived in another part of the barrio but I had to return. I missed being with them. My uncles Carlos and Silvio

> also live close by, my aunt Altagracía has always lived near us. Where one goes, the rest go and it has always been like this. We haven't been able to disperse ourselves. (Samuel)

Indeed, the presence of Pedro and the knowledge that he would bring his new wife to live there were essential factors in Altagracía's decision to relocate. The extended family depend upon each other's help on a daily basis, sharing food, knowledge and talk. Altagracía, who lives alone, especially appreciates the proximity of her family:

> My life is tranquil, nobody bosses me around. I feel good selling my *mabi* [a sugary fruit drink] and ice since I find bread to eat, my daily bread here. My family also helps me, my family here are very good to me. I feel protected, I don't feel alone with my neighbours and my family I feel happy. They are good, they always respect me and have loved me a lot. (Altagracía)

Over the years, Pedro, Felicia and Altagracía have actively helped members of her family to establish themselves in the same street. Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate the constitution of sociality over time. Firstly, Pedro occupied his small ranchitos in 1972 and soon thereafter helped Altagracía buy and repair her own ranchito. In the mid-1980s, Carlos acquired land in the same street and constructed the first floor of his house. Around the same time, Altagracía converted her ranchito into a concrete house. Her children did much of the planning and building. Some five years after that, Silvio bought a piece of land from Altagracía so that he could construct his own small house adjoining his common law wife's land. By this time, Samuel and Antonio were old enough to help Silvio and Carlos with the building. In 1993, Samuel built his house on his parent's block with family labour. Today, Altagracía lives alone; Pedro lives with his wife Felicia and their son Antonio; Samuel lives with his wife Vero and their three young children. Carlos lives with his wife Sandra and their five children of varying ages; Silvio lives with his common-law wife Ana. Ana's twelve-year-old son, her eighteen-year-old son and his girlfriend live with her mother. Only Altagracía's and Silvio's children live elsewhere in Santo Domingo. The housing arrangement is an objectification of the social relations between family members, since the house and family are

mutually reinforcing. As a stable object, the house grounds familial relations; in turn, those familial relations provide the human capital (labour and expertise) to construct further houses. Carlos comments:

> We are a very united family. If one of us is hungry and the other one can give him food we do so enthusiastically, and we always treat each other well. When we have some time we visit each other and greet each other with lots of affection. We're a family that is totally united because we were brought up to respect home life. This was the teaching that gave us such good unity. (Carlos)

For this extended family and many others, the benefits of autoconstruction far outweigh the alternative of struggling to pay the rent of a tiny flat in the noisiest part of the city. The area stigma that accompanies autoconstructed communities certainly impacts upon the ability of people like Samuel and Antonio to find respectable and well paid employment, yet it also allows for greater independence and choice in the construction of a social world. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, cienigüeros also create distinction among themselves by dividing (high and low land), allocating (my house, my cousin's house), interpreting (in this street we are respectable) and embellishing (interior decoration). The evolution of the house is arguably the most visible material manifestation of this quest.

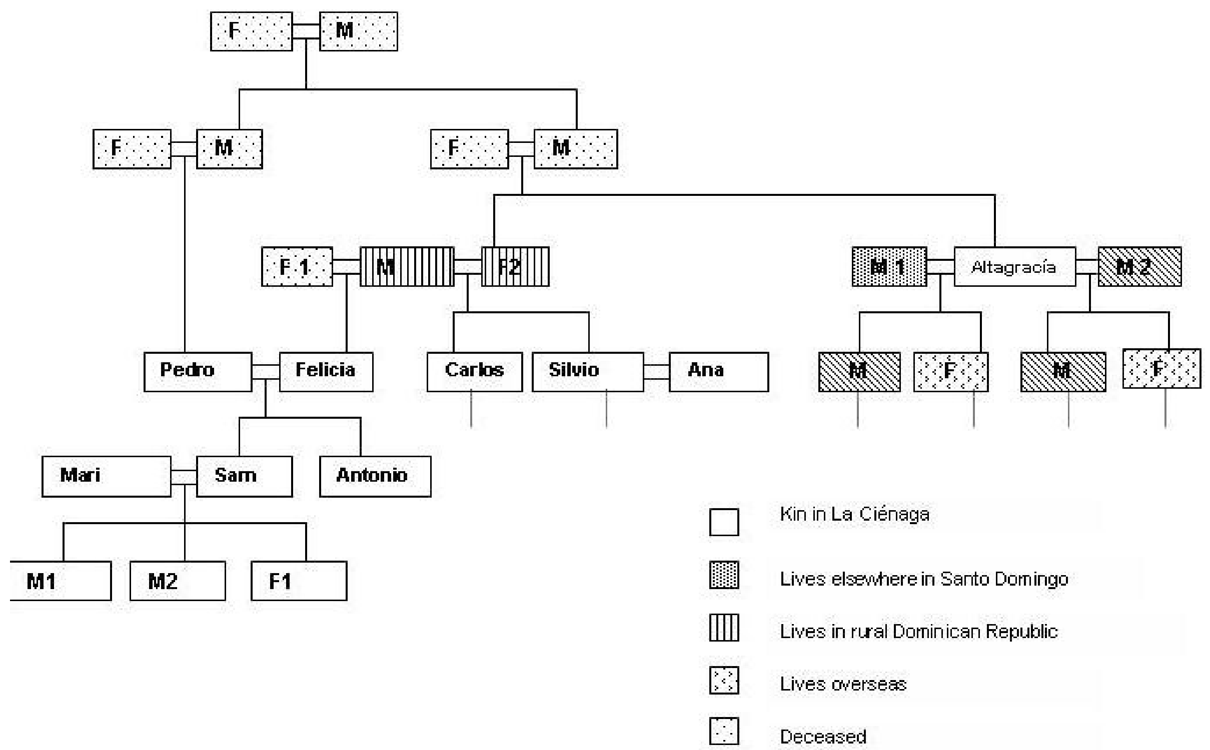

Figure 12. Kinship chart of Pedro's family

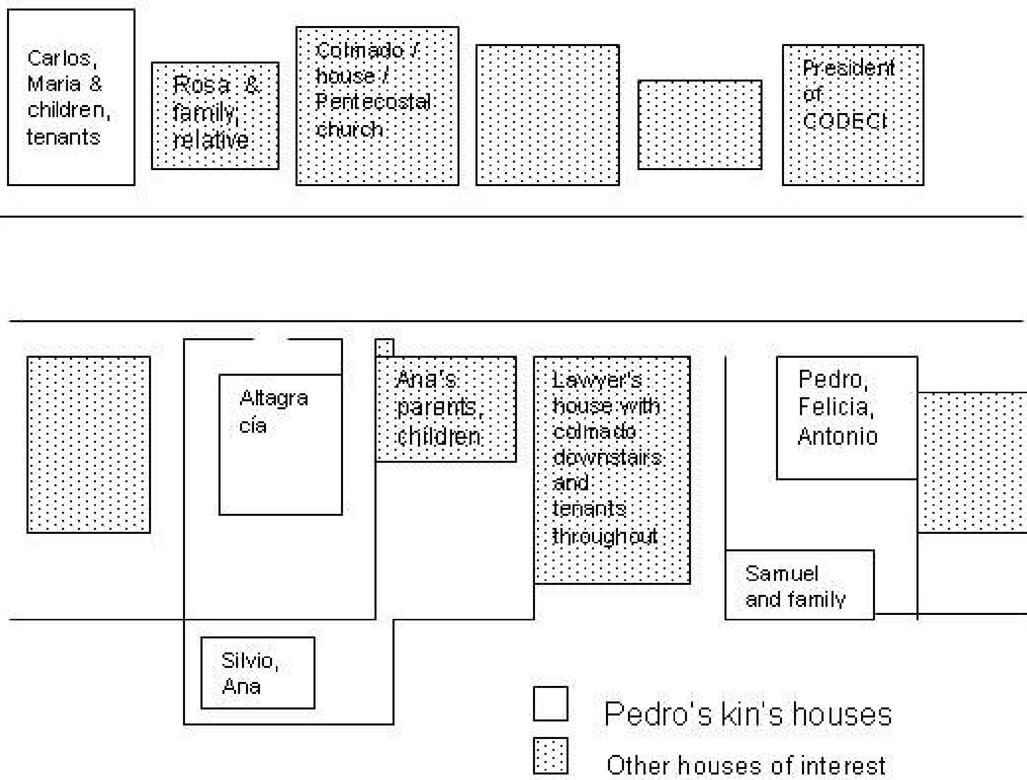

Figure 13. Map of houses of Pedro and his kin in La Clarín

Figure 14. Enjoying the afternoon breeze in front of a row of ‘good’ concrete houses with bars.

The House as Life Strategy

The construction of the house is an ongoing process that reflects the trajectory of the social agent in time and space. The quest to obtain a house requires the deployment of strategies, but the house is also a strategy in itself toward a certain style of life (see Bourdieu 1977). As such, it is the primary objectification of residents’ attempts to achieve a life that is secure, autonomous, socially embedded and modern. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the house as a process takes on particular salience in La Ciénaga due to residents’ marginalisation in the market. The flexibility of house construction (while its owners live in it) reflects the fluctuations in people’s daily lives as they struggle to hold stable jobs, buy construction materials and mobilise family and friends in the building process. In this sense, strategies are negotiations of meaning and power played out through a form of production and consumption. They articulate with structural conditions but are geared toward the problems of the everyday.

Cienigüeros use a wide variety of strategies to obtain the resources necessary to transform their house. While Pedro stayed in Santo Domingo and worked restoring colonial buildings for the

municipal council, Altagracía spent eleven years working overseas as a domestic servant, leaving her by then grown-up children by themselves. She was sponsored by a wealthy employer (a doctor's wife) who was impressed with her work ethic. Seven years after building her ranchito, Altagracía was approached by the middle-class woman for whom she kept house. 'Altagracía', her employer asked her, 'You're a hard worker and you keep to yourself. You'll never make enough money here to build a decent house. Would you be interested in working overseas?' At first Altagracía declined vehemently: she didn't know anyone overseas, didn't want to leave her family behind, had never caught a plane, and did not have the papers necessary to apply for a passport. In time, however, Altagracía decided to take the risk, and so she set off for the domestic situation that her employer had set up in Caracas.

> In 1978 I went to Venezuela and left my children here in this little wooden house that was falling apart around them. They were already grown up. It wasn't a large house, just a little ranchito with a dirt floor. I left here and each month sent my earnings to my children so that they could buy food. I was working hard for very little in return and I was always hungry as my employers didn't give me enough to eat. In time my children all got jobs and told me "Mama, don't send us any more money, we're all working. Save the little money you earn to build a house." After four years I came back to visit and I marked out where the house should go, and when I returned for good after eleven years the house was already done, my children had built it. (Altagracía)

Altagracía's story is one of sacrifice. She told me with sadness of how hard she would work and how little she would get in return. Her first employer in Venezuela gave her too little food, so Altagracía would spend days *pasando hambre* (being hungry) so that she could send her meagre income home to her children. But she managed to send home enough money so that her children could live and begin to convert Altagracía's *ranchito* into a larger concrete-block house. Eventually, Altagracía decided that she had earned enough money and prepared to leave Venezuela for good. She told her employer that she was going back to the Dominican Republic to visit and promised that she would return soon. Back home, Altagracía's children had all grown up and were earning their

own money. Since the electricity supply was somewhat more regular than when she had left, Altagracía invested her savings in a refrigerator and a chest freezer, as well as items of furniture. These purchases allowed Altagracía to run her own business from home, selling home-made *mabi* (sugary fruit juice), ice cream and ice from her living room. Altagracía continues to eke out a living from this business today, supplemented by money from one of her daughters who moved to Puerto Rico.

The earnings from her time in Venezuela allowed Altagracía to transform her ranchito into a *casa buena* (good house) made from concrete block with a tin roof. It has two and a half bedrooms and an indoor bathroom that she received for free from a community project to provide sanitation in the barrio. All her windows have metal shutters and the front windows have metal bars. Altagracía's house is partially hidden behind a wall made of concrete blocks with spikes on the top and has a lockable gate. Her side passage also has a gate that is locked from the inside, and the wall surrounding it is topped with broken glass to ward off intruders. Her two sons live elsewhere in the city and her two daughters live in Spain and Puerto Rico, so Altagracía lives alone in a two-and-a-half bedroom, single storey house.

There is a standard method to transform one's house, and most barrio streets will include houses at various stages of construction. Once the concrete floor and posts are in, the walls are filled with concrete block. Generally, the front wall is the first to be transformed, as it is the physical and reputational façade of the family. White metal shutters and bars may also be installed. A second motivation for replacing the front wall first is to protect against thieves or delinquents who shoot bullets into the air during the night. After one particular night in which residents were awoken by repeated gunfire, Ana (Silvio's wife) expressed her concern about the welfare of her parents in their wooden ranchito. 'Those bullets are going to pierce the wood!' she exclaimed, 'My parents are going to be killed in their beds by *balas perdidas*' (stray bullets). In the next few days she stepped up her efforts to buy concrete blocks and sand, accumulating them in her parents' backyard until she had enough materials to commence.

If the owners of a house come into a sum of money through better employment or the success of a child, they replace the wood-and-tin roof with a concrete plate and rewire the electricity. A concrete roof serves as the internal ceiling, as well as the external roof. The house's steel and concrete supports are left exposed at the top, so that a second storey can be added to the house when the owners accumulate the resources. Second floors generally follow the same plan as the first floor, and are accessed by narrow external concrete stairs. These expansions of space are used prudently: they are either inhabited by an adult child and his/her family, or rented out. The ceiling/roof will then serve as a floor and the second storey will be topped with either a tin or concrete plate roof. A concrete roof is more desirable because it provides better protection against hurricanes and is also a place to hang out the washing. However, houses with plate roofs are hotter inside than those with triangular tin roofs because the air cannot circulate over the internal walls. The design of Altagracía's house is particularly conducive to catching the cool afternoon breezes that come from the river and sea, because its roof is tin and its front and back doors are aligned to aid the circulation of air. Her nephew Carlos owns a much 'better' two-storey concrete house with plate ceilings, but it is insufferable during the summer. Since most people in La Ciénaga are too poor to afford air conditioning, achieving the 'ideal' aesthetic can actually cause loss of comfort.

When Antonio was working full-time in a factory producing metal shutters, he was slowly converting his father's house from wood to concrete. Together with the rest of the family, Antonio managed to construct a concrete floor, corner supports, concrete block walls at the front and some concrete walls on the sides and internally. The front patio and Antonio's bedroom have concrete ceilings, but the rest of the ceiling is tin. The transformation came to a grinding halt when Antonio lost his job during the presidency of Hipólito Mejía from 2000-2004. Many Dominicans are bitter about this period, complaining that Mejía left the country *destruido* (destroyed) through his government's corruption. Despite the slow pace of the economy's recovery, Antonio remains hopeful about the future. He says:

> Well, if I find a job that pays okay then I'll finish my father's house. I'll put a concrete roof on and start constructing mine on top. Even if I leave La Ciénaga, if I have a house here

> they can rent it out and live more or less well. Rent my house on the second floor and live in this one below. But the plan has always been to put a second floor that will be my house. (Antonio)

Antonio found his situation depressing, but was quite optimistic that he would find himself something and regularly came up with new ideas on how to change his situation. However, most of his ideas were unrealised because he lacked the social capital to successfully participate in the competitive Dominican job market. Since male employment is low, many women, including Altagracía, have taken responsibility for their own housing and economy. At the same time, they encourage the men in their life to reassert their traditional role as providers. Altagracía regularly reminds Antonio of his obligation to finish the family home, advising him on what materials he should buy and which parts of the house he should finish first. Antonio's father Pedro also likes to 'interfere' (in Altagracía's, Felicia's and Antonio's understanding) in his son's plans, leading to much frustration for Antonio, who at times is tempted to quit the project altogether. Antonio has threatened to give up and sell the materials he has bought in retaliation to his elderly cantankerous father's interference, much to the dismay of Felicia, who considers that Pedro should be quiet so that Antonio doesn't get 'distracted'. Thus gender-based battles and aspirations are played out through the physical terrain of bricks and mortar, and across generations.

The incomplete transformation of the house from a rural model to a 'modern' one is analogous to the incomplete transformation of the Dominican economy from agricultural to an industrial/service-based one. When Pedro migrated from his father's land in Cibao to Santo Domingo in the early 1950s, he envisaged a path for himself that led from poverty to economic security and modern living: 'Life in La Ciénga has been good, more or less. I thought I would have a better house but I am thankful to God for what I have, that my children are well behaved and that I have my health.' In Pedro's mind, Antonio's job in a factory should have been sufficient to allow him to live a comfortable life, but forces that are outside their control have indefinitely delayed the family's modern urban dream. Thus the house stands as a symbol of the family's pride and achievements,

but it also represents their helplessness. Holston captures the contradiction of the ever-evolving autoconstructed house when he states:

> Their very incompleteness provides people with a model of change itself and with a mode of thinking about past experiences, present circumstances, and imagined futures. In this way, houses are both concrete embodiments and imaginary representations of people's relations to their conditions of existence. (Holston 1991:456)

Like many poor Dominicans in an age of mass media, Antonio's *esfuerzo* (effort) is tied up with a single material object, while his dreams extend elsewhere: he is confronted with mansions in *telenovelas* (TV dramas) and peruses car magazines in his spare time. Owing to national and global economic forces, he is caught in a temporal limbo in which he has long ceased to be a child, but is prevented from fully realising his adult life. In this sense, the house is a freeze-frame of Antonio's aspirations to socioeconomic mobility, while simultaneously emplacing him in a particular mode of engagement with the labour market and the State. People like Antonio are indefatigably challenging their marginalisation by putting themselves forward as worthy beings and staking a claim in progress.

Living a Comfortable Life

Thus far, much of my data have been put to service in describing how the house operates as a strategy for obtaining security and conditions for social reproduction in an uncertain world. In this section, I examine the house as a material form that is an end in itself, and as a site for self-expression that draws upon a range of stylistic influences. Here, I use Miller's formulation of kinship and consumption as being complementary, in that 'the two idioms of kinship and mass consumption collude, as it were, in the development of this dualist rendition of the possibilities of sociality and freedom' (1994:206). However, I also point towards the distinctions and stratifications that such processes entail as people strive to both meet norms and generate individuality. Miller describes how material culture's very normality allows it to generate taxonomies that share

homologies with other structures, such as class, ethnicity and gender. I contend that processes of self-creation should not be divorced from processes of stratification because they are mutually constitutive. As Holston (1991) aptly demonstrates in relation to 'autoconstruction' in Brazil, the process of elaborating material culture generates autonomy but it may also reproduce hierarchical social relations.

Housing in La Ciénaga today ranges from the very basic shack made from castoff materials with a dirt floor, to three-storey concrete houses with glass windows and air conditioning. According to the Centro de Estudios Sociales Juan Montalvo, 80 percent of cienigüeros own their home, 18 percent pay rent and 2 percent are living in accommodation that has been lent to them (CES 2004:11). Around 46 percent of houses are made of concrete block, 26 percent of wood, 8 percent of both block and wood, and 20 percent of tin (ibid). 93 percent of roofs are made of tin and seven percent of concrete, while 92 percent of houses now have concrete floors, 6 percent earth and 2 percent tile (ibid.). Many are still very basic, lacking internal walls, running water, or divisions between rooms. Residents construct internal walls out of whatever materials they can find, with reams of fabric (especially curtains) being the most common choice, although I did enter one ranchito whose inner walls were partially covered with a large metal Visa sign.

In Santo Domingo, creativity is most visibly expressed through the colours of one's house. Dominican houses are notable for their colour palette of flamingo pink, lime green, fluoro yellow, deep red and turquoise blue. A popular brand of house paint sells a range of 'tropical colours' that are pre-mixed for Dominican tastes. While these colours are more commonly applied to single-storey dwellings rather than blocks of flats, their pervasiveness throughout the country means that they are accepted as a national style rather than a working class or peasant style. They are part of the Dominican cultural landscape.

Residents paint their houses in combinations of these colours and the effect can be quite shocking to outsiders whose eyes are trained to value a more limited aesthetic. For example, during my stay Altagracía regularly hinted to me that she would like to paint her house a shade of limey yellow that

I particularly disliked. I resisted her wishes, instead painting the inside of the house white (her choosing). When I departed I left her some money, which she gave to Carlos to buy paint, but instead of her brilliant colour he came home with dark green, and this was the colour of the exterior when I returned to visit in August 2006. Altagracía loudly complained to me, Carlos, and anyone else who listened how the colour made her house resemble a police station. Again, upon leaving, I gave her money, and not long after she told me during a phone call that she had finally obtained the colour she desired.

Creativity is also apparent in people's efforts to comply with norms despite a lack of resources. A sign of quality in a Dominican home is a tiled floor rather than a concrete one. When Antonio was working with his father in the restoration of colonial buildings, he saved some old, broken Spanish tiles and took them home. He and Samuel used them to tile the entryway to their parents' house, creating a beautiful and unique montage. In a similar manner, their mother, Felicia, is creative in the placement of their furniture. Dominicans have a penchant for rearranging furniture on a regular basis to *cambiar el aire* (freshen the air). This exercise may seem futile among poor residents, who have little space and few material goods, but it creates an atmosphere of change and renewal without expensive purchases, and it allows them to use their limited space in new and creative ways. A change in the arrangement of furniture always evokes comments from family and visitors on the skill and foresight of the arranger, as well as generating a feeling of progress and hope.

These practices can be compared to Trinidad. Daniel Miller (1994) writes that unlike Bourdieu's observations on differential class aesthetics in France, Trinidadian households exhibit an aesthetic norm that crosses class, gender, and ethnicity. Competition exists in the displaying of material goods from a standard set, rather than in uniqueness of style. My observations in Santo Domingo are consistent with Miller's findings for Trinidad. Dominican social classes share notions of what it is good to have and good to be seen to have. While the middle class house is the ideal type, it would be misleading to identify the normative aesthetic as being wholly middle class in origin. Many aspects of Dominican style, such as the colours they paint their houses, are derived from the

countryside. These traditional aesthetics sit alongside imported goods that symbolise the attainment of a modern life.

In Miller's terms, this entails engagement with both transcendence, in the promulgation of traditions and durable goods, and transience in the display of personal style, often influenced by transnational relations. The two forms are often present in the same objects: for example, the prominent display of photos of loved ones who are overseas is simultaneously a comment on the transcendence of the family and the reality of its dispersal as members follow individual strategies. Mahogany furniture is an essential possession across the social spectrum, and even the smallest and poorest living room will generally have a couch with two mahogany chairs that are upholstered in the same fabric as the couch. It is not uncommon for these to be still covered in the original plastic for protection. Since most living rooms in La Ciénaga are very small, they are usually crammed close together so that one has to move them or climb over them in order to sit down. A set of shelves, a television and a stereo is also normal, regardless of the condition and type of house or the income of its occupants. Shelves display ornaments, religious objects and small vases with artificial flowers. Altagracía takes great care of her collection, though she often complains that she has *demasiado vaina* (a Dominican colloquialism meaning 'too much rubbish'). She places all her ornaments on the upper shelves, where they are out of reach of small children.

As Miller (1994) found in Trinidad, differences in the interior decoration of middle class and lower class houses have more to do with income than style. Middle class walls are decorated primarily with family portraits, certificates of achievement, religious pictures or slogans, and original paintings of Dominican rural or urban colonial landscapes. Lower class walls are decorated in the same fashion, with the exception of original paintings. Instead, they display posters, pictures from magazines, or calendars. Neither class displays objects associated with Africa, such as Haitian paintings. Indeed, Haitian paintings are almost exclusively found in venues that cater to tourists, such as hotels and tour agencies. The few homes of Haitians that I visited were indistinguishable from Dominican homes, showing no trace of ethnic difference or desire to identify with Africa.

The aesthetics of the house express changes in the socioeconomic circumstances of the owner. A concrete house indicates a certain level of respectability for a neighbourhood as much as an individual, as Altagracía verbalized when she pointed out to me that nearly all the ranchitos in her street have been replaced with *casas buenas* (good houses). She contrasted her street with the area *abajo* (below, in the lower part of the barrio) where people live in tiny shacks in a state of *desorden* (disorder). This reference has strong moral as well as material connotations; it implies that the owners are of dubious family backgrounds, are lazy and have their priorities wrong. While their housing is a function of their abilities and resources as individuals, it is interpreted as a collective fault that is described in regionalist or racial terms. For example, as I explained in the previous chapter, residents arriba tend to believe that most residents residing abajo are dark-skinned and to have originated from the south-west or from Haiti. It is this same process – the association of the individual with the collective – that residents of La Ciénaga are trying to resist when they claim respectability in opposition to the criminalization of the barrios.

Differences between Haitians and Dominicans are not marked by the house itself, but rather by embodied differences (colour, dress, and accent) and spatialized differences (the notion that Haitians and people of dubious moral character are primarily concentrated abajo, in the poorest parts of the barrio). Indeed, when I visited the south of Haiti with Amélie (a Haitian woman who has been living in La Ciénaga since 1981), I was surprised by how similar it was to its Dominican counterparts. Not only was the landscape exactly the same, but people also sat on plastic chairs in the street playing chess, sold the same produce in the markets, and decorated their homes with the same ornaments, tablecloths and artificial flowers. Some houses differed in style, but most were the same concrete constructions as found on the eastern side of the border. Similarities in consumption should not be surprising given the easy flow of products across the border, and I took great delight in showing off my photographs when I returned to La Ciénaga and hearing people's cries of amazement. Amélie was very pleased that I could demonstrate to some of her closest friends that her country of birth is not so strange and exotic.

Similar to Miller's findings in Trinidad, though there appear to be few ethnic differences in house decoration, a dualism is identified and expressed in discourse. Dominicans tend to believe that Haitians occupy certain sorts of houses that are filled with ethnically specific objects despite the fact that Haitian houses display more similarities than differences. Miller writes how actual differences between the houses of Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians were levelled during the oil boom, which increased consumption power across the society. After the oil boom and independence, differentiation of ethnicity took on a heightened political import.

In the Dominican Republic, economic crisis and insecurity is an enduring feature of Dominican-Haitian relations, and the promotion of difference is an act of governance that is echoed in everyday discourse. Therefore, Haitians are 'known' to occupy poor quality housing that is decorated in a peculiarly Haitian style with its associated artefacts (such as those relating to voudou), whereas the Dominican house, albeit of low quality, is endowed with the intent to attain a modern standard. In her study of two Jamaican neighbourhoods, Austin (1984) notes how residents magnified the differences between the two neighbourhoods, one presenting themselves as economically secure and respectable, and the other as poor and disordered, despite the relatively small social distance between them. Their social and spatial proximity increases the incentive to magnify distance and read it onto the environment.

Social difference is also magnified between residents of La Ciénaga. Material objects and the environment in which they are embedded are important markers of success. Being successful means having the ability to live a comfortable life, which requires possessing certain goods and living in a certain sort of neighbourhood. As Carlos observed to me:

> The people here in the Dominican Republic say *acomodado* [comfortable] when one has a good house, a car and when one lives in a part that is more or less decent, in a sector that is organized. This is a person who isn't rich but is comfortable, as they say. So we don't have the possibility of living in a part better than this. If God helps us one day, then perhaps one

would leave and look for a sector a little more decent where there is less delinquency, there is no black water and it facilitates the children's education a little more. (Carlos)

Here Carlos draws a link between the consumption of status goods and a life of morality and progress. The link is both causative and symbolic. Living in a good sector ensures greater safety, health and education, while living in a bad sector makes it difficult to gain the economic position necessary to live in a good sector and buy status goods. Status goods thereby become synonymous with the non-material aspects of a "comfortable life". They are symbols of their owner's ability to *superar* (overcome), or in Miller's terms, transcend, the difficulties of barrio life. This link between materiality and morality is particularly noticeable in the respect given to people who *superar* (overcome) as a result of their own hard work.

Pedro's son Samuel constructed his own house at the back of his father's house when he was 21. For Samuel, the construction of his house was made possible through his job in a hotel, his own ingenuity, and extensive help from his neighbouring family and friends:

> My house is a small, modest house. I've tried to make it as comfortable as possible. I made it with my own hands. It has two levels; on the lower level is the living room and kitchen, and on the second level is the bedroom and bathroom. I think the spaces are well distributed. At first I had planned to build a house with two levels and wooden floors. But it worked out that it would cost more, so I decided to construct completely in concrete block. When I started to make the house I didn't know anything about construction, so I started to investigate. I went to construction sites to observe how they do the work. I took measurements of how they put the materials, for example at what distance they put one column from the other. I started to ask people who worked in construction and took notes.
>
> Then in 1993, with the help of friends and with my brother-in-law, we started to construct the house according to the research I had done. We started to lay block and we built the house. We did it between the family with myself as master builder although I had never laid a block in my life, but we put my research into practice and I still believe that we

> achieved a good result. When other people come to see my work they asked me to work on their own houses. I helped Silvio build his house because he collaborated here with me. But my first construction job was here. (Samuel)

Samuel is finishing a university degree in tourism and works part time in his own business organizing functions. His wife works as a cook and waitress in a large hotel. Their house is made from concrete block, and it has metal shutters on the windows and no bars. Samuel wanted to put in wooden floors, in keeping with international style, but was unable to because it was too expensive. Downstairs there is a living room and small kitchen, and upstairs there is one large bedroom and a bathroom. There is a small, concrete-covered backyard between the parents' house and their son's. This area is used for socializing and washing clothes. By building his own house on his father's land, using inexpensive and readily available materials, and using his own and his family's labour, Samuel dramatically lowered his building expenses. His family's living costs are also reduced since they do not have to pay rent, have no mortgage, and do not pay childcare (as while they work, Felicia and Antonio look after the children). For the past three years they have been looking for a place to rent in a more 'organized' neighbourhood, so that their children can be involved in extracurricular activities, but so far they have not found a place that suits their budget.

Samuel's pride in having constructed his own 'comfortable' home corroborates Holston's argument that 'autoconstruction' counters negative representations of poor communities through 'replacing them with new ones of competence and knowledge.' (1991:462) Achieving the material construction of a home is admirable given the heavy difficulties faced by the poor and proves that one is serious (*gente seria*) and hard-working (*gente de trabajo*), two often-cited categories of respectability. Building the material structure of the house is therefore a powerful way of declaring oneself a person of skill and value.

How a house conveys distinction depends upon its architecture, contents, the land it is built on, its use, and the people who reside in it. Concrete multi-storey houses with spaces divided according to their function, bars on the windows and air conditioning are highest in the architectural hierarchy,

while small wooden *ranchitos* with only one or two rooms are the lowest. Internally, the walls are painted, surfaces tiled and doors installed. Only a handful of houses in La Ciénaga have reached this state of distinction. Belgica, a long-time supporter of the church and a respected member of the community, works in the school cafeteria and her husband owns a *colmado* (grocery store). Her small house stands out from those around it because it has a concrete roof, its floors are completely tiled, all windows and doors are barred and she has 'good' non-plastic furniture inside, including a matching sofa set and a dining table.

The house and its contents speaks volumes about a person's economic and social position but can also be misleading. While Belgica's house conforms to middle-class standards, she is clearly not a member of the middle class. Belgica's and her husband's incomes allow them to live well in La Ciénaga because they acquired land cheaply in the mid-1970s and do not have to pay a mortgage or rent. It took them two decades to develop their house to its present standard and acquire the material goods necessary to finish it. Most houses in the barrio started off at the most basic level and are in different stages of evolution, and so a family's housing style is often an indication of a longer residential period in the barrio rather than a reflection of their actual income. Furthermore, often a family's resources are entirely embedded within the house, but its owners may not have a stable income. Carlos's large house conceals his family's poverty:

> I spent fifteen years paying rent and it was difficult. At times I had to ask for an extension because in reality I didn't have the money, but thanks to God I now have a house and I don't pay rent. In 1995 Altagracía helped me start up a business selling music cassettes on the street. She lent me thirty-three pesos and I invested them in cassette tapes that I bought for one and a half pesos each and sold them at two for five pesos.
>
> Then when I was presented with an opportunity of work I made a parenthesis in the sale and I worked for a time in a shop. I spent seven years working and from the money I earned I made the house I have now. My work paid an incentive for good work and with what I made I kept buying concrete blocks, buying blocks and laying them until thanks to God I could construct a level. Thanks to God I'm not paying rent. But when prices went up

> they had to let people go so I went back to selling music cassette tapes. The house still isn't completely finished, it lacks some details. (Carlos)

Carlos moved to La Ciénaga in 1998. He lives across the street from Altagracía with his wife, Sandra, and their six school-age children. He now sells mobile phone accessories on the street, while his wife earns DOP$3000 per month (US$100) working as a domestic servant. They live on the bottom floor of their house. The top floor is divided into two apartments that Carlos rents out intermittently to tenants for DOP$1000 per month for each apartment. There is also a small garage with a metal roller door, which is sometimes rented out as shop space. However, the rent Carlos earns is irregular and is not sufficient to cover his large family's expenses. Indeed, the family barely have enough to eat and struggle to find the money to pay school expenses for their children.

> I have hopes to find a job, who knows if God will help me go a little more *adelante* (forward) and find a decent job. My children lack *el pan de la enseñaza* (benefit [lit. bread] of learning) and food… I don't have anything to leave to my children because I am a man who is totally poor. We – my brothers and I – we don't have anything. Not one of us can talk about thousands of pesos because we don't have it. We have always been poor, none of us has ever lost a million pesos because we have never had it. But we are honourable people, and thanks to God we have never had problems with the law, nor anything similar, because if something doesn't belong to us we leave it there. (Carlos)

Carlos points to economic crisis to explain his struggles:

> We are a humble family with wishes to *superacion* (improvement) although life is difficult, because life has lately been had for us with the high cost of living, with the high prices that have shot the *canasta familiar* (family shopping basket) to high prices, and one day's salary doesn't pay enough to eat well. (Carlos)

The economic situation compels many poor Dominicans to invent micro-entrepreneurial solutions, most of which fail to get off the ground due to lack of capital or lack of a market. Recently, Carlos tried selling medicine from the small shop at the front of his house that used to be Julia's bakery. He set up a folding table with a variety of medicines displayed, from cough syrup through to painkillers and antibiotics. Carlos's children staffed the shop while he continued to sell mobile phone accessories on the street. His three-year-old son, Max, is left in the care of the older children while his parents are at work, and he often visits Altagracía's house to play with Rosa's four-year-old daughter Luisa. On one occasion, Max complained to Altagracía that his mother was at work. Altagracía responded, 'But it's good that your mother is working! She works so that all of you can eat. It's a good thing!'

Like most parents in La Ciénaga, Carlos and Sandra struggle to provide enough for their children, whether food, schoolbooks, or their time. They are stretched between multiple jobs and money-making ventures because wages are below a liveable level. At home, Carlos defies the traditional gender divide and pitches in at whatever task needs doing, whether it be cooking, cleaning, or tending the children. He explained to me that 'My mother used to say that you know about today but you never know about tomorrow. You have to know how to do everything because you don't know what will happen.' But life with one's own house is infinitely more secure than without.

Carlos does not see his house as having much value as an inheritable object because, like all cienigüeros, he lacks the title for the land the house stands on. Carlos correctly identifies his house as the minimum requirement he and his family need to survive. Sandra dislikes La Ciénaga for its noise, pollution and inconvenience, but they have little option but to stay where they are. The sale of the house, albeit a large and 'good' one, would not buy the family much living space elsewhere in the city. Until Carlos or Sandra find better employment, or until their children do, they are trapped in La Ciénaga. This is a limitation that most residents face: building a house is a necessary strategy for securing a place and making a life, but the house alone generally does not provide class mobility or even a secure place in the market. A strategy that aims for socioeconomic mobility must

look beyond the house to other means for changing market position, such as through education and training. I will address some of these other strategies in later chapters.

Autoconstruction is socially significant, but it is also politically significant. Let me address the political first. Although cienigüeros do not own land, they have a sustainable habitus. While autoconstruction does not result in significant socioeconomic mobility, residents do attain an element of negotiation of power, since elaborate house-building makes it problematic for the state to move them on. This is not necessarily a conscious process, as residents engage in autoconstruction to reap sociocultural benefits and build identity, but through the process of self-creation it becomes political.

Building a place is not only material but also social. It allows residents to create their own social worlds that are seen as antithetical to the impersonal middle class, while engaging in consumption to express their right to a stake in progress and modernity. The construction and elaboration of the house and housing arrangements over time stand as testimony to the creativity and determination of the poor when faced with shrinking options in a struggling economy. More than anyone else, poor people in poor nations know how to tackle, and transcend, the problems of the modern world. How theirs is not a single, unified response but a heterogeneous mix of cooperation and differentiation will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Arriba and *Abajo*: 'Dualism' in the barrio

On most evenings, Rosa takes refuge in the living room of Altagracía's house after she arrives home from her work as a domestic servant. The two women, one thirty and dark skinned, the other seventy-two and *indio*, sit on plastic chairs and gossip by candlelight, enjoying the sea breeze flowing freely through the open louvers and doors. Their conversation is frequently punctuated by the occasional needs of Rosa's three young children, visiting friends and relatives, or perhaps a neighbour looking to buy one of Altagracía's bottles of home-made juice. Most visitors stop for a few minutes to share news: whether or not the men are finding much work in construction, whether or not the new police station is dissuading the *delincuentes* (delinquents), or whether the barrio is just as *caliente* (hot, troublesome) as ever.

On one occasion, Altagracía, Rosa, and Silvio and Carlos (Altagracía's nephews) were discussing a robbery at the *club de billard* (pool hall) near the entrance to the barrio. The robbery was on a Sunday night, the busiest night of the week, when the club is packed out with locals dancing to *bachata* and *reggaetón*. According to Silvio, a gang of thirty young men from a neighbouring barrio

held up the club at gunpoint at around one o'clock in the morning. They made everyone put their hands up, confiscated all the men's guns, robbed wallets and the till, and then liberated motorbikes outside by shooting the chains so they could drive off on them.

'But the military station is just across the road from the club', said Rosa, 'Didn't they do anything?' The military station at the entrance to the barrio was a leftover from when the barrio was blockaded under Balaguer between 1991 and 1996.

'Of course they didn't!' responded ever-cynical Altagracía in disgust. 'Don't be stupid, Rosa. They had a deal with the delincuentes. Neither the military nor the police are ever going to do anything here.'

Silvio turned to me with a twinkle in his eye. 'It's a hot barrio, isn't it Erin?' he asked, 'Not like how you told me about Tokyo where there are no thieves.' Silvio had been highly amused when I told him that in Tokyo people leave their bicycles unchained on the street while they work all day in high-rise offices, and he repeated the story to anyone who would listen.

Altagracía ignored him. 'The barrio is getting worse and worse' she stated emphatically. 'Before you could walk around anywhere, but now we have to restrict our movements. *Abajo* is filled with *tígueres* (tigers or streetwise men), Haitians, and thieves. I hardly leave the house except to go to the market or the church. When Tomás [her son] visits he comes the long way on his scooter so as not to pass through *abajo*.' Tomás lives *arriba* in Guachupita, a barrio that is one of the most frequently reported troublespots in the media due to gangs. Much to my surprise, Tomás once described Guachupita to me as 'very hot right now, but not as hot as La Ciénaga'.

While Altagracía was talking, Amélie, a slight, forty-year-old Haitian woman, entered the yard on her way home from a meeting at CODECI (Coordination for the Development of La Ciénaga). Amélie didn't take Altagracía's objection to Haitians personally, as she considered herself well-respected in the community and therefore exempt from such slurs. Besides, she got along well with Altagracía.

'Altagracía, you shouldn't let the thieves stop you. This is our barrio! Look at me, I'm small and I go everywhere and at all hours!'

'She's right,' interjected Rosa, 'I usually come home from work in the dark and nothing has ever happened to me. I think that if you have confidence and believe that nothing will happen to you, then nothing will.'

'You're kidding yourself', Altagracía responded, 'In no part of this barrio is there tranquillity. Here *arriba* in La Clarín is the only part that is relatively tranquil right now.'

'That's not true, Altagracía', retorted Amélie, 'I walk around the barrio every day and in all parts there are many who are working for the community – good people, serious people. The thieves and delinquents are only a minority.'

Silvio looked mischievous. 'Yes, there are many people who should be taken seriously – they are armed!'

'Well, I wouldn't walk around most parts of *abajo* for anything,' answered Altagracía definitively, 'community workers or not. You can go walking around if you like but I'll stay here in my house and sell my juice and talk with the people I know who have lived here for years.'

The above conversation illustrates a range of positions within a moral geography of Santo Domingo, La Ciénaga, and especially those parts of the barrio that border La Clarín (see Taylor 2009b). As I discuss below, cienigüeros map out a moral geography in terms of a familiar Caribbean dualism, 'respectability and reputation' (see Wilson 1969 and 1973). In Chapter 6, I elaborate how this moral geography with its characteristic dualism is but one version of larger a 'geographical knowledge' sustained in the city's middle-class areas. In this chapter, I describe how this urban moral geography is reproduced in La Ciénaga, as its residents assert their respectability in contra-distinction to others identified as disreputable.[26] The very judgments made of them by outsiders are denied but also foisted onto unwanted neighbours. Harvey proposes that such moral geographies, or forms of geographical knowledge, are grounded in the relations of power and status that mark any social world. He remarks,

[26] Harvey (2001:296-297) renders as 'geographical knowledges' what others now refer to commonly as 'moral geographies', noting the political and value-laden dimensions of the way in which space and landscape are interpreted, bounded and divided. See for instance, Shapiro (1998), Smith (2000).

> No social group can subsist without a working knowledge of the definition and qualities of its territory, of its environment, of its "situated identity" in the world … Every individual and every social group possesses, therefore, a distinctive "geographical lore" and "geographical praxis," some loosely structured body of knowledge and experience about matters geographical. The social transmission of that knowledge is vital to the perpetuation or transformation of any social order. (Harvey 2000:551-2)

Harvey asserts, citing State Department politics in the USA, that commonly these moral geographies operate by 'demon[izing] spaces and places', not least as an integral part of an identity politics (Harvey 2000:552). Later in his discussion, he notes that the proliferation of 'local resistances and separatisms' is engendered as an (attempted) 'antidote to neoliberal globalization' (Harvey 2000:555). He deploys Deshpande's term, the 'sedimented banalities of neighbourliness', to write of the micro-identities mobilized to keep the de-personalism of global cities at bay (cited in Harvey 2000:555). This contrast between solidarity and opposition is integral to the construction of moral geographies as people define themselves in contrast to an 'other' as much as in terms of solidarity within a locale. In times of rapid change and instability, this process of differentiation and identification becomes more marked. In his ethnography of Trinidad, Daniel Miller (1994) argues that these 'identities defined by contrast' emerge from a dualism inherent in the contradictions of modernity and particularities of Caribbean history. The rapid change that is integral to modernity effects a search for 'transcendence', or rootedness, as a counterpoint to a heightened consciousness of transience. Social differences become more trenchant and are expressed in oppositions as people struggle to create the self and a society.

These ideas intersect nicely with the enduring discussion in the Caribbean literature concerning the notions of respectability and reputation, an opposition that also emerges through contrasting identities. As Puri (2003) notes, this discussion has focused mainly on 'reputation' as a value complex deployed as resistance to the respectability of church, home and school that Wilson marks

as a legacy of Caribbean colonialism[27] (Wilson 1969, 1973). Whereas for Miller dualism emanates from the characteristics of modernity as they are played out historically, Wilson's dualism is posited as a Creole response to colonial domination. As he describes it, Wilson's dualism is in itself a form of moral geography. A feminised domestic space, brought together in the home or 'yard', and aligned with colonising powers, is juxtaposed to a masculine domain realised in forms of performativity rather than normative constraint and, importantly, located on the street. This resonates with Austin's (1984) 'inside' and 'outside' lives in Jamaica, a spatialised idiom that serves as a metaphor for other social structures such as race, class and gender.

Wilson's spatialisation of values and identities resonates with notions of status in La Ciénaga. Residing arriba in La Clarín, residents also typify their own preferred way of life as a domesticated 'inside' one as opposed to that pursued abajo, outside, on the streets in adjoining areas. La Clarín's relative height from the river naturalizes this moral geography as one that possibly describes only the relative risk of flooding among different parts of the barrio. It echoes a larger division in which the city is designated arriba and the barrios by the river abajo. In the comments of Rosa, Altagracía and Silvio though, a particular issue is at play. Their remarks position them in various ways within a discourse of respectability and *rootedness* that is part of their identity in La Clarín.

Keeping Miller's understanding of dualism in mind, I propose to discuss a moral geography that objectifies in spatial terms the opposition between respectability and reputation. In contrast to Wilson, I argue that 'respectability' does not depend upon the appropriation of alien institutions and values. Rather, the materials of respectability (such as the church, the state and the family) are all part of the totality of Dominican sociocultural life, to which cienigüeros firmly belong. Thus respectability is not simply a form of submission, as Wilson suggests; nor does this mode of identity creation require the appropriation of alien products to form a positive identity, as Miller states is the case for self-creation through consumption in Trinidad. My argument, in this chapter and the next,

[27] Dualism, as Sutton and Miller point out, has long been observed in many Caribbean contexts, beginning at least with Herskovits' idea of "socialised ambivalence" in Haiti, which Sutton describes as 'the result of the coexistence within the same group of two sets of counterposed values and modes of behaving – the one "African", the other 'European"' (Sutton 1974:188). However, Miller does not locate dualism as emanating from colonialism.

is that respectability is a form of opposition to a larger politics that demonizes the barrios and denies cienigüeros a place in Dominican sociocultural life. It is a strategy to acquire legitimacy and recognition in a field to which they already feel they belong.

At the same time, cienigüeros turn this value opposition on those around them in their struggle to sustain identity in a larger urban environment. They deploy a negative opposition of 'reputation' to account for socioeconomic distress and distance themselves from it. That is, in creating a positive identity as people of value with a right to security, they objectify and displace their own experiences of rupture onto others. Yet this process is primarily discursive: in daily life, oppositions, dualisms and the identities they imply are generally more muted and malleable than in national and local discourse. Challenging stratification therefore depends upon de-naturalising the dualism as it is expressed in discourse and calling attention to the multivalent ways in which people act in practice.

Respectability and Reputation as a Moral Geography

Peter Wilson's (1973) dualism of respectability and reputation is a clear example of a moral geography with a territorial politics of inclusion and exclusion. The title of his book, *Crab Antics*, is a metaphor for the struggle of a Creole egalitarianism against a colonial social stratification that is played out on the island of Providencia off the coast of Colombia. According to Wilson's model, 'respectability' is a metropolitan-derived value complex that reproduces social stratification. It is associated with the middle class, institutions such as school and church, women, and domestic spaces. Wilson posits that the spatialized performance of respectability reinforces the colonial order at the expense of egalitarianism. For Wilson, the principle of 'reputation' is the antidote to social stratification as it provides the working class with an alternative route to social status that depends more upon personal skills and attributes than upon traditional class markers such as property or education level. Reputation is locally derived and located in informal, street-based networks rather than the 'inside' spaces of institutions and the home. Wilson suggests that this particular moral geography has its roots in the plantation system and is characteristic of the post-colonial Caribbean region.

Wilson's dualism continues to be evoked in accounts of contemporary Caribbean life because, despite its flaws, it sustains value as an analytical device. It points to a process of differentiation that exists among people of unequal resources and power. Wilson's opposition resonates with, though is not identical to, a spatialised idiom of differentiation that is deployed in Santo Domingo. In focusing on status systems, the opposition also points to the fact that these identities are not simply differentiated but also stratified. As I proceed, I wish to embrace three dimensions of criticism of Wilson's dualism: first, as Wilson describes it, the dualism masks both dynamics between groups and even within the lives of individuals, both men and women; second, that respectability can in fact be oppositional and a source of self-creation; and third, that as a mode of classification, some people have more power over its deployment than others. Respectability and reputation, then, are not *alternative* status systems but part of the same system of creating and differentiating 'situated identities' (Harvey 2001).

Wilson's gender dichotomy is arguably the most problematic part of his analysis. He associates respectability with women, the domestic sphere, and colonial stratification, whereas reputation pertains to men, the public sphere, and local egalitarianism. Wilson's logic is that women's allegiance to respectability has an historical basis in their preferential status under slavery and continued interest in the maintenance of the colonial social order, but he has been critiqued for ignoring ample evidence of Caribbean women's resistances to the colonial order both under slavery and in contemporary life. Besson (1993) writes of how British Caribbean slave women participated in many modes of slave resistance, some of which were particular to women, such as poisoning the master's food and ridiculing him. Nor is it clear that slave women's engagements with respectability were a sign of subservience. Besson notes how the anthropologist Sidney Mintz, writing about peasant life after slavery, demonstrated a link between female land ownership (a marker of respectability) and higglering (squarely in the public domain and reputation) in post-slavery peasant life, thus making the house and yard the nucleus of the Afro-Caribbean culture of resistance. Indeed, Caribbean women's work historically blurs the line between public and private as the micro-businesses they run from home often brings the 'public' indoors. Women's resistances, then, are often not as 'domestic' as their location would suggest. Rather, the house and yard serve as

mediators of public action for women who may be restricted outside of this sphere. So, while Wilson may well be correct in identifying respectability with the domestic sphere and institutions, it does not follow that this also entails subservience. Further, Daniel Miller points out that seeking forms of respectability was not merely an act of subservience to the colonial order, but a way of refusing the abjection of slavery and the poverty that followed emancipation. He writes, ‘Given the conditions of slavery, the difficulties in maintaining family bonding and the treatment of slaves as property themselves, it is just as reasonable to see the female-centred search for respectability in stable descent groups with long-term ambitions for family development and the cultivation of property as the true form of resistance’ (Miller 1994:263).

It is not just women’s allegiance to a metropolitan-derived respectability that becomes tenuous under closer scrutiny. Miller argues that considering Wilson’s reputation as creole is problematic because it also has its roots in colonialism. He writes that colonialism’s ‘culture of mistresses, the sexual liaisons, the leisure activities of colonial males could provide as firm a precedent’ for the development of reputation as do local practices (Miller 1994:261-2). If reputation is due to colonial influence as much as respectability, then Wilson’s hope in reputation as the local product that will overthrow foreign cultural domination appears shaky.

Nor is it clear that men are as removed from the domestic sphere or the values of respectability as Wilson makes out. Writing about masculinity and family in Barbados, Christine Barrow (1998) argues that men should not be seen as situated outside domestic life. Wilson may be right that masculinity is validated in the company of other men, but ‘their masculinity, though validated ‘outside’ as ‘one of the boys’ is also located within the family’ (Barrow 1998:356). Emphasis on virility is accompanied by a concern for family life and fatherhood, and masculinity depends upon balancing the identities of ‘family man’ and ‘one of the boys’: ‘Within his family… the “real man” strikes a balance between conflicting identities, roles and relationships. He must show that he is “in control” by maintaining an equilibrium within a dispersed kinship network that incorporates legitimate, respectable relationships at home, as well as those which are “outside and irresponsible”’ (Barrow 1998:357). Puri also notes that men’s performances of reputation often

depend on *other* performances of respectability: ‘Indeed, the rebel’s refusal to work for the “shitstem” may be enabled by the “respectable” labor of an unacknowledged person, often a woman’ (Puri 2003:32). The domestic sphere is clearly integrated into performances of masculinity.

Puri’s focus on the performative aspects of respectability and reputation points to their use as life strategies, a theme that also comes through strongly in Carla Freeman’s (2007) study of middle-class Barbadian women. Freeman writes how these women combine respectability with reputation to attain class mobility. She argues that reputation has gained ‘upward mobility’ as its flexibility proves compatible with neoliberal global capitalism. Trying to climb out of Wilson’s proverbial barrel, female entrepreneurs turn to reputation as a means of gaining class mobility and resisting the constraints place upon women under the values of respectability. She argues:

> …this climb requires a careful embrace of reputation polished with a veneer of respectability ... business itself has become more respectable, signalling reputation’s move from oppositional margins to the center. And this upward mobility of reputation is paralleled for some by their own class mobility, making the enactment of a new entrepreneurial middle classness especially notable. These boundaries, however, are in tension, and the fault lines are gendered… (Freeman 2007:260-1)

In contrasting the flexibility of reputation (viewed as oppositional) with the flexibility of neoliberalism (viewed as hegemonic), Freeman’s data suggest that reputation is losing its oppositional qualities, as it is put to service in the neoliberal economy. If reputation is in the service of global capitalism, how can it be harnessed to bring about egalitarianism? Respectability, Freeman posits, seems *more* resistant to global capitalism than reputation, yet it constrains women. The solution, at least for these entrepreneurs, appears to be the simultaneous enactment of respectability and reputation by the one individual. This differs markedly from a view of the dualism as dialectically opposed and aligned with gender, race, or social class.

This balance resembles what Puri refers to as the dualism's 'structuring tension', 'between mass performances of transgression and mass desires for acceptance and assimilation, between popular desires for work and popular celebration of respite from its exploitative conditions' (2003:24). Puri argues cultural studies has fetishized resistance and privileged reputation at the expense of the everyday possibilities for resistance found in the practice of respectability, such as 'the resources of respectability through which a group of village women may mount a campaign against the drunkenness of their husbands; the informally institutionalised networks of daycare; the struggles for clean water, and so on.' (Puri 2003:25) But respectability is not simply a resource mobilised by women: respectability also has an importance in 'the *political* sphere, where Caribbean publics have tended to make pragmatic and often cautious political choices rather than revolutionary ones' (Puri 2003:2). The dualism, then, is much more encompassing than Wilson suggests.

Dualism as an encompassing phenomenon is suggested by Miller's 'transience' and 'transcendence'. For Miller, this dualism emerges (though not *inevitably*) from a fundamental contradiction of modernity, in which people have greater possibilities than ever before and freedom, yet struggle against the rupture and alienation caused by a heightened sense of temporal consciousness and the 'burden' of self-creation (1994:62). The Caribbean is a paradigm of modernity in that its particular historical circumstances (especially the phenomenon of slavery) have resulted in a heightened awareness of this split. In Trinidad, the oil boom of the 1970s and its demise by the mid-1980s increased awareness of the 'fragility of self-creation' and the possibilities of 'alienation and insignificance' (1994:292). Far from being an ascription to a dominant value system, transcendence is a way of securing the self against rupture and alienation.

Miller writes that Trinidadians have a greater sense of meeting dual desires (Miller 1994:300-308) for freedom and rootedness than do Britons, due to the rapid nature of change in Trinidad and the uncertainty it has generated. This heightened sense of dualism is then played out through other structures, such as gender, class and ethnicity. Interestingly, Miller notes that ethnic differences between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are expressed dualistically, even though the oil boom allowed practices of consumption to reduce the differences between the two groups. He

writes that Indo-Trinidadians were viewed as the objectification of the transcendent family and suggests that they internalised that view. In contrast, Afro-Trinidadians became marked as transcendent. This differentiation was related to national economic and political changes as Indo-Trinidadians experienced upward mobility as a result of the oil boom, while Afro-Trinidadians slipped downward. My own data echo a similar process in that Santo Domingo's poor barrios abajo became more disreputable following a series of economic crises. The boundaries between city and barrio spaces and people became more marked, and a more specific dualistic discourse developed. What Miller does not emphasise is that some social groups have more power than others to determine the nature of these dualisms. Santo Domingo's barrios have been marked as the objectification of reputation against their will, due to their relative lack of power and wealth.

In her review of Crab Antics, Constance R. Sutton's (1974) primary concern is that Wilson's dualism collapses the distinction between social and cultural structure, 'thus one cannot readily ask questions about the linkage between ideology and social structure, or about how changes in power and control of economic resources influence values, categories of thought, or the persistence of cultural dualism' (Sutton 1974:189). Sutton argues that focusing on values and locating the heart of the colonial system in the institutions of church, education and marriage as sources of respectability, ignores issues of power (see also Washabaugh 1974). Wilson rightfully draws attention to the importance of cultural values in giving meaning to social life, but he obscures the 'external realities' that hold power over it. Sutton remarks,

> If the efforts of other Caribbean peoples to implement social reforms and change their cultural values have thus far had limited success, it is not because they lack awareness of the desirability of developing a more egalitarian and autonomous value system. Rather they, unlike Wilson, recognize that colonialism and neo-colonialism are not simply systems of values but constitute formal and informal institutional arrangements over which they still exercise only limited control. (Sutton 1974:191)

Colonialism is not just a value complex that can be thrown off by an increased focus on reputation; rather, the ability of Caribbean peoples to alter their societies is limited by external social structures, particularly economic dominance. Clearly, Wilson's call for Caribbean women to abandon respectability in favour of reputation's egalitarianism is not a practical one when power lies elsewhere. Extending Sutton's point, Diane Austin (1983) remarks that constraints on social change arise 'not only [from] the power to dominate others politically and economically but also to constrain ideas and intervene in attempts to construct alternative models of society' (Austin 1983:223). Cultural resistance may be manifest yet contained by the dominant ideology of the middle classes. Austin (1984) demonstrates the constraining power of ideology in her discussion of an idiom of 'inside' and 'outside' lives in Jamaica. Importantly, her analysis takes the focus off gender and onto the spatialization of class relations. The terms 'inside' and 'outside' refer to the arrangement of living quarters (especially access to privacy and the location of the toilet), work conditions (outside manual work versus inside office work) and the legitimacy of children. They are used as shorthand for social class, where the middle class view the worker as one who is 'born outside, lives outside and works outside only to propagate outside children and begin the chain again' (Austin 1984:150). She writes that the middle class view workers as born into their position due to their parents' inability to socialise them properly. It is a cultural logic that appears justified in light of Jamaica's history and the working class find it difficult to reject, even as they express awareness that their class position is due to exploitative relations:

> Though they believe that their own position is due to exploitation and others' inheritance, they nevertheless tend to perceive themselves as an outsider class. Though often they think of themselves as outsiders to wealth and power this can also become a view of themselves as cultural outsiders – uneducated, ignorant, unmannerly. It is at this point that the working class accept a form of hegemony and suggest that they, as a "black" and "ignorant" class are culpable for their position. (Austin 1984:150)

In this statement, Austin demonstrates how a moral order that emplaces and enclasses a subordinate group is naturalised. Santo Domingo's 'arriba' and 'abajo' is comparable to Jamaica's 'inside' and

'outside' in that it takes space as a symbol of moral value, using it as shorthand for differences that include social class, race, ethnicity, and territorial identity. Thus, 'outside' and 'abajo' become analogous to being poor, dark-skinned and living in an undesirable neighbourhood, while 'inside' and 'arriba' stand for being wealthy, light-skinned and living in a desirable neighbourhood. Like Austin's working class Jamaicans, residents of La Clarín (the high ground, *arriba*, in La Ciénaga) reject this spatialized hegemony while simultaneously confirming its veracity. The very flexibility of the moral geography allows this double usage: cienigüeros can resist the demonization of their entire community (a class ideology), while simultaneously projecting it onto smaller spaces that are populated by people who they view as different (while of the same social class). In this manner, they position themselves conservatively as occupying a middle rung in the moral geography: they claim a high moral stance, especially relative to other people in close proximity, while yielding to the ideology that generates these demonizations. I will discuss this in greater depth in the following chapter, while here I wish to focus on its deployment in micro-form. Within La Ciénaga, identification with reputation or respectability is less about class belonging than an attempt to avert the worst effects of emplacement in a highly stratified society.

My analysis will show that reputation is not the antidote: indeed, as Puri and (somewhat incidentally) Freeman point out, in this global age reputation is just as likely to be at the service of individual mobility and neoliberal capitalism, and respectability the primary source of resistance. But neither are people exclusively loyal to a single value complex: instead, they engage with both of them in multivalent ways, at times individualistic and at other times communitarian, to sustain an identity, implement class mobility and put up resistances. The 'crab antics' of La Ciénaga's moral geography is not a struggle between gendered status systems, but rather the simultaneous deployment of both value complexes by individuals seeking to escape the barrel. The particular ways in which cienigüeros deploy respectability and reputation as life strategies at once reproduce wider stratifications and individualise the terms of their engagement with them.

A View from La Clarín

When Altagracía first settled arriba in La Ciénaga some decades ago, the rainy season annually turned the high land, called La Clarín, into a river-girt island. Over the past few decades, a series of public works have pushed back the river and provided drainage, and today flooding abajo has become less common. She no longer has to wear gumboots to pass through abajo on her way to the market, but she continues to avoid the lowlands, which she views as rambling, unhealthy and dangerous. Altagracía prefers to stay close to home in La Clarín, where she has built a decent concrete home near her family and the Catholic church. Altagracía adheres to a moral geography that posits the high land arriba in La Clarín as respectable, versus abajo, which is the domain of reputation. Having struggled over her lifetime to build a respectable and secure position arriba, she now distances herself from the inconveniences and dangers of a life abajo. This struggle is not simply to attain a respectable and comfortable position within La Ciénaga, but to achieve something that is valued across Dominican society. It is an ascription to normative values that entail putting down roots and securing oneself in the world. But despite her aspirations to respectability, Altagracía has a history of engagement with reputation that continues to form her practice, if not her discourse, to the same degree. Indeed, in this chapter and the next I argue that dualism has become amplified in discourse throughout Santo Domingo in recent years due to increasing difficulties in achieving or maintaining one's values and position in the social order. In this section, I present a case study of Altagracía's strategic uses of respectability and reputation in discourse and practice.

Arriba consists of Altagracía's sector (La Clarín), the main street leading to the barrio's entrance and the cliffs separating La Ciénaga from Guachupita. Most houses in arriba are built of concrete block and a large number of its original residents still live there, maintaining a community feel. La Clarín is the most desirable area of the barrio to live in because it does not flood and it houses the school, the Catholic church and CODECI's office. It also has the highest rate of church attendance out of the barrio's six sectors. In short, it offers domesticity and institutions of the sort that Wilson associates with 'respectability'.

Abajo refers to any low-lying land, but particularly the large central region where Altagracía used to farm and the land at the edge of the river. La Clarín sits between these two regions. Abajo is densely populated and its material underdevelopment advertises the poverty of residents. Houses abajo are small and primarily constructed of wood and tin. They are joined together by a network of alleys, which convey a sense of inaccessibility and alienation. Few residents appear to know the area in its entirety: residents of the central region may not know their way around the riverbanks, and vice versa. Many people, like Altagracía, stick to the main paths through abajo to avoid getting lost in the more inaccessible, unpaved and dirty alleyways. A stormwater system was installed in 2005, but a lack of drainage continues to be a problem in some parts, where water muddies paths and human waste stagnates in open drains, providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes and disease. A government initiative has covered drains and concreted paths in much of the barrio, reducing illness and mud. The concrete paths also provide space for children to play between the close-set houses.

While the geographic features of the land initially gave rise to this spatial division, it has come to mean far more to residents. La Ciénaga's moral geography is a dualist classification of space and the people who reside in those spaces. Economic insecurity, overcrowding and the social change wrought by them have resulted in a heightened sense of danger in the city and the barrio. Under such circumstances, there has been an enhanced focus on a pre-existing process of separating respectable and non-respectable worlds. The barrio is classified into high versus low space (arriba/abajo), but also private versus public space (house/street), and reputable versus disreputable architectures (church and other institutions / bars and gambling places). It reflects a wider moral geography that demonises the entire barrio through the association of poverty with social disorder. Residents of La Clarín engage with this moral geography in a certain way: they resist the barrio's demonization by positing themselves as respectable, moral beings, while simultaneously verifying the association of poverty with social disorder through the division of space and people within the barrio. Unlike arriba, which has changed dramatically over time and now resembles a poor but prosperous and modern neighbourhood, abajo's underdevelopment and pollution challenges the barrio's improved status. As many anthropologists have noted, including Douglas (1966), Smith

(2000) and Modan (2007), dirt is a signifier of imperfection and inferiority, leading to the demonization of people and spaces as impure and contagious. Notions of impurity inform a moral geography that associates space with embodied markers of difference, including public visibility, race, or style of dress. Bodies that occupy impure spaces are interpreted as immoral, and vice versa.

Like Wilson's respectability/reputation and Austin's inside/outside, La Ciénaga's moral geography classifies the private sphere as more moral than the public sphere[28]. While La Clarín has an active street life, abajo is infamous for its public activities in sites such as *colmadones* (open air bars), whose noise and revelry place them firmly in the domain of reputation. The rowdiest colmadones are located off the main streets and they draw their clientele from neighbours who live close by. Colmadones occupy a similar place in Dominican life as dancehalls in Jamaica. They are places for the (relatively) young and (somewhat) disreputable (particularly men) to gather, drink beer and rum, listen to reggaetón and bachata, and flirt. Every weekend, the sounds of partying float up to La Clarín from abajo, occasionally accompanied by gunshots. Often the activity was still audible on the following morning. 'Listen to the *tígueres*! [tigers]' Antonio regularly exclaimed, 'Listen to the state of *desorden* (disorder) that this country is in!' For Samuel and Antonio, the partying abajo is indicative of a disintegration of the Dominican people, who have fallen into *corrupción* (corruption, or immorality) in hard times, rather than persevering with traditional peasant values of hard work and austerity.

Race is an intrinsic part of the moral geography, public perception being that most 'Haitians' live abajo. The colouring of abajo reflects state racism that presents Haitians as a threat to Dominican livelihoods. Fear of cultural difference, violence and irrationality (the idea that Haitians are primitive) are parts of the racist discourses articulated by people like Altagracía. Similar anxieties inform a national racism that allocates moral disorder to dark-skinned people, especially *morenos* (brown people) and *haitianos* (Haitians) (see Chapter 2). On at least three occasions after a robbery had taken place, I heard people (including the police) ask, 'Was it a *moreno* (brown man)?' when trying to gain a description of the perpetrator. In the Dominican Republic, contemporary beliefs

[28] Depending upon other factors; the classifications are not absolute.

about race and danger rest upon a long history of state manipulation of scholarly research and public opinion concerning morality, race, and national identity (Derby 2003; Torres-Saillant 2000).[29] State racism is itself a moral geography that classifies both blackness and whiteness as foreign, but while blackness signifies cultural difference, poverty and criminality, whiteness signifies privilege and wealth. In La Ciénaga this state racism is reflected in notions of what Haitians are and what they do, including that they are poor, illegal immigrants; that they therefore mostly live abajo; that they are uncivilized and dangerous, and prone to violent outbursts. This is by no means the only view of Haitians, nor could it even be argued that most people believe these stereotypes; rather, as I explain further in Chapter 6, they are convenient tropes that are drawn upon in times of trouble. In daily life, relations between Dominicans and Haitians are characterised by a good deal of cooperation. Amélie was willing to ignore Altagracía's comment about 'tígueres, Haitians and thieves' because Altagracía's actions in everyday life convey a multivalence that her racist speech does not. Altagracía's second husband and eldest daughter are dark-skinned Dominicans and a number of her friends, including Amélie, are Haitian.

Like all territorialisms, La Ciénaga's moral geography is reinforced through the construction of physical barriers. Silvio's tiny, two-bedroom concrete house forms a buffer between abajo, the old swamp where houses jostle for space along alleys, and Altagracía's house arriba in La Clarín. His house has no street frontage and sits in a small plot at the bottom of Altagracía's garden in the shade of her tamarind tree, surrounded on all four sides by a corrugated iron fence that separates it from the neighbouring houses. To visit Silvio and Ana, one must go through the yard of Ana's mother, who lives next door to Altagracía, and follow a partially concreted path downhill to a gap in the fence. One afternoon, early in my fieldwork, I came home to find Altagracía helping Silvio reinforce the fence on the low side of his lot. I asked what they were doing, and Altagracía told me that they were building the fence up higher 'because thieves from abajo jump over it at night, looking for items left lying around in our yards that they can steal'. In building the fence higher, Silvio and Altagracía were reinforcing the symbolic rendering of abajo as a source of danger.

[29] The treatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic has been critiqued extensively. For recent reports on human rights abuses, see Amnesty International (2000), Human Rights Watch (2002), Wooding (2004).

Altagracía has a complicated ritual of locking up her house every evening. She had extended her house out onto the pavement in front of her house, constructing a five-foot brick wall with metal spikes on top. Every night, she shuts its metal gate and locks it with a padlock. She places a sheet of tin in front of it with broom handles resting on the tin, so that if anyone tried to move it, the tin would fall and wake her up. She then comes inside and bars the front door. As an extra precaution she would place a chair against it, with a metal crowbar hanging from the chair. In a similar vein, she placed empty bottles on the windowsills in case someone tried to open the metal shutters. The back door was made of metal and so it was simply shut and barred. This all done, Altagracía could go to bed and sleep in relative peace. Altagracía told me that despite her age, she was afraid of rape as well as robbery, and she was thankful that she had her nephews close by to protect her.

In daily practice, Altagracía's social radius is centred upon the street in which she lives, limiting her visits abajo to activities relating to her livelihood or her involvement with the Catholic church. On two or three mornings a week Altagracía walks to the *mercadito* (little market) in Los Guandules or up in the city, always following the same route and returning home quickly laden with foodstuffs and the ingredients for her *mabi* (sugary fruit juice) and ice cream. Throughout the morning, she serves her customers while she prepares products for sale and cares for Rosa's children. Altagracía's central concerns are to run her business, maintain her home and attend Mass. None of her children remain in La Ciénaga, but she is not short of cousins, nephews and nieces with whom to interact. Her commercial activity helps her keep in touch with community news, as her clients often stop to talk to her or sit down while they drink their juice. Her business provides an excuse for women who are engaged in community work to drop in and inform Altagracía of community activities that are taking place.

Altagracía is reluctant to place her faith in anyone but her family and the church. Indeed, Altagracía and Felicia often claim that the church *is* their family: it has been with them throughout their lives, and many members of the congregation have lived in La Ciénaga for decades. With little schooling and a lifetime of informal work, Altagracía has always been self-sufficient and understandably cynical regarding the ability of the state or other political organisations to provide assistance and a

route to progress. The Catholic church has been the sole constant institutional presence in Altagracía's life, and so it is in the church that she places her trust and effort. Altagracía attends Mass two or three times per week, prayer meetings weekly, and partakes in special events such as Easter processions. On Sunday mornings, Altagracía dresses in a white skirt, a white blouse, black leather shoes and clip-on earrings. She ties her long, straight, dark hair into a neat ponytail. Typically, Felicia passes by the house and calls for Altagracía to hurry up lest they be late: Mass is one of few events to which cienigüeros feel the need to turn up at the appointed hour, and Felicia likes to get a good seat. Altagracía is not one to be rushed by anyone, and she pays little heed to Felicia's anxieties. She arrives at the school hall on time and exchanges greetings with her neighbours before the sermon starts. Afterwards, Altagracía rarely stops to chat with the rest of the congregation in the schoolyard. Instead she makes her way directly home to put lunch on the stove, knowing that Felicia will inform her of the church women's plans. Meanwhile, Felicia and other women plan out their meeting schedule for the week: where the next prayer meeting will be held, who will take what role in the church's courses for pregnant women and when they will attend Mass in the church in Guachupita.

Prayer meetings consist of a small group of people, almost exclusively women, who meet in a private home. The meeting place rotates among the barrio's six sectors. If the meeting is held abajo, the women of La Clarín often walk together, as some may not know the location. The houses and yards where the prayer meetings are held are not unlike Altagracía's, but the setting may be different. One prayer meeting I attended with Altagracía was in a small concrete house with a concrete wall and a gate. Flowers grew over the wall, giving it a quaint and romantic feel. The inside of the house was decorated with a matching mahogany lounge suite and flowery curtains. But directly on the other side of the wall was an open canal full of stagnant black water, and the house was hidden away in the inaccessible centre of the barrio. This combination of sameness and difference is part of what makes abajo so troubling to residents of La Clarín. Residents of arriba and abajo share a social position and own similar material goods. Moreover living conditions abajo remind residents of La Clarín of their own long struggles with poverty. On the other hand, when Altagracía goes to prayer meetings in parts of abajo that she has not visited for some time, she is

often surprised by improvements that have taken place. I have heard her exclaim to her son, who does not live in La Ciénaga and continues to avoid abajo, 'You wouldn't recognise the place now! They've done up all the shacks, the streets are paved, it's not the same place it was when you lived here'. Altagracía's church activities are her primary connection with the barrio as it is lived by others, and have prompted to her to *rethink* her classifications to a certain degree. Prayer meetings allow her to see changes with her own eyes, and her relationships with church people, many of whom live abajo, contest her blanket statements regarding the fundamental differences of residents abajo to residents arriba.

After years of attending church activities abajo, Altagracía knows a great deal more of the barrio than she commonly makes out. Moreover, Altagracía's conservatism hides a life history characterised by *movimiento* (movement), although, according to Altagracía, her engagement with movimiento was driven more by necessity and a search for autonomy than an aspiration to leave the domestic sphere. As a poor teenager in Cibao, Altagracía was engaged to a moreno man whom she did not particularly like. This was in the 1940s, during the second decade of the Trujillo era, when it was illegal to travel without a national identity card. Altagracía was unable to leave her home in the countryside because she was not yet old enough to apply for a card. When she turned sixteen (in 1948), Altagracía immediately obtained one, told her fiancée that she was going on a short trip to the city to visit relatives, and caught a bus to the capital with her wedding trousseau in hand. Once there, Altagracía sold the sheets, clothes and household goods that her fiancée had gifted to her and used the money to establish herself in the city.

Over the next two decades Altagracía worked as a domestic servant, married twice and had four children. By the time she moved to La Ciénaga with her children in 1972, Altagracía was again single. Moving to La Ciénaga was an opportunity to make a home for herself and her children with other family members close by. She reluctantly went to Venezuela to work, motivated only by the thought of improving her domestic situation. For Altagracía, the move was risky: to uproot oneself from one's family, community and country required courage and determination. But, despite the hardships she experienced overseas, Altagracía managed to fulfil her goal of making enough money

to build a house in La Ciénaga (as I described in Chapter 4). Like Carla Freeman's (2007) middle-class Barbadian women, Altagracía used reputation to gain the economic resources necessary to attain respectability.

Today, Altagracía's primary aim is to preserve respectability's rootedness. Having had to engage so much with reputation's movimiento throughout her career, she has since been reluctant to travel far from home and never visits her remaining relatives in the country. Her only trip out of Santo Domingo is a yearly church excursion to picnic by a river and swim, a favourite national pastime. She projects her dislike of reputation onto abajo as a means of 'domain closure' (Trigger 1986).[30] For Altagracía, movimiento is not desirable in itself, but rather it has been a tool to gaining stability and leading a domestic life. That is, it was Altagracía's path to a 'good' house, a sedentary life and respectability. Her neighbour Rosa, at thirty-two years of age, is engaging with the movimiento that Altagracía, at seventy-two years of age, found necessary to establish herself. This movimiento is very much aligned with values of reputation, including being street-savvy, willing to transgress moral-spatial boundaries, and entrepreneurial. Rosa's primary concern is that the movimiento that she and most other adults engage in does not corrupt her children. She worries that her young daughters, who are seven and five years old, will become *mujeres sin vergüenza* (shameless women) and her son, then ten, a thief because they spend much of their time playing with other children on the street without parental supervision. Altagracía's involvement with the Catholic church gives her an additional avenue to respectability, which Rosa has chosen not to take up, because she is far too busy with work and family. While Altagracía takes Rosa's seven-year-old daughter to church on Sundays (her five-year-old is considered too young and her son unable to sit still for so long), Rosa washes her family's clothes in Altagracía's machine and prepares *maizeña* (maize flour porridge) for breakfast. Like Altagracía, Rosa never sits idle. In upholding values of work and family, she roots herself in a domestic-based respectability that defies the transience involved in struggling to make a living.

[30] In this article Trigger discusses how the Weberian concept of 'social closure' is not just praticed by the powerful. The subordinate also close their domain against more powerful groups. In Altagracía's case, she is taking a category used by people more powerful than her (abajo as moral disorder) and projecting it further down the line to position herself as superior.

Altagracía's and Rosa's stories suggests that an individual's engagement with respectability and reputation is fundamentally a material issue: if either woman had sufficient resources, they would not have to engage in practices of reputation at all. Yet I feel that this interpretation is simplistic and unfairly reductionist. Altagracía and Rosa are clearly not univalent beings who merely wish to live the gendered 'inside' life of a middle-class family, which many view as isolating[31]. Rather, they are vivacious, independent women with a strong sense of rights and self-determination. Their brand of respectability is not merely a desire to emulate the middle class. Like the more privileged classes, they would like to be able to choose how they engage with respectability and reputation, particularly as socio-economic changes increase the uncertainties of everyday life. It is *oppositional* in the sense that they struggle against the life of reputation that they have been born into. Their engagement with La Ciénaga's moral geography is best understood in light of their limited choice.

Hombre de la casa

Altagracía's concern for respectability and domesticity is by no means exclusive to women. While Dominican notions of masculinity are centred on reputation and the street, men also aspire to respectability and use reputation strategically to achieve it. In some ways the tendency toward respectability can be more pressing for men because they feel more strongly the threat of reputation and its potential to impinge upon their life chances. They struggle with inherited notions of masculinity as they attempt to balance the risks and benefits of reputation with their aspiration for respectability.

Altagracía's cousin Pedro, who is eighty years old, is a good example of respectability's lengthy presence among working class men. He has never been a man of reputation despite having lived regularly in the city since he was in his early twenties. Pedro has been very religious since he was a young man. His family and the Catholic church are central to his respectability. In our interviews, in which he details his life history, his dialogue is punctuated at intervals with prayers. Although he

[31] By 'traditional middle-class life', I mean an ideal of a nuclear family, where the husband is the head of the household and his wife does not work. In Santo Domingo many such families live in apartments and are viewed by many *cienigüeros* as more socially isolated.

cannot see well and is partially deaf, Pedro attends Mass twice weekly and reads his bible every day. Pedro views himself as coming from a poor but respectable family:

> The men in my family live simply, thanks to God. I don't drink, I don't dance. I don't hang around in the street. I am a man of the house, not a shameless man, a charlatan. We aren't the type of men who chase women. Perhaps one is poor, but to be poor isn't a sin. (Pedro)

Pedro's description of his family's men presents them as distinctly *not* in the realm of reputation; nor does he give any apologies for not conforming to what Wilson viewed as a central component of male working-class Caribbean life. He associates domesticity with religion, claiming that poverty is no excuse for living a licentious life. One may not have resources, but one can find solace in family and God, rather than partaking of the street's *corrupción* (immoral behaviour). Yet, like Altagracía, Pedro has lived a mobile and colourful life. He migrated to the city when he was a young man and spent many years working at odd jobs. He is a gifted orator and tells a repertoire of stories involving run-ins with authority and movement between the city and the country. Pedro was arrested twice for not carrying an identity card, once under Trujillo and again under Balaguer. Each time he spent three days or so in La Victoria, Santo Domingo's notorious jail that is featured in the book and film *La Fiesta del Chivo* (*The Feast of the Goat)* (2000) by Mario Vargas Llosa. He tells how on another occasion he escaped arrest:

> There was a group of Trujillo's assassins called The Owl who would do damage by night. If they found people on the street from 10pm onwards they would blow them away. And this one day, normally I would be home by then but I was out late. I had to walk eight kilometres home because [public] cars were hard to come by at that hour.
>
> So, I was walking down the street when they came on top of me. I was scared but I told them, "I haven't done anything wrong or suspicious". They were tall and one was *prieto* [black]. Another had blue eyes. He looked at me and said, "He seems like a man who is searching for work". I had a hammock to sleep in and a machete. They didn't ask me anything, they just turned around and left! So I went running in the other direction so that

> when they returned they wouldn't find me there, I ran to my house, which was already close by, and I stayed there.

Pedro's stories demonstrate a conflict between the dictatorship's agenda and the realities of everyday life. Trujillo was the great domesticator: in his bid to control Dominican life entirely, he restricted freedom of movement and made the streets dangerous for ordinary people (Derby 1998). But in controlling movement, he limited men's ability to earn a livelihood and increased their need to be courageous and take risks, a central feature of Dominican masculinity. Throughout his life, Pedro has had to take many risks, but like Altagracía, most were more from necessity than choice, and he settled on a domestic life as soon as he was able. Pedro's religiosity throughout his life has been a way of coping with the stresses and uncertainties of poverty. It does not diminish his masculinity; rather it instils respect in him as a serious man.

Pedro's sons have also adopted a home-centred stance. In the urban milieu, being an *hombre de la casa* (man of the house) takes on a particular salience as a means of distancing oneself from social degradation associated with poor barrios. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the criminalisation of the barrios threatens men whose livelihood depends upon respectability. Though Wilson acknowledges that reputation always involves some measure of illegality, socio-economic changes in Santo Domingo blur the boundaries between streetwise men and criminals.

Samuel and Antonio's local networks are family-centred. On most afternoons they gather with some of their male relatives in the backyard to share news and drink strong, sweet Dominican coffee. Antonio and Samuel may visit other people in the evenings, but more commonly they stay at home to receive a regular swathe of visitors. Their parents' house is something of a locus for family and friends to *hablar vaina* (speak rubbish, gossip) and organise cooperative work on their houses. Both Antonio and Samuel follow their father's example and restrict their movements to the barrio's main streets, unless they have a good reason to visit abajo, claiming that it is dangerous (see following chapter for more detail). Their mother, Felicia, discourages them from walking around abajo at night for fear that they will be arrested, or even murdered, by trigger-happy police. Local events

such as the robbery of the club de billard can also be a disincentive to movement and street life. Antonio refuses to visit the billiards club at the entrance to the barrio, claiming that it is too caliente. Samuel is not so cautious as Antonio: he argues that he knows all the delincuentes, so they will not rob or shoot him unless they do not recognize him because they are on drugs. This requires knowledge of how to negotiate a range of social situations, including knowing the local delincuentes and the motoconchistas personally so he can return safely to the barrio at night, networking effectively with other students and his professors, or negotiating a business deal. Although Samuel is protective of his respectability, he deploys a number of reputation's characteristics, including shrewdness, adaptability, flexibility, oral skills and movement. In essence, Samuel enacts a form of masculinity that is normative for the middle class, shunning elements associated with working-class reputation. But on the occasions that Samuel visits abajo during the daytime, he often gets mistaken for an outsider - a middle-class Dominican from a respectable suburb or even a foreigner - due to his light skin, articulate manner of speaking and neat appearance. Samuel finds this misrecognition insulting, since he was one of the first people to be born in the barrio and expresses a strong loyalty to it. Symbolically cast out of the world he was born into, Samuel feels that he is perched between two classes and not a full member of either.

Samuel aspires to gain good employment and a middle-class lifestyle, which would allow him to stay off the street and immerse himself in the social world on a voluntary rather than an obligatory basis. This social mobility would allow him to overcome the limitations of emplacement and his lack of choice as a resident of a poor barrio. In contrast to Samuel, Antonio concentrates on placemaking *within* the community. While he has many ideas for advancement, he is conservative in their implementation. In some ways, Antonio defends his respectability too closely. This is evident in conversation between his mother Felicia and Altagracía at the beginning of the previous chapter, when Felicia and Altagracía expressed frustration at Antonio's lack of initiative. In their view, Antonio loses opportunities for advancement because he does not take risks. Being an hombre de la casa is a legitimate goal, but the women are well aware that the practice of reputation is often necessary to secure this position. This requires a certain amount of separation of reputation from the moral geography: the deployment of enough reputation can increase an individual's socio-

economic mobility, but too much reputation results in emplacement as a marginal character on the fringes of social life. It is to this liminality that I now turn.

Street Life

Samuel and Antonio's position is typical of many young men in the barrio, who are trying to build up a respectable life and all that it entails. But the practice of reputation as Wilson described it is also live and well and thriving on the streets of Santo Domingo. It is embodied in the *tíguere* (tiger), a liminal character who Christian Krohn-Hansen describes as 'a survivor in his environment [….] both an everyday hero and a sort of trickster' (1996b:108-9). Like his feline namesake, he is strong, cunning and commands respect. The tíguere has positive and negative forms: he is at once admired for his courage and shrewdness, and reviled for his manipulation of others to meet his own ends. He shares many characteristics with Wilson's man of 'reputation', such as being a good orator, skilful and promiscuous. The most striking difference is that *tigüeraje* (tiger-like behaviour) does not operate as an alternative to colonial values, as Wilson suggested for Providencia. Whereas Wilson's men of reputation were forging a place against social norms, dominated by the colonial system, the tíguere appeared in a nation that was long independent. It is more akin to Miller's (1994) transient figure, especially in that its importance – and ambivalence – have increased in response to socioeconomic change and a growing sense of rupture. Yet being a tíguere is also very much concerned with livelihood as a means for self-realization.

Christian Krohn-Hansen (1996a) writes that the term tíguere first appeared among working class men in Santo Domingo during the 1930s, when Trujillo's tight control necessitated innovative and courageous evasion tactics. Although the type is urban-based, it draws heavily upon rural values of masculinity comprising five main features: the rural man must have courage, be visible in the public sphere, be a seducer but also a good father and husband, have excellent oratory skills, and be serious and sincere (Krohn-Hansen 1996b). These qualities are evident in the urban tíguere and most are also part of being an hombre de la casa. The primary distinctions between the two male types are their social networking and spatial scope: whereas the hombre de la casa associates

primarily with his close family and often attends church, the tíguere must be visible on the street and network with other men.

In its positive form, the term "tíguere" is used throughout Dominican society to admire individuals' skills, style, or cunning. For example, if a person makes a good speech, wins a game of dominoes in style, or makes a good deal, then he or she may receive the praise '*que tíguere!'* meaning 'what a tiger!' Krohn-Hansen points out that it may be used admiringly in reference to a doctor or a minister, and it is increasingly used in relation to women. For example, Steven Gregory relates how a Dominican man described his one-year-old daughters as 'mas tíguere' (more tiger-like) than his five-year-old daughter 'because she only rarely smiled or cried and seemed to possess a more forceful personality' (Gregory 2007:41). The flexibility of the term *tíguere* allows it to cross class and gender boundaries to become a master symbol of Dominican identity. The Dominican journalist Lipe Collado, author of *El Tíguere Dominicano* (1992), notes that Dominicans in New York are often collectively referred to as 'tígueres' because they use the phrase so regularly. In its positive use, then, the tíguere is a normative character in Dominican popular culture.

In its negative form, tigüeraje is put to the service of delincuencia. Tigüeraje is spoken about as a manifestation of crisis due to economic instability and overcrowding in poor neighbourhoods. In this negative manifestation, the tíguere is a young man who uses his cunning in crime towards individualistic ends. Such young men form gangs who take control of abajo and, in the evening, control the streets throughout the barrio. This negative tíguere is associated with imported goods and clothing from the United States, such as baseball caps and designer trainers. Tígueres embody conspicuous consumption with their motorbikes, latest mobile phones, guns and well-styled hair. They are marked by their gender (male), age (approximately 15-30), clothes (brands such as Nike) and masculine accessories (motorbikes and guns).

By spending scarce money on consumer goods, the tíguere may oppose middle class views that the poor should behave prudently, but he is also criticized by his fellow barrio residents. One of Antonio's complaints about people who live abajo is that their values are inverted: they will spend

their money *divertiendose* (enjoying themselves), including buying status symbols like guns and powerful stereos that mark them out as having reputation, rather than improving their houses and truly progressing. They are criticized for having lost faith in Dominican values, turning to the ephermality of the street rather than the permanency of the house and family life. 'Respectable' residents draw a connection between tigüeraje, crime, and antisocial behaviour, claiming that an increased focus on consumption at the expense of family has led young men to steal in order to obtain status goods, as well as neglecting family life. Thus, individualism and consumption are derided as a loss of traditional values. This is largely symbolic: all Dominicans want to consume, but not at the expense of sociality.

Despite these extremes, in everyday practice tigüeraje normally entails a style of life and a means of livelihood in difficult circumstances. The tiger is a revealing symbol of the position that many barrio dwellers find themselves in when confronted with a society that is ready to condemn them. Through his knowledge and his toughness, the tiger has the ability to resist and overcome, two very necessary survival tactics in the barrios of Santo Domingo. I suggest that tigüeraje is about making a living and is comparable to a respectable use of reputation. Unable to gain permanent employment, young men develop the persona of a tíguere to make a living from informal work on the street. Steven Gregory describes how Boca Chica's hustlers struggle against a 'spatial economy of difference' (2007: 50) that separates tourists and locals, excluding the poor from the profits of the tourist industry. Tourism police patrol the local beaches, ensuring that locals do not enter the zone in front of the hotels unless they are licensed vendors. To make a living, hustlers must circumvent these barriers to gain access to tourists and sell them services such as shopping tours or sex.

In La Ciénaga, the *motoconchista* (motorcycle taxi driver) embodies the liminality of the tíguere. Given the barrio's lack of transport, motoconchistas provide an essential service ferrying passengers from the barrio to the city. They are respectable insofar as they work for a living, but their street work entails the transgression of borders and makes them privy to knowledge of criminal activity. Being a motoconchista is a dangerous job, and it depends upon extensive knowledge of the streets and their people. They cannot operate without the consent of other motoconchistas, who jealously

guard their occupation from newcomers so as to maintain sufficient clientele. Motoristas work out of sites where their friends also work, and support each other in negotiations with passengers. They also build up networks along their routes to inform them about what is taking place in the street: whether the police are out booking people with defective bikes, or whether delincuentes have been operating in certain places. Like Gregory's tígueres, the motoconchistas' tigüeraje involves transgressing the borders of moral geographies, simultaneously providing a means of livelihood and a source of danger.

Tigüeraje allows a degree of self-creation, transgresses the boundaries of the local moral geography and makes a claim for mobility in the wider social hierarchy. Its resistances are limited. It is the struggle of the marginal – the 'survivor in his environment' - defined by difficulty and the need to *resolver* (resolve problems). In its negative form, it shows few signs of the egalitarianism that Wilson identified in reputation as it generates closed networks with their own exclusionary signifiers. For example, its focus on consumer culture affirms the desirability of an elite lifestyle. Practitioners of this negative tigüeraje remain socially marginal. In its positive form, it is inclusive in the sense that tigüeraje is a legitimate role in Dominican popular culture, yet it generally entails limited socioeconomic mobility and does not aim at structural transformation. The performance of tigüeraje, then, generates no more power over representation or social position than respectability. Like respectability, it is a strategy and, to a significant extent, a 'choice of the necessary' , through which people of limited means and a precarious economic position attempt to take control of their lives.

Walking In-Between

Thus far I have presented respectability and reputation as value complexes that tend to reproduce social stratifications, but that are more multivalent in practice than in discourse. Both are deployed as styles of life and means for livelihood, depending upon people's values and aims, and restricted by the limited choices available to poor barrio residents. In enacting 'transcendence', respectability opposes the demonization of the poor. Reputation, with its focus on 'transience', emphasizes the

right of the poor to engage with the modern world of consumption and movement. Neither value complex appears to pose a radical challenge to social stratifications; indeed, they appear to *reproduce* them within the barrio, as barrio residents have little power to influence what these classifications mean.

In this section, I suggest that respectability deserves another look. I argue that, within La Ciénaga today, the institutions and practices of respectability have more potential than reputation to challenge social stratifications. Such challenges involve the revaluation of space and the people who occupy it by breaking down the divisions between arriba/abajo through physical movement between them, contesting racial stereotypes, and insisting on the possibility of co-existence of both respectability and reputation, within the one being and both in practice and discourse. Like house-building, this has the effect of constituting a politics of place in terms of legitimacy and inclusivity, which as I will show in the next chapter challenges Santo Domingo's wider moral geography.

I present a case study of Amélie, who offers some intriguing differences to other practitioners of respectability. As a member of the Catholic church and a Haitian, Amélie is implicated on both sides of the barrio's moral geography. Amélie openly challenges the moral geography by insisting upon free movement through space and maintaining her right to respectability despite her ethnicity. She contests the naturalization of La Ciénaga's moral geography, pointing to a more fundamental politics of difference that reproduces inequalities through ideologies of race, class and gender[32]. She is not alone in this quest. Within La Ciénaga, the Catholic church in particular works to combat discrimination and redraw the barrio's symbolic order. Outside the barrio, growing Black consciousness and women's movements attempt to bring these inequalities to light (Cassá 1995). Amélie and her sister, Claire, are two of the church's most committed members in La Ciénaga, spending much of their time *trabajando para la comunidad* (working for the community), a task that involves extensive knowledge of the barrio and networking with its people. For the sisters, the church is a vehicle for personal and social change.

[32] In particular pointing to the government's role in *antihaitianismo* (see also Chapter 7).

Amélie herself is a paradigm of difference in the Dominican Republic as a poor, black, Haitian woman. Her status as a 'stranger' (Simmel cited in Wolff 1950) grants her the flexibility to contest social boundaries. Simmel's definition of the stranger is someone who belongs to the group yet does not belong:

> He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself. (cited in Wolff:402)

Amélie meets the criteria of a stranger. She belongs in La Ciénaga because she has lived there for some twenty-seven years and is deeply involved in community networks. She stands out due to her differences: she is dark-skinned and speaks with an accent, and is known to be Haitian. Amélie brings with her qualities that are not local in that she has a 'different' appearance (though this is contextual), speaks another language and expresses divergent values. She is more mobile than most Dominicans, especially women, since she regularly takes trips to visit relatives in different parts of the Dominican Republic and her parents back in Haiti. Simmel wrote that the stranger cannot be an 'owner of soil', and, while Amélie owns a house, her right to own it is contested by those around her. Amélie embodies the 'distance and nearness, indifference and involvement' (ibid.:404) that Simmel marks out as the qualities of the stranger.

Amélie was brought up by her godmother in a small town in Haiti's south where she attended Mass and helped her godmother run a small shop. Her elder sister, Claire, grew up with their parents on a small farm in the hills. Despite Amélie's more advantageous position in town, she did not learn to read and write, while her older sister is literate. When Amélie was fourteen, her godmother died, and Amélie returned to live with her parents. She continued attending mass and was confirmed soon after. Amélie moved to La Ciénaga in 1981 and lives with her Haitian husband, two of her own children (who have been naturalized as Dominicans), and two of her younger sister's children (who have not been naturalized). Her younger sister lives in Higuey and cannot look after her children

because she works long days plaiting tourists' hair on the beaches of Punta Cana. Amélie's older sister Claire moved from Haiti to La Ciénaga in 1984.

Amélie most strongly felt her status as an outsider when she and her husband constructed their new house. Originally, both sisters settled abajo, but around five years ago Amélie and her husband secured a plot of land on the edge of La Clarín. It is a tiny, three-room concrete house that they built themselves with money her husband earned selling clothes in the city market. Their neighbours were jealous that Haitians could own a 'good' house, while many Dominicans could not. Recounting an incident on a sugar plantation where a Haitian *bracero* (cane worker) had entrusted his savings to a Dominican who subsequently betrayed him, Amélie defended her right to belong:

> If a Dominican sees that a Haitian has a good house, you know what they do? They look for trouble with them, they kill them or whatever, so that they can take it from them... If I struggle and manage to build my house then nobody should abuse me or look for my [immigration] papers. Leonel's government should take account of this.

Here Amélie draws a clear link between the treatment of Haitians at the national level and their ability to belong in local communities. She suggests that if the Dominican government did not harass Haitians, they would command the same respect as Dominicans for having struggled to achieve a good house. Instead, Amélie feels that her family's position in the barrio is threatened due to the state's position. Their house is located on low ground but it can only be accessed via the high ground of La Clarín, so Amélie legitimately claims to reside arriba. She takes pride in her La Clarín residence and the status it offers her, particularly since her 'good' house and her residential location allow her to defy common stereotypes of Haitians as occupying the worst parts of the barrio and the worst houses.

For Claire and Amélie, the ability of the church to assist her children in obtaining Dominican citizenship and enrolling in school was a major drawcard. Claire describes how, when she found the Catholic church, she found a place in the world for herself and her family:

> When I didn't know the Catholic church I worked hard trying to enrol my children in the school. All my life has been work; I worked hard when I didn't know the Catholic church. Now I have been attending for eleven years. How should I tell you? The church is like my house. I feel very good in it and they help me with anything. They helped me enrol my Haitian children in the school, as they didn't have birth certificates. (Claire)

In the Dominican Republic, thousands of Haitian and Dominican children are excluded from school because they do not have birth certificates to prove their nationality. Under the Dominican constitution, children born in the Dominican Republic are automatically Dominican citizens, but in practice, hospitals have refused to issue birth certificates to children of Haitian parents. The Jesuits have a number of programs to work with Haitians. The church helps Dominican-born children obtain birth certificates, run a Haitian choir (currently directed by a Haitian priest), hold a monthly Mass in Haitian Creole in the church in Guachupita and administer a Haitian Refugee Service in Centro Bonó. Over the years, Claire and her sister Amélie have worked with the church to obtain papers for dozens of Haitian and Dominican children. The church also promotes gender equality, encouraging women to run for leadership roles in local community organisations.

Amélie's illiteracy limits her position in organisations, but her sociability and liveliness make her well suited to community work on the ground. I accompanied Amélie in many of her activities, including church-run classes on pregnancy health and childcare. The *Pastoral Materno-Infantil* (pregnant women's' group) meets once per fortnight in the school. The groups consist of approximately fifteen women who are all at a similar stage of pregnancy. The Catholic church's nuns, who run the school in La Clarín, train community women as 'counsellors' to run the classes using a manual provided by the church. Counsellors are paired up and put in charge of three or four women, for whom they fill out cards with their medical information throughout the woman's pregnancy. Every month, the counsellors visit the homes of the women assigned to them to check on their wellbeing and update their cards.

Amélie uses these visits to conduct other business she has in the barrio, mapping out a route that also includes a selection of friends and relatives, people from the church's Haitian choir, parents of children who needed to obtain birth certificates, and so on. Her rounds abajo were by no means limited to these monthly visits. Abajo is familiar territory to Amélie: it is where her sister lives, and where she lived herself before she and her husband acquired a small parcel of land behind La Clarín. Amélie has no trouble negotiating the muddy alleys that twist through abajo, easily locating the shacks of the various people we are visiting and stopping to gossip with friends along the way.

Amélie's community work and involvement with the church are respectable ventures. But whereas most of her Dominican counterparts avoid the alleyways of abajo, Amélie and Claire exhibit bravado and a range of movement more in keeping with Wilson's 'reputation'. There are many women who are dedicated to *trabajando para la comunidad* (working for the community), but few know the barrio as well as Amélie and Claire. Amélie enacts toughness and freedom by visiting any part of the barrio she chooses, even in the evening. She likes to point out that although she is small, she is not afraid. As a result of their many activities, Amélie and Claire are rarely found at home in the afternoons. Their commitment and mobility do not go unnoticed, and many community women remark of Amélie and Claire that 'these women don't stop at home!' These remarks express both an admiration for the sisters' commitment to the church, and a concern for their wellbeing.

Amélie and Claire view themselves as leaders of a growing trend for women to relinquish their attachment to the domestic sphere in favour of an empowered, street-based sociality. They are able to be leaders precisely because they bring different values, experiences and knowledge to a new locality. Amélie and Claire favourably contrast themselves with Dominican women, who they see as lazy and housebound. In their view, Haitian women possess a stronger culture of mobility due to occupational roles, such as selling goods in the market, which regularly take them away from home. Amélie claims that Haitian women are active compared to Dominican women, and as a result have more spatial knowledge and capabilities.

Amélie's refusal to conform to the barrio's moral geography is legitimated by her role in the Catholic church. The Jesuit priests, who themselves are strangers,[33] also make a point of learning their way around the barrio, and their knowledge generally surpasses that of most residents. The church has an active program of unifying the barrio and raising participation in the least involved sectors, especially in Los Cocos, which has the lowest church attendance. For example, they hold Thursday Mass in a different sector each week, organise for the church's *animadoras* (animators, women who coordinate church events) to reach out to other parts of the community, and encourage people in all the sectors to come to church.

One Thursday Mass I attended was held in a poor area near the river. Around forty people met in a member's small shack, overflowing the garden onto the lane outside. This particular shack sticks in my memory because the owners had constructed the inner walls out of anything they could find, including a large metal Visa sign. After an opening song, we made a procession through the narrow paths, singing an upbeat evangelising song:

> Holy Ghost come and pass by here
> In our community we can't advance
> I am tired of inviting the neighbours of my community
> They don't want to accept the call of Jesus
> No community can advance alone
> Let's all go walking, so that we can arrive
> And see reign the justice that we are all looking for.

Our procession arrived at a *colmadón*, a shop selling alcohol that has an open air dance space consisting of a concrete floor, a tin roof on pillars and plastic chairs. We were greeted by the surprised looks of neighbours and by the priests and their assistants, who had set up an altar and chairs. The rest of Mass was held there after the surrounding residents had been summoned in to participate. The primary purpose of these processions is to increase church attendance, with the

[33] Most of the priests who give Mass in La Ciénaga are Dominicans, but from other parts of the country.

assumption that the church's presence in the sector will also decrease social disorder such as crime. As Claire told me, 'Wherever they put the church, everything changes, because they work skilfully and don't put down the people, they work to touch the people.' In this way, the church is bringing its own version of respectability into traditional arenas of reputation.

Amélie, Claire and the Catholic church are hardly contesting social hierarchy in the manner that Wilson envisaged, yet their practices call into question social stratifications that are objectified onto barrio space. While the church only challenges the state in limited ways, it does deliberately transgress local boundaries. It is of the state and yet not of the state. Its institutional ambiguity both empowers and confines cienigüeros. As the poor's major institutional resort, it mediates the conditions that maintain both respectability and reputation as prominent forms of value. These contestations of the barrio's moral geography create the basis for a class identity that contests a larger moral geography that demonises the barrio. While residents engage in a 'crab antics' for position within the barrio, they are also forced to acknowledge that they are emplaced and enclassed collectively: the class structure does not distinguish the respectable urban poor from the tígueres. In the next chapter, I detail how respectability counters this moral geography and, furthermore, argue that it is not just a dualism of Santo Domingo, but an ideology with a politics.

Chapter 6

Violence, Social Classification and the State

> Urban residents possess a culture sprinkled with ambiguity and marked by the irrationality of a process of modernization that pretends to be inclusive but actually promotes a certain symbolic exclusion of the popular urban sectors. (Isis Duarte in Cela S.J. 1997:12)

In the course of my residency in La Ciénaga, I heard many stories about the dangers of the barrios and the people who live in them. One particularly memorable conversation took place when I visited the *palacio de la policía nacional* (national police palace) in search of crime statistics. Having explained to reception what I was looking for, I was directed past desks with manual typewriters to the office of an overweight middle-aged lieutenant who sat at his wooden desk looking at papers, while an assistant worked at a keyboard in the corner. We shook hands and I explained my research. 'You live in La Ciénaga?' he asked me, and started laughing. By now I was used to such reactions. This time, however, he pulled out an overhead with a map of La Ciénaga and pointed to small circles stamped on it. 'Each of these circles is a place where someone was murdered', he explained, 'You see? You're living in a *barrio caliente* (hot barrio). Hasn't anything happened to you down there?' 'No', I responded, 'the people are very nice'. He continued chuckling to himself, wished me luck, and promised me that his assistant would help me with the

data I required.[34] It was at this point that I realised the extent of the difficulties that cienigüeros faced in their relationships with outsiders. If this lieutenant was convinced that La Ciénaga and its residents are unequivocally dangerous, then how do cienigüeros navigate their way through the city's social relations?

The moral geography at work in La Ciénaga – that denies respectability in the face of hot spots and tigers – in fact reflects a discourse tied to social class that is pervasive in Santo Domingo. This wider moral geography entails a politics of oppositions, discussed in terms of (dis)reputable barrios abajo versus the (relatively) respectable city arriba (see Taylor 2009a). I suggest that this is a form of discourse through which the middle class seeks to maintain its status and social distance from the poor. The demonization of the barrios naturalizes the exclusion of the poor on the basis of their immorality and the threat they pose to social order and progress. But the discourse goes further than this in suggesting that, while the rich can legitimately access progress in the city, the poor do not belong to the city unless they have employment, because the conditions in which they live do not allow them to assume moral responsibilities as citizens. They are denied the right to partake in modernity and progress.

The city's moral geography is not a fixed representation, but a process in which competing groups draw upon historical repertoires to realise value, positive and negative, and define their positions in the social order. Bourdieu has noted that 'classificatory systems are thus the stake of struggles between the groups they characterize and counterpose, who fight over them while striving to turn them to their own advantage' (Bourdieu 1984:477). These classifications 'derive their ideological strength from the fact that they refer back … to the most fundamental oppositions within the social order;' the haves and have-nots for instance (Bourdieu 1984:469). Cienigüeros engage with this classification and seek to redraw its geographical boundaries. As migrants from the country, they call on a shared habitus and the positive valuing of rural life in national culture in order to recast themselves within an urban environment; that is, as migrants to the city who retain the moral order

[34] After repeated visits, the assistant eventually emailed me some information, but it was not adequate, and nor could I find the information elsewhere. I eventually concluded that the national police do not release such statistics, if indeed they compile them at all.

of rural life. In a number of important ways, residents of La Ciénaga seek to overcome antagonistic oppositions and locate themselves closer to the domain of a respectable middle class. This re-classification involves an attempt to move themselves from the margins of the status order to a position in its middle reaches.

My analysis will show that this struggle over classification revolves around two oppositions: one between *abajo* and *arriba,* the other between *el campo* (the countryside) and *el barrio.* Each of the oppositions negotiated in this struggle bears on the way in which some cienigüeros seek to define their respectability, implicitly their citizenship, and their right to progress in the city, both for themselves and their children. Nonetheless, this struggle is bracketed by the role of the state and the manner in which its violence has been visited on La Ciénaga and also projected onto cienigüeros as disreputable residents in the city. By virtue of military and police interventions, the state protects the barrio from itself, while simultaneously defining it in its totality as deviant and dangerous. The state's power, including its calumnies that convince the respectable middle class that the barrios are fearful places, means that the struggle over classification is ongoing for cienigüeros. Therefore, although local politics (concerned with services and aligned with the Catholic church) has had some success in La Ciénaga, it does not and possibly cannot fundamentally challenge the classifications that are in play. This circumstance prompts residents of La Ciénaga to move towards a centre or conservative political position that complements respectability.

Violence and the (Dis)Reputable Poor

At seven o'clock in the morning, the streets of La Ciénaga are bustling with activity and the aroma of fresh coffee, as thousands of residents make their way arriba into the city to work. An army of women slip off quietly on foot or *motoconcho* (motorbike taxi) in the dawn's light for their jobs as domestic servants, leaving their sleeping children in the care of others. Rosa is among them, walking forty minutes to the house of an elderly bachelor to earn money through a hard day's cooking and cleaning. Carlos and Silvio also leave with sports bags full of mobile phone accessories, hoping to catch willing buyers in the morning traffic on the city's main arteries. Later,

Samuel will dress neatly in a shirt and slacks and head off to class at his private university in Gazcue, meeting afterwards with his fellow students to discuss his idea for a cooperative function hire business. Rosa's three young children slowly stumble into Altagracía's house, rubbing their eyes and asking for breakfast.

While many people have joined this daily exodus of the employed, underemployed and microentrepeneurs, many more remain behind. Gaining steady employment is never easy and it is particularly difficult for poor urban residents who live abajo in the barrios around the edge of the Ozama River. As Samuel has discovered, living in a barrio that is associated with *delincuencia* (delinquency) and *tigüeraje* (tiger-like behaviour) is not a good way to get a job. Once in the past, Samuel was rejected from a job on the basis of his residence. He now tells prospective employers that he is from a neighbouring suburb, since his *cédula* (identity card) only states his district, not his address. This way he avoids astonished comments such as 'You're from La Ciénaga? But isn't it dangerous down there?' Much of this astonishment is due to his appearance: he is light-skinned, well-dressed and articulate and therefore does not fit the stereotype of the young, moreno, Nike-wearing, motorbike-riding, barrio-dwelling tíguere. Still, his pleasing appearance counts for little in a fierce job market where he is competing against middle-class kids who come from 'good' neighbourhoods and have private educations. Like Goldstein's (2003) favela residents in Brazil who hid their residency, barrio residents find that any chance they have for inter-class mobility requires a performance of middle-class respectability. One's identity - and employability - is judged by one's appearance, residency and social connections.

Demetrio, a young moreno man in his late twenties, is not attempting to enter the private job market. Instead, he has a job with Ciudad Alternativa, a non-government organisation that seeks to transform the city into an equitable place for the poor to live (see Chapter 3). Among other responsibilities, he works in their library, which stocks books, pamphlets, videos and other media that relate to the city's barrios. He is motivated in his work by the shotgun pellets that are embedded in his upper chest, a legacy of police repression of protests in La Ciénaga during 1995. Between March and May in 1995, Demetrio was involved in a series of protests against the construction of a

sewerage treatment plant in La Ciénaga. Residents were concerned about the health risks that the plant could pose as it was located next door to their homes (García 1995b). On 11 March, 1995, El Siglo reported that the protests of the preceding three days had left two people dead (a young man shot in the head by police and a woman who died from a reaction to tear gas) and dozens had been injured in clashes with the police the day before (García 1995a). Alex was among the people who were shot.[35] He is now making his career through engagement with local welfare and community politics.

Alex's and Samuel's stories highlight the range of problems that cienigüeros face as residents of a poor barrio. They are both experiencing the effects of living in a barrio where material underdevelopment, marginal geographic position and violent history prompt outsiders to classify it as dangerous and immoral. As I discussed in Chapter Three, La Ciénaga is centrally located yet geographically marginalised at the bottom of a cliff, with only one proper entrance. Its geographic position provides natural boundaries for its separation from the city as a barrio of ill-repute. Furthermore, its poverty is visible from the bridge, and protests such as those against the sewerage treatment plant have added to La Ciénaga's reputation as a dangerous place. The sewerage plant and the protests against it are also symbolic of how the barrio is perceived: dirty, disorderly and undesirable. The barrio's problems with waste and inadequate infrastructure communicate a disorder that threatens the city's long quest for modernity. Notwithstanding, it is an irony that as La Ciénaga has become more secure as an urban settlement during the past decade, its reputation as a site of fear and violence seems to have grown. This dynamic inter-class and city-wide classification bears on cienigüeros as much as their material circumstance. As their demands and representation have become more organized, their location among the disreputable poor and violent, seems to have become more securely fixed.

[35] On the 14 March 1995, Balaguer promised to relocate fifty families who lived immediately adjacent to the plant (García 1995a), but protesters continued to disrupt work on the sewerage plant, pacifically occupying the plant on the 8th April. They eventually retired at the behest of an engineer who reiterated Balaguer's promise.

In a survey I undertook on Santo Domingo's waterfront, the *malecón*, La Ciénaga was cited among the five most dangerous barrio in the city (Figure 1). However, this common designation among outsiders seems to have less to do with La Ciénaga's actual crime rate than it does with its socio-economic characteristics and geographic location. According to my survey of media reports over a ten-year period from 1995 to 2005, its neighbour Guachupita has a much higher rate of violent crime (especially gang violence), yet La Ciénaga is more feared. While media stories are often sympathetic to La Ciénaga's poverty, public perceptions jump quickly from sympathy to crises in the barrios, to fear of crime and violence. The incongruity between discourse and reality struck me from the beginning of my fieldwork, when a taxi driver reluctantly delivered me there, admonishing me that I would be 'murdered for my shoes'. Such comments followed me throughout my fieldwork, and these, coupled with references to the barrios as 'caves of thieves', alerted me to the difficulties that cienigüeros, particularly young men, have in convincing outsiders that they are people of worth.

Poor urban residents and the spaces they occupy have long been considered a retrograde force and threat to civilization in Santo Domingo (Martínez-Vergne 2005), but during the past decade crime has become a major source of concern in the city. It is not uncommon to hear residents swear that ten years ago there was no crime at all in Santo Domingo. When I asked city residents what they had heard about the barrios in the media, I was told that 'almost every day you hear in the press that there have been attacks, bullets fired, it's dangerous' (male, retired, resident of Zona Oriental, a middle class area); that there are 'lots of deaths, lots of attack' (female, client services, resident of Charles de Gaulle, a middle class area); and that 'every day there are deaths and attacks, they rape girls, there are drugs and everything. These are lost sectors' (male, seller from Ensanche La Paz, a middle class area).

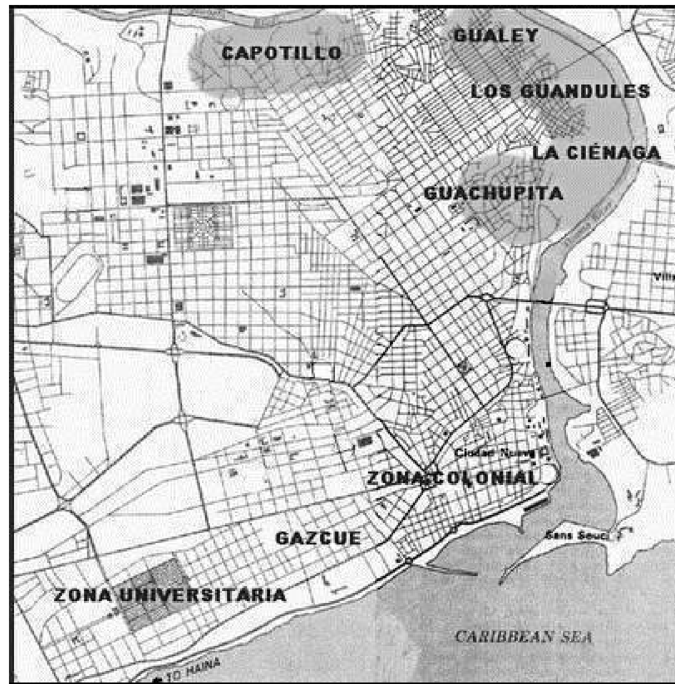

Figure 15. Map of the National District in Santo Domingo.

The grey area denotes the five sectors that my survey respondents considered to be the most 'dangerous': Capotillo, Gualey, Los Guandules, la Ciénaga and Guachupita. All but Guachupita border the Ozama River. Guachupita and La Ciénaga are around three kilometres from the Zona Colonial. Modified from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/yates/yates.asp, accessed 12/5/06.

Crime and violence are reported daily in the media, which it associates closely with poverty in the barrios. In an article entitled 'Who are we and where are we going? Society lives in panic with the rule of crime', the author writes:

> Amen to the white-skinned delinquents and the powerful traffickers of drugs and contraband, among the principal actors of criminality, who form a new human specimen, the Dominican forged in marginal urbanism who elects crime as a formula of survival, for vital necessities, to drug themselves or to satiate materialistic anxieties.
>
> There are many girls and boys without future prospects, marked since infancy by accentuated deprivations and without opportunities of social ascension, children of slums, zones perturbed by gloomy nights, by gangs and "nations" [a type of gang], armed heavily,

> dangerously drugged, whose revenges and confrontations to dominate places to sell narcotics create panic, spilling blood in the marginal sectors. (Isa y Eladio Pichardo 2005, my translation)

The story is illustrated with a photo of a man with a cloth around his face, crouched down and pointing a gun. In this and many other media reports, the 'marginal sectors' are depicted as war zones in which children are destined to become criminals as a result of deprivation and first-hand exposure to crime. As is the case in other cities around the world, poor young people in Santo Domingo are perceived to be over-urbanized; that is, they enact both the positive and negative aspects of urban living through consuming the resources available to them and using crime to gain those withheld from them. The phrase 'white-skinned delinquents' suggests that Dominicans can no longer gain security from blaming 'morenos' for crime, since 'white' Dominicans are also corrupt. It also refers to a popular belief that Dominicans who have been deported from the United States have brought back with them knowledge of crime that was previously unknown in the Dominican Republic. This discourse not only posits anti-social behaviour as un-Dominican, but links it with globalization and especially the US interventions that many see as actually exacerbating instability in the Dominican Republic.

Crime in the 'marginal sectors' would perhaps not cause so much concern if it remained bounded within the spaces occupied by the poor. However, newspapers suggest that now crime overflows the borders of the barrios and is impinging upon middle class suburbs. An article in Listín Diario dated the 10th February, 2005, complained:

> Under a leafy green tree in Gazcue, the residents cannot sleep in peace. The incertitude of being assaulted at whatever moment prevents them. The wave of robberies, assaults and attacks, characteristic of almost all the popular [poor] barrios of the city of Santo Domingo, have arrived at this historic middle class sector. (Pérez Reyes 2005)

The problem is posed as one of the flow of danger from certain city areas to others: crime and instability have arrived in middle class areas, whereas once it was the province of the poor. Poor and well-off residents alike are taking measures to secure their homes. Today, the vast majority of dwellings in well-off areas have bars on every window, garden walls with metal spikes, locked gates on the front door and 'rape gates' in the hallway leading to the bedrooms. Most middle to upper class apartment blocks and many houses station security guards out front, particularly in the night. In his article entitled 'Open the doors,' Gautreauz Piñeyro comments:

> Years ago, the majority of houses remained with their doors open and the danger of someone entering to rob the house was perhaps one in a thousand. Is there such a large economic bonanza that Dominicans have locked themselves up in their houses with bars, electronic alarm systems, motorized gates and other modes of protection? Almost without noticing we have allowed ourselves to get cornered: robbery, assault, attacks, in one word, crime appears to have won the game over decent people, working people. (Gautreaux Piñeyro 2005)

The risk of physical harm alone does not explain the widespread fear. According to Inter-American Development Bank data, in the year 2000, the homicide rate in the Dominican Republic was 11.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, not far above the world average of 10.7, while Jamaica's homicide rate was 35.0 per 100,000 inhabitants (Chaowsangrat 11th March 2007). People are disturbed not only because they feel they face greater danger, but because they feel that the national character is changing. The image of the Dominican as friendly and sociable, mixing with neighbours on the street, is threatened as people retreat behind locked and barred doors. Both influential media and some among the middle class identify the immediate cause of this as the barrios and especially La Ciénaga.

The opposition between abajo and arriba that, applied to individuals, can be rendered in terms of reputation and respectability, assumes greater political weight as a form of classification that actually extends across the city and distinguishes respectable middle class life from that of the

disreputable poor. In a world characterized by increasing uncertainty, the middle class who live arriba classify urban space as safe or dangerous, and thereby seek to isolate zones of insecurity. As a result, the urban poor abajo have become problematic and sometimes dangerous strangers.

Residents of La Ciénaga find this prevailing moral geography troubling, not least because it disadvantages them in the search for jobs and also undermines their local social and political initiatives. Therefore, they seek to counter these negative valuations of the barrio. Yet their task is a difficult one, made even more complex by the existence of a second form of classification and moral geography - that of the country and the city.

Morality and Corruption in *el campo* and *el barrio*

Dependence on agricultural production and late industrialization meant that Dominican cities remained small until the 1960s. As a result, many city dwellers of all social classes are first or second generation migrants who retain strong connections with their relatives in the country and respect for rural life and rural people. Often seen as backward in relation to the city, *el campo* is also represented as more innocent. It is imagined as a place that even today remains largely uncorrupted by the negative aspects of modern urban life. Unlike the tourists who flock to the Dominican Republic's beaches, Dominicans take advantage of public holidays to visit relatives in the country and bathe in the freshwater rivers. They see themselves as escaping from the city's ills, including its pollution, noise, overcrowding, stress, disease and crime.

Both nationally and among the urban population, el campo has been cast as the heartland of Dominican culture. While the city is the site for citizenship and the production of the nation's modern future, el campo represents an idealized past (Derby 1998; Martínez-Vergne 2005). El campo was the site of the great events in Dominican history, such as the 1844 War of Independence against Haiti, the birth of national leaders, and the development of folklore (Andrade 1969; Sagás 2000; Torres-Saillant 2000). As a result, a romanticized rendering of el campo dominates representations of Dominican culture in written history, painting, and music. Peasant production has

been central to Dominican social history and so rural people have long been seen as major players in the development of this culture. Martínez-Vernge writes of how, at the beginning of the 19th century, the 'composite ideal Dominican was based in the countryside' (2005:21) and included characteristics like colour (more white than black), affinity with Europe (as opposed to the US) and love of country (hard work, family and morality).

In this rendering, peasants become respectable citizens, made so by the centralized governance and nation-building that replaced caudillo politics. Indeed, the peasant-citizen has been a crucial part in constructing the dominicanidad that stands in contrast to the denigrated Haitian. The large, central valley known as Cibao is particularly associated with the ideal Dominican peasant as its fertility made it a popular settlement site for European immigrants. Today, relations with the United States have eclipsed ties with Europe, but notions of the authentic Dominican archetypal character continue to be based on these imaginings of el campo. Country people, particularly those with lighter skin, are given a privileged place in 'the nation', as carriers of culture and morality.

Urban classes privilege the countryside for different reasons. For the poor, romanticising the beauty and morality of the countryside is an escape from the pressures of urban poverty. However, for most the aspiration is to visit the countryside, rather than return there permanently. For the elite, the ownership of a large ranch with a grand house, swimming pool and servants declares their class position in a manner reminiscent of a rural past. In fact, by co-opting productive labour and controlling space in the city, the wealthy reproduce the power inherent in the patron-client relationships of the past, but minus the social responsibility that such relationships entailed. Privileging the country strengthens national culture and class stability, essential survival tools for a middle class that has been tested historically by economic and political crises. Since many middle class professionals come from peasant backgrounds, romanticizing the countryside legitimates their roles in terms of a notional integrity rooted in *el campo.* Desirable national and thereby inter-class society is projected onto the country (and the past) rather than the city (and its present or future).

While the rural poor hold an important place in Dominican social imaginings, their respectability is not readily transferable from the country to the city, or from one occupational niche to another. More prosperous residents propose that the urban milieu has a catastrophic effect on peasants who migrate. The passage from el campo to el barrio is one that strips the poor of their previous moral strengths and leaves them corrupted and dangerous in the urban setting. In the words of a male street vendor, 'the barrios are where the tígueres are, people who come from the country for the capital, and those that stay are these delincuentes, no-one else' (male, street vendor, Ensanche La Paz, a middle class area). The ideological message that comes from such observers is that, whereas the middle class and others demonstrate their ability to transport the virtues of the countryside into the city, residents of the barrios show that this is not possible for the poor. In fact, their limited education and resources mark them as residents out-of-place in the city, as rubbish in the midst of modernity that, ideally, should be swept aside or at least returned to a rural milieu. The poor are perceived to bring from the country its backwardness but neither the strength nor resolve to 'move forward'.

These issues are acknowledged, but rendered differently in the remarks of cienigüeros. Their stories of migration from the country to the city suggest that residents try to strike a balance between moral risk and economic success. A story of rapid return to the country, and one of securing a place in La Ciénaga, demonstrate the way in which different individuals address the passage from el campo to el barrio.

Gregorio (Felicia's brother) and his wife moved to La Ciénaga from Cibao as they wanted to give their six-year old daughter a better education. Gregorio makes bottles of *mama juana* (rum with a special type of bark inside) and sells them to tourists in Boca Chica, a beach located thirty minutes' drive from Santo Domingo. La Ciénaga is a much more convenient location for his work than the country, and yet the family lasted just one week in the city. They returned to Cibao, citing the noise, pollution and different social relations as reasons why they did not wish to stay. When they left, Felicia's son Antonio commented to me that the little girl would most likely get very little education in the country, and, like the majority of girls, would grow up to be a rural housewife. When I

expressed concern, he told me that 'there's nothing you can do, it's how things are done in the country. At least there isn't the *corrupción* (immorality) and the *vagabonería* (laziness) that we have here. Look at all the armed men you see walking down this street. Some delincuentes who can't afford a gun put a mobile phone in their trousers to look like one. La Ciénaga is a mess!'

On the other hand, María herself was born in Cibao but has lived in La Ciénaga since 1972. She rarely travels back to the country due to ill health and a busy schedule, though she maintains regular contact with relatives. Felicia works part-time cleaning offices, cooks and cleans for her family, and volunteers tirelessly for the Catholic church. She told me in an interview how she grew up working as a wage labourer, as well as doing most of the domestic work in her house:

> After I grew up I started cutting coffee, growing rice, cutting rice, cutting corn, growing corn, and picking beans, and growing beans. I did everything, everything, everything. It was really hard work, and I also had to cook, fetch water, and clean. We didn't stop all day long. (Felicia)

Felicia's depiction of rural work is shared throughout the community, as virtually all cienigüeros are rural migrants who worked in similar occupations. Work is a central theme in memories of country life and residents draw comparisons with the work they do in the city. Most cienigüeros migrated to the city in search of greater employment opportunities, but in recent years economic crisis has made employment scarce. Country work and life are insurmountably difficult compared to city work, which, though also hard, is 'soft' in comparison to the country.

Working With the Classifications, Contesting Moral Geographies

Given that cienigüeros themselves romanticize the countryside, this discourse presents a major challenge in their struggle to contest prevalent accounts of their milieu as abajo and dangerous in opposition to secure and respectable arriba. Endorsing idealized views of the countryside, barrio residents can be caught in an implied critique of the barrio - in the very forms of stigmatizing

rhetoric that they criticize at other times. One way of addressing this dilemma is to make a clear distinction between abajo and arriba within La Ciénaga, for instance as Altagracía does. Thus, a classification that is city-wide intersects with a national one, and is reapplied within the barrio. Altagracía's strategy can involve distinguishing between the attributes of individuals, parts of La Ciénaga (as we saw in Chapter 5), or between barrios. Another way of addressing the dilemma is to acknowledge that conditions of urban poverty mean that the task of reproducing honoured values within the barrio is indeed hard. However, it is poverty and lack of opportunity, rural as well as urban, that generates this circumstance. This second strategy, in effect, provides a structural critique of the poor's position within the Dominican Republic. It also seeks to reinstate respectability among the poor. It is common for cienigüeros to vacillate between these positions; between a tendency to distance themselves from proximate 'others', while simultaneously declaring the social classifications inaccurate or unjust. I provide examples of each position in turn.

Unlike the totalizing representations of outsiders, cienigüeros differentiate between places and people within their community, viewing some people and places as more or less dangerous than others. For example, Juan commented to me that 'We are not all delinquents, there are plenty of serious people in La Ciénaga'. He further said:

> In reality La Ciénaga doesn't deserve its bad reputation, because we are all human, but lamentably people who don't have anywhere to live have to come to a barrio even though it has a bad reputation. If a person is moral you have to respect them. Even though the area they live in has a bad reputation, you have to recognize that they don't take part in it. (Juan)

Residents of different poor barrios tend to be suspicious of one another, and rarely consider their own barrio to be the most dangerous in the city. For example, residents of Guachupita asked me if it wasn't too dangerous for me to live in La Ciénaga, whereas cienigüeros took extra precautions against thieves when they visited Guachupita. According to many residents, the young men who live in La Ciénaga are not troublemakers, but rather delinquents who come to the barrio from other, more dangerous places for the purpose of making troubling. In a slightly different version, it is

proposed that delinquents commit crime in each other's barrios rather than in their own, tipping each other off regarding the best places to rob: 'La Ciénaga isn't that dangerous because the delinquents from La Ciénaga don't rob here. Those that rob here come from somewhere else' (Claire). Or, 'There are places worse than this. There are barrios where people have to lock themselves up because they attack and kill at all hours, and look at us here with all our doors open' (Soledad). Antonio commented:

> Before we could go out and return to the barrio at midnight or one in the morning but we can't anymore. Now the people are something else, they have guns and when they drink they get out of control. They are copying things from other countries more advanced than us, as they see guns and other extravagant things in movies. But there isn't as much delinquency here as there is in other barrios, such as Capotillo, Gualey. At least here you don't see drugs rolling around. There are people here with bad reputations but it isn't like people think, not like other barrios with gunfights. Here you can leave your house without being worried. (Antonio)

During the daytime, there is probably less concern for security in La Ciénaga than in most other parts of Santo Domingo. The view of the barrios abajo that is promulgated by the media is, by and large, how cienigüeros view their community at *night*. During the day, doors are only shut during storms or to secure an empty house. Whereas external doors remain shut and locked at all times elsewhere in the city, their main function in La Ciénaga is to remain open to permit the flow of light and people into the house. Cienigüeros seem to take surprisingly few security precautions during the daylight hours. They install bars on their windows if they can afford to, mimicking the middle class. But unlike other, allegedly safer, areas of the city, where doors are locked and barred at all times, in La Ciénaga front doors are unlocked and propped open from the first light of day until the colmados shut their doors at 11pm. During the daytime and the evening, people move between houses to visit relatives and friends, buy products from the many women who sell goods from home, or to talk politics. But at 11pm when the colmados shut, most residents also move inward,

breaking up their small social groups to carry their plastic chairs back indoors. It is widely accepted that after this hour, delincuentes roam the street looking for people to rob and things to steal:

> Delincuentes are those *palomitos*[36] whose task is to take what is yours away from you. When you walk around with your cellphone they take your phone and sell it for ten pesos, they take drugs, Brugal (a brand of rum), beer. These are who we call delinquents. But there are also things they do out of necessity because they don't have an alternative way of subsisting. (Jorge)

Jorge's interpretation reveals the moral tension of delincuencia: delinquents are fundamentally negative urban identities who drink, take drugs and steal the personal property of other poor people. They lack moral decency and demonstrate a total break with the moral order of the countryside. Yet, Jorge and others also acknowledge that delincuencia is the result of structural inequality. Urban poverty involves a crisis that requires an unusual moral stamina.

The second way of addressing social classifications applied to La Ciénaga underlines virtues that cienigüeros can share with peasant life and the trials of urban modernity they share with the more affluent. At least three themes are prominent: the status of a 'hard worker' is pronounced transferable from the country to the city; modernity's impact on the young is generalized; and finally, poverty itself, whatever its location, is valued in the face of an acquisitive society.

City people of all classes regularly use the term *gente de trabajo* (meaning a hard worker) in reference to country people. They also use the term to differentiate hard workers who live in barrios from delincuentes. To be called gente de trabajo by a middle class employer is to gain recognition as a person of value in the city. People like Felicia depend upon this reputation to gain and keep employment in a highly competitive labour market. Nonetheless, the status is sustainable mainly in the context of long-term employment in menial service roles. For many of the residents of La Ciénaga, this is a status that is hard to gain and often only in later life. It is largely closed to youth

[36] 'little dove', meaning adolescent male sex worker.

and also can reflect the reproduction of forms of clientelism common in the ‘backward’ countryside. It embodies a dimension of respectability that is important to older residents, but which youth tend to reject.

Another way in which residents of the barrio challenge negative classifications is to stress their own concerns about modern urbanism, especially as it bears on the young. Pedro’s brother, Roberto, laments the changing nature of child-parent relationships and discipline:

> I remember one time when we lived in the country we went to the river and my brother found a nest of eggs, because chickens laid wherever they liked, and since we found them in the wilderness we took them home. When we arrived with these eggs our father hit us and sent us to return them, because we didn’t have a chicken to care for them. But now it’s different – children steal cars and their fathers help them. It’s for this reason that society is like it is, it has decomposed since the ‘80s. Before Christmas was beautiful and was the only day of the year when children were allowed to drink alcohol, but now they drink all the time. (Roberto)

Bethania, a community activist who grew up in the southwest of the Dominican Republic, contrasts her childhood in the country with modern urban life:

> I had a very beautiful childhood, it wasn’t like now. Before, when I was growing up, we played ball, told stories, made up poems. They were healthy games. We sung songs. Now it’s different, kids don’t enjoy themselves in a healthy way, they live in front of the television and this doesn’t help them because most of the programs are bad. Most of the delinquency exists because the children don’t play properly and pass all their time in front of the television. (Bethania)

Clearly, concern regarding changes in childhood is a modern discourse that is not restricted to the city, let alone to barrios. However, it is in this circumstance that cienigüeros underline their structural disadvantage:

> The rich can pay for their children to go to a nursery, but us poor have to leave them alone in the house to look after themselves as well as they can. While we are in the street working, they are doing whatever they feel like because there are no adults watching them. This is why our society is so corrupt, with so much delinquency, so much crime and ugly things, the lack of care on the part of the parents.
>
> I always say that us the parents are responsible for delinquency, because if your children aren't watched they will follow the wrong path. I don't blame them but rather us. This and globalization, because before we didn't have televisions because we couldn't buy them, but now every poor person has a 20-inch television in their house, a huge stereo, a VHS and a fridge, everything. Parents have left their children behind to go achieve what they want, what they wish, to scale the ladder. Before it was Father and Mother before everything. Material goods have diverted them from parenting. (Bethania)

Cienigüeros repeatedly refer to the effort they have invested in working hard to improve their material environment. When it comes to individual courses in life, abajo or arriba, continuity with el campo or desperation in the midst of the city, residents tend to underline both the struggle of the poor and issues of individual choice. Theirs is a slow struggle toward mobility, in which the fruits of a person's labour may benefit the next generation more than the self. This slow route towards securing respectability contrasts with delinquency's focus on immediate gratification at the expense of social relations. Especially in the hands of women, these strategies for repudiating external, negative classifications commonly call on the church and its various social roles. The construction of the school Virgen del Carmen in 1987 is one of the first major communal actions remembered by the Catholic congregation. The construction of the school was organized by a nun called Maria Blanca and carried out in conjunction with the community. Men supplied the labour and women

carted materials to the site and prepared food. Every house donated a block towards the building of the school and contributed their labour according to their capabilities. Lidia relates:

> I was involved when we, the parents, made the school that used to be here. We carried heavy things, we carried the food, we carried breakfast when the men were working. We helped a lot with the school. It was us. (Lidia)

Residents remember the construction of the school with pride. Community actions such as these stand as evidence of residents' civility and moral worth in the face of denigrations of the barrio. Indeed, there is some evidence that the classifications discussed in this chapter and Chapter 5 are not applied as confidently today as they once were by the more affluent. Nonetheless, improvements have come through a great deal of struggle and personal sacrifice:

> We did so much work to *levantar* (raise up) this community, we walked around this entire gully of Maria Auxiliadora, we were *chancleteando* walked (walking in sandals) down the alleys carrying the word of God to all parts, evangelizing the word of God. It was a lot of work to form the community, and to get it like it is today I spent thirty-four years.
>
> I am one of the old women and those that haven't moved away have died, but I'm always here thanks to God. God has me here because he needs me here. Many people were evicted but not me. I believe that the community has advanced a lot in this barrio, because this was mud, lots of mud and water. Here below you couldn't go anywhere because of the water… The community has helped the barrio *subir* (rise), given it strength, like the reign of God has grown because before the people didn't want to go to the reunions and now they come to Mass. Many women have died, now there are few of us who remain. (Felicia)

For Felicia, the spiritual and the material development of the community are two sides of the same coin. Without God, nothing can be achieved because only God can give residents the strength to work hard for their community's future. Felicia's approach is not surprising given the absence of other organisations in the community, or indeed any support from the outside. In the early days of

the community, the Catholic church was the only point of meaningful institutional contact for many residents, and it remains the largest local organisation by far. Soledad remembers that she had a bad leg and was ordered to rest by her doctor but 'God gave me the strength to go on working'. The thought of God watching her and judging her kept her going back every day. By struggling in daily life, Soledad feels they are improving life and also securing a spiritual transcendence. These values of hard work and struggle of the spirit, coupled with a shared experience of migration and a common structural position, are integral to a habitus that cienigüeros confirm is reputable.

The State and the Politics of the Poor

Cienigüeros use the oppositions, abajo versus arriba and el campo versus el barrio, not in order to reject or redefine them, but rather to amend the moral geography of Santo Domingo. Many residents wish their barrio to be classed among the respectable, or at least the reputable poor. They propose a position for themselves closer to the middle of the city's status order and exemplify at most a centrist politics in their relations with the state. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the respectability (while retaining flexibility) that this course entails resonates with the self-identifications of residents, as I have shown. Secondly, the reconciliation of the two moral geographies is readily transposed into a viable political strategy that is realizable in the medium term. Locating rural virtue in the barrio provides a base from which to make claims on the state. Thirdly, the development of the community in accordance with normative notions of a good life is supported by the Catholic church, which is a powerful ally for the poor barrios.

But there is another crucial reason why the community (and other poor communities) take a centrist political approach, namely that the climate of violence that characterised the Trujillo regime continued under his successor Balaguer, narrowing political options and forcing opposition underground. Although political violence is now minimal, state violence is still alive in the form of an aggressive and corrupt military and police force, making change at once more urgent and difficult, and exacerbating negative representations of the barrios. While the state can facilitate respectability through improved services, it also has the power to contain and undermine barrio

complaints should they grow too strident. In sum, the manner in which cienigüeros work with classifications and render their moral geography is not simply shaped by local or immediate causes. It is also the product of a larger and inter-generational experience of the poor in Dominican politics.

During the years of the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961), the Dominican state had a virtual monopoly on violence. Political assassinations, torture and extrajudicial punishment were commonplace, creating a climate of fear and suppressing political opposition. After Trujillo's death in 1961, new opportunities opened up for political opposition and social movements. These suffered a severe setback when the 1965 revolution failed to reinstall the democratically elected President, Juan Bosch. During *los doce años* (the twelve years) from 1966-1978, President Balaguer targeted barrios that had been centrally involved in the revolution (all the barrios surrounding La Ciénaga) to suppress opposition.[37] According to the historian Hoffnung-Garskof, these barrios were the targets of state violence and subject to 'redevelopment' projects that evicted many residents:

> After the uprising, the remnants of civilian commando forces went underground, forming revolutionary cells in the barrios. The Dominican police, retrained by U.S. advisers in tactics of counterinsurgency and riot control, worked with bands of "anticommunist" thugs to arrest, beat, and assassinate thousands of constitutionalists, leftists, students, union organizers, and other local leaders in the Zona Norte…. Rhetorical attacks on the neighborhoods as festering dens of illicit and dangerous activity helped cloak political repression under the banner of fighting "delinquency" and imposing order in the capital. (2008:39)

This repression sent political movements underground as 'social clubs' and hampered leftist opposition. Amnesty International reported that during 1970 a police murder victim was found in Santo Domingo's streets every 34 hours on average, and between 1966 and 1971 there were more than a thousand political assassinations, most being PRD members (Bosch's Partido Revolucionario

[37] At the time of the revolution in 1965, La Ciénaga had very few residents.

Dominicano) (Ferguson 1992:29). The Dominican popular movement grew again during the economic crises of the 1980s, when PRD governments held power.

Police repression of the barrios continues today. According to a Dominican newspaper, there have been an estimated 1,376 extrajudicial assassinations by police in the Dominican Republic between 2000-2005 (Ramírez 2005). The journalist Ruiz Matuk (2005) reports that there were around 1,259 homicides by civilians in the Dominican Republic during first five months of 2005, representing an increase of 60 percent over the preceding decade (El Caribe 2005). If these statistics are correct, the rate of extrajudicial assassinations by the police is around a quarter of the rate of civilian murders. Residents continue to fear the police and often view them as part of the crime *problem* rather than the solution:

> A lot of the police here are delinquents, you don't know who is going to do you damage – the police or the common delinquent. We have this terrible problem whereby we feel insecure walking down the street, elusive and unresolved. It doesn't matter if the person at your side is dressed in a police uniform or in civil dress, young or old, you have fear because you don't know if they are going to harm you.
>
> Last week a cousin of mine was arrested with his motorbike. When he was inside the station, a delinquent came along and he told the police officer in charge that he had stolen five gold chains. The officer said 'Where are the chains?' The delinquent said, 'Look, here they are', and swapped them for the motorbike.
>
> I know of another case where a man was robbed of his motorbike and he went to the police station to report the person who did it. So the police officer called up the thieves to tell them that this person had reported them. The police are in league with the delinquents, and a portion of them are totally corrupt. (Samuel)

Yet the attitudes of cienigüeros are ambivalent. The police are despised for using violence, but their violence is tolerated when residents believe that delinquents are the target. When I carried out my survey on the malecón (see Appendix 2), the police were undertaking a program called *Barrio*

Seguro (Safe Barrio) in Capotillo. It was widely publicized in nightly television news and a number of people I spoke with saw it as a force for good in the barrio: 'They [the barrios] are a bit more placated because there are many soldiers, more security, but there is delinquency. It's better than six months ago, a year ago' (male, from Villa Mella, a working class area and black community). By far the most popular solution to the problems of these sectors was to increase police patrols within the barrios themselves. Just one man from Villa Mella, a working class area, cited the police as the source of violence, saying 'Fear, fear, fear. One can't go out because the police are killing people, they kill boys'. More common was the view of a young white male neighbour of mine in La Ciénaga, who lamented that the police don't kill enough delinquents. He said that Dominicans need 'la mano derecho' (a strong hand) to keep them in order. In his view, Balaguer was justified in killing delinquents and dissidents because he at least kept the country calm. Caldeira (2000) found similar views in Brazil and she wondered why Brazilians support the death penalty when they don't trust the justice system. Although it is widely accepted in the Dominican Republic that the state and police are corrupt, and in the past have stymied political action, criminal violence of the everyday variety is commonly perceived as a more immediate risk than the predations of the state. As a consequence, the vagaries of police behaviour are tolerated.

On one occasion in July 2005, there was a meeting in the school hall between the community and the national police. Around three hundred residents attended, including members of CODECI, the Catholic church, sports clubs, parents' groups and many other people who are not normally involved in community organisations. Soledad, the community representative for COPADEBA (Popular Committee for the Defence of the Barrios), opened the meeting with a prayer and led the singing of the national anthem. Launching into a speech, she instructed the police on the need for them to engage intimately with the community. She told them that they must learn to walk around the entire barrio and know every *callejon* (alleyway), every part of it, because this would be the only way in which they could respond to the community and fight crime.

When a few people in the audience expressed their lack of trust in the police, the chief of police's representative responded by comparing the police force to La Ciénaga itself. He said that outsiders

view all of La Ciénaga as a bad place, but he personally knew that trouble is caused by a small minority, perhaps less than twenty people, and that the majority of residents are *gente seria* (serious people). Similarly, there is corruption in the police force, but only a minority of police are corrupt. He admonished the audience not to gossip about the police, because *eso hace daño* (it does damage). He said that the national police had a retraining program for all levels of the force, through which they hoped to minimize corruption and malpractice, though it would take seven or eight years to implement. Later, someone told me that the lowest grade police officers earn about 4000 pesos per month, or around AUS$200. With wages this low, cienigüeros are shocked but not surprised by the corruption they encounter.

In 2006, the Fernandez government extended the Barrio Seguro program to La Ciénaga. When I visited in July 2006, groups of between four and six policemen were patrolling the barrio throughout the day and night. This program has been warmly welcomed by cienigüeros, as they feel safer and also think that the government is looking after them. A stronger police presence publicized by the media was also expected to promote improved perceptions of the barrio among the general public. Nonetheless, this greater security represents a loss of control of the spaces that residents have constituted for themselves, and it is unlikely that improved perceptions will improve the reputation of the community enough to bring more social mobility. In this context, policing becomes the cheaper alternative to effective development that would open up opportunities to the poor. The exercise of state control, through the constant policing of La Ciénaga and other barrios, masks the state's relatively precarious position within the world economy. The hierarchy of societies, cultures and races in the trans-Atlantic means that the options of the Dominican Republic are limited even if liberal progressives were in power. Therefore, the danger of the circumstance, as well as the dispossession and frustrations of the poor, are projected onto a population characterized mainly in terms of crime and thereby pathologized. In sum, the moral geography of Santo Domingo confronting cienigüeros serves not only to consolidate statuses, but also to mask the limitations of the state.

Given the climate of violence in which political activity takes place, it is not surprising that La Ciénaga's community organisations strive to reposition themselves within existing moral geographies, rather than revalue the classifications that form them. Their strategy is to reposition themselves, and their relations with the outside world, in accordance with normative notions of what it means to be legitimate urban residents and Dominican citizens. This involves countering negative representations of the barrio and developing their material environment, so that it is not interpreted as a poor and therefore immoral space. Because the moral geography demonizes the entire barrio, a counter-discourse requires the constitution of the barrio into one single political community. This entity is supported by legitimate institutions such as the Catholic church, NGOs, the state and the media. These external institutions lend authority to the community's political initiatives. As Samuel explained to me:

> The church, particularly the Catholic church, we know it has a lot of power. When the Catholic church pronounces that it is in favour of or against something, generally the government pays attention because although it represents a great power, the Catholic church has a universal power. (Samuel)

With a more sympathetic government and the advocacy of the Jesuit priests, La Ciénaga has been able to improve its image in the public eye. This change is observable in newspaper reports of the barrio over a ten-year period from the early 1990s to 2005. Balaguer was President until 1996 and media reports on La Ciénaga focused almost exclusively on protests and clashes with the police. After Leonel Fernandez was inaugurated as President for the first time on August 16, 1996, the tone of media reports changed to focus on La Ciénaga's underdevelopment and promote the government's urban development plans. On 4 September 1996, Hoy quoted a document sent to the newspaper by a group of leaders from La Ciénaga, which declared, 'The barrio La Ciénaga has become the sector with the worst physical and moral conditions, thanks to the arbitrary and unjust measures taken by the governments of the past twenty years' (Rámos 1996). Other articles published in that year include stories of overcrowding, disadvantaged children, public health, food

distribution, the construction of housing, the ambiguity of land title, and as the year draws to a close, youth gangs.

In May 1997, there was a resurgence of protests against the sewerage treatment plant and one young man was shot dead by the military (Medrano & Martínez 1997, 29 January). Reports of non-politically motivated violence increased in this year, with the murder of a military officer in La Ciénaga and media reports about the problem of delinquency (García 1997; Valenzuela 1997). Nevertheless, the majority of articles were concerned with the physical development of the barrio and the relocation of select residents, with a number of stories announcing improvements. President Fernandez visited the barrio twice, in August and in December, to inaugurate the sewerage treatment plant and mark the beginning of the construction of the school (Nuevo Diario 1997; Peña 1997). In September 1998, the Catholic church formed CODECI and they began to liaise with the press and government officials. Henceforth there were fewer articles about La Ciénaga in the newspapers, and those that did appear generally referred to an ordered process of public works and progress. By focusing on material improvements within the barrio, the media projected an implicit message of a change in the moral order.

In late 2005, I attended a press conference, organised by CODECI, regarding SABAMAR's (Sanitation of the Marginal Barrios) intention to start work in the barrio on the construction of large underground stormwater drains and on renovation of the sewerage treatment plant. The conference was held in a disused space across from the plant. Because the plant had been an issue of contention in the past, the press conference attracted a large media audience and was reported widely in the city's papers. My survey of non-residents on the malecón indicates that La Ciénaga's reputation had improved in the recent past, with a number of people telling me that 'La Ciénaga is bad, but not as bad as before'. When asked why they thought the barrio had improved, respondents pointed mainly to the work the government had done to improve material conditions, implying that delinquency and crime are the outcome of living conditions. Therefore reducing material deprivation allays residents' desperation. Indeed, with the support of the President, the church and positive media reports, a life of value under the bridge now appeared to be a *possibility* in the public eye. In other

words, public opinion no longer held that progress and barrio residence were entirely incompatible. Cienigüeros might become valued Dominican citizens.

The views of residents of La Ciénaga differ on what this progress entails. At the more negative end of the spectrum, the barrio remains irredeemable:

> Well, to resolve these problems I think that the first thing that should be done is a total eviction where the people who live in this sector can have a place to live better, somewhere that is at reach of everything, where they can go quickly to the doctor, where they can easily go to a school, and convert this area into either a tourist or military zone. In this way some of the delinquency could be eliminated, I say this is my opinion about this. (Juan)

A more common view is that the barrio's future should include some sectors and residents while excluding others. Two plans exist to redevelop La Ciénaga and the neighbouring suburb of Los Guandules. They are Plan Cigua, which was developed by an organisation called Alternative City (Ciudad Alternativa) and the Government's Plan Resure. Both of these involve relocating thousands of residents to other city spaces, while retaining the older core of the community and providing spaces for parks, businesses and car parking as well as green space along the waterfront. For Joaquin, the barrio is redeemable but many residents lack the intelligence necessary to understand the problems that the barrio faces:

> I think that for the future – this is speculation, like dreaming – but I think that within a short time it will be necessary to evict the people who live in the uninhabitable zone at the edge of the Ozama River. They live in extreme danger. We understand, although one can't say it because if you say it to them, they don't understand. Their abilities don't permit them to understand that they live in danger. I believe that for the future we should evict this group of people who live so close to the river that their backyard is water. Here where we live, where you live, where I live in Clarín, I believe with time this could urbanize, and so that a large portion of La Ciénaga could live in this sector in high buildings. (Joaquin)

Such a redevelopment should entail building new housing for the evicted, though the design and realisation of this process is largely left to the government. Other people envisage a more inclusive transformation. Gabriel, the leader of a sports-education club and a CODECI representative, describes his hopes for the barrio's future using economy and nature as metaphors:

> We want to *llevar mas adelante* (take ourselves forward). As they say, a diamond is made of carbon but once you polish it, it shines. That is, you bring out the value. As an institution we could prepare a fertile terrain, that is, the seed that we plant today will turn the barrio into fertile terrain for development. (Gabriel)

In Gabriel's view, the barrio and its people have an intrinsic value that can be coaxed into revealing itself. Such a possibility requires craftsmanship and nurturing, rather than violence and struggle. Gabriel's dream is emblematic of how cienigüeros would *prefer* to move pa'lante if conditions were favourable: to transcend the 'violences of everyday life' (Scheper-Hughes 1992) through a humanitarian and unified process of progress. This is why the church's messages of peace and harmony ring true to so many residents. Its combination of spiritual transcendence and political power provide a practical model for reconciling twin contradictions: one in which the self embodies both positive and negative values, and a second in which urban life brings both violence and progress. In the following chapter, I will discuss further this search for transcendence in spiritual and political life and its salience for people 'shackled to space' and uncertainty (Gregory 2007:239).

Chapter 7

Transcending Circumstance: Religion, Practice, and *progreso*

At 3pm on the 30th January 2005, three large coaches transported cienigüeros to the city's Olympic Stadium for a large Catholic rally. There were around ten thousand people in attendance from various barrios around the city, seated according to their community groups and wearing clothes in their community colours. Many waved flags bearing the national emblem or images of the island and the words 'República Dominicana'. The colour of La Ciénaga's parish (San Martín de Porres) was white, prompting Felicia to joke that people might mistake the group for lost PRD (People's Revolutionary Party) supporters who had turned up for a political rally eight months late. Most of the attendees from La Ciénaga were women, reflecting their dominance in the Catholic church's congregation. At one end of the stadium was a stage decorated with a backdrop of painted makeshift icons of the Mother Mary, the infant Jesus and the twelve disciples. An altar, flowers and various crosses were positioned on the stage. To the left hung a banner reading 'We want a Dominican Republic in peace'.

As the rally began, the city's priests entered the stadium from the opposite side and proceeded across the field to the stage amidst the cheering and clapping of participants. The opening speech

set the agenda: the launching of the Third Pastoral Plan, conceived as a joint project of the church and the barrios to constitute and expand a world community of Catholics, who are working together to spread Christianity and end poverty. The women of La Ciénaga enjoyed themselves immensely that afternoon: they were proud of the number of people present, representing many barrios; they admired the beauty of the priests' vestments; they enthusiastically joined in the singing of religious songs, and reflected upon the speeches and homilies. Perhaps most importantly, they appreciated the broadening of their community experience from a localised one to one that involved a larger community across Santo Domingo and indeed the world.

Almost one month later, on the 27th February, *capitaleños* (residents of the capital city) lined Santo Domingo's malecón to watch the Independence Day parade.[38] They cheerfully jostled for position in the early afternoon to witness the passing of their nation's military, which was dressed in a colourful array of uniforms, hats and emblems. Among the floats rolling by were the black tanks of the *commando especial contra terrorismo*, (Special Anti-Terrorism Force) bearing black-uniformed men with red berets, painted faces and M16 rifles; a white-jacketed brass marching band; ground soldiers in camouflage gear, and many others. The parade's highpoint involved paratroopers gliding down from planes to land on a stage. It was a performance of how the Dominican state would like its citizenry to view it: modern, progressive and vigilant in the face of real and anticipated threats to sovereignty and order. And yet the militarism, largely taken for granted, also spoke of self-conscious state power ready to act, even against its own citizens. This, the parade implied, was part of progress.

Close by, most cienigüeros did not venture out from abajo el puente to view the parade. Many watched it on their television sets – a feat made possible by the unexpected provision of electricity, possibly a favour granted by the state and the private electricity company to allow barrio residents to witness this spectacle of state prowess. In fact, that day *la luz* (the light) did not go off again until

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[38] *Día de la Independencia* and *Carnaval* are the most important events in Santo Domingo's busy festive calendar. Día de la Independencia celebrates the Dominican Republic's independence from Haiti on the 27th February in 1844. One week later, Carnaval is the civilian event, and features costumed performers, masked devils and a great deal of revelry. It is a Christian-derived celebration that takes place before Lent. It significantly pre-dates Día de la Independencia, but is now timed to coincide with the former.

four the following morning, inspiring much revelry and happiness in La Ciénaga, and inciting Altagracía to comment to me that 'they must have forgotten to turn it off'. The existence of such state favours suggests that, despite the state's triumphant display of transcendence – or perhaps because of it, barrio residents like those in La Ciénaga still live in desperate circumstances. This leads many to look to sources other than the state for the seeds that will germinate, in Gabriel's words, a 'fertile terrain' for progreso. Barrio residents have an ambivalent relationship with the state as it is, on the one hand their protector and provider, and on the other the mediator of their marginalisation.

Both the rally and the parade are indicative of barrio residents' relations with the two most powerful institutions – church and state – that bear on their struggle to transcend their circumstance. They convey a promise of progress to those who participate or watch; a promise of peaceful, prosperous life in which citizens can benefit from tradition while taking advantage of modernity's largesse. Barrio residents realise that the church and state are potential vehicles for progreso, but also that their promises, made explicit through public ritual, are in fact not always matched by their performance.

In their attempts to reach out beyond the milieu in which they find themselves, barrio residents use the vehicles that are available to them. Santo Domingo's poor do not suffer so much from Appadurai's (2004) lack of a 'capacity to aspire'. Rather, they are constantly confronted with limited means to realise their dreams and aspirations. They choose practical strategies for themselves and their children, aimed at transcending the uncertainties of precarious conditions while still trying to gain a foothold in modernity. Throughout this thesis I have described their strategies for creating value in place, for affirming a sense of self and for improving their standing in the barrio. In this chapter, I explore the strategies that they use to negotiate both hope and power beyond the barrio in pursuing the promise of progreso.

Religion and its Politics

In a barrio such as La Ciénaga, all religion has a politics. This is not to argue that one's religion is a political choice, but that in circumstances of dire poverty and marginalisation, experience often collapses the division between secular livelihood and one's faith. In circumstances of radical marginalisation conferred by globalisation, institutions that can bypass such localisation, such as education and religion, have salience in people's lives. This is particularly so in the absence of a labour movement that can make resource claims on the state. These are made instead by communities, and frequently by a church (see also Austin 1981). Moreover, it is through these organisations that the state can be identified as not only a protector, but also as an agent of marginalisation among the poor. As Rowan Ireland has written of Campo Alegre in Brazil:

> The citizens in [these] communities were … prudent and anything but political revolutionaries. Nevertheless, they mounted an influential critique … of bureaucratic … authoritarian pretensions … Arguably, moral communities of this sort … are essential to any deepening of Brazilian democracy. (Ireland 1993:63)

A similar observation might be made for La Ciénaga and the Dominican Republic. In the context of a global world where states and transnational markets operate in sync, religion has become a vehicle for worldwide reactions to poverty and dispossession (see Jameson 1998:64). This gives a new meaning to the notion that religion has more than one competence (see Worsely 1968:xxx-xxxii) and, in Miller's (1994) terms, provides more than one 'transcendence'. The first of these is the ritual one that proposes a reversal of temporal hierarchies so that the poor become the most blessed. The second is secular and sometimes political. It concerns the creation of 'rootedness' via gaining security in a transient world. I suggest that, for cienigüeros, these meanings are inseparable: even a search for transcendence that is primarily spiritual is also political in the way that people understand their circumstance through their belief. For example, in the following statement, Felicia connects her idea of spiritual transcendence with her material conditions:

> At times one asks God for something but God says that if one asks him you have to wait for the reward, and if he doesn't give it to you it's because it doesn't suit him. Every day you need to have more confidence in him because he is the only one that can help you in everything.
>
> If you are going to go out first you ask that everything will go well. You thank God for the bread that he has given you, for the water, the daily bread, also for the air, the nature and also I thank God for the name he has given me, also for the force he has put in me because it is him that gives me the strength I need. Because look at the time we are living in, with so much wickedness, so much selfishness, so much injustice, so many things that we need every day that hold us to God. He is the only one who can help us. (Felicia)

The wickedness and injustice that Felicia identifies is not simply an abstract biblical wickedness (a characteristic of an unredeemed humanity), but rather, a my last chapter illustrated, it is very much part of the everyday milieu in which barrio residents live. The structural violence of urban poverty is unendurable without God, who provides a wealth of spirit that fills the place of, and becomes superior to, material wealth. Transcendence balances the transience of barrio life in a dialectical fashion to create a synthesis in-between, which is the outcome of the structural position of people and the deployment of available strategies. This is the act of self-creation, the positioning of the self or group as a complete social being who embodies neither the rupture of an immoral soul divorced from God and society, nor the material want and despair that informs others' readings of the barrio. Marcia, who spent a year studying as a novice in Santiago before returning to Santo Domingo to study law, commented of her fellow barrio residents:

> The poor are stronger believers. The poor look for a refuge in religion. It doesn't matter which religion, but they look for a refuge. The rich aren't like that. The rich look for refuge in their money, and at times, perhaps one day, they go to Mass. The poor no, as the poor don't have any money so they look for something that fills them, and they put themselves in religion because they want to believe in something and the only manner to believe is to put

> yourself in a religion, whichever it is. There are many poor people who are rich in spirit, that's what I've always said. (Marcia)

Hence religion is not merely a matter of individual faith divorced from economy. People understand their faith in terms of their economic marginalisation and their attempts to address their position through religious, as well as secular, practice.

According to a survey I carried out in La Ciénaga, around 63 percent of residents are Catholic (around 12,000 people), 14 percent Pentecostal (around 2500 people), 13.6 reported no religion, 6 percent Christian (probably Pentecostal), 1.3 percent Adventist, and 1.3 percent Jehovah's Witness. 19 percent of residents say they attend church at least twice per week. The community has an active and visible religious life, with both the Catholic and Pentecostal churches conducting multiple services per week. Church activities are highly visible in the community, since many of them take place in the public domain. Both publicize messages of transcendence from the struggles of everyday life through subsuming individuals within a moral community, whether the aim is spiritual transcendence through connection with God and his subjects, or rootedness in the material sphere through collective political action. Both churches hold that neither personal salvation, nor progress can be achieved by the individual acting alone. The church is then an organisation that, for cienigüeros, reaches out to the whole of life and to their understanding of progreso.

While La Ciénaga is predominantly Catholic, it is the Pentecostals who most saturate the senses of residents as they bring their proselytizing to the streets. On many of the mornings I spent in La Ciénaga, I awoke to hear a woman shouting out evangelising messages on her tour of the barrio; later the same morning she could be heard advertising the sale of cooked red beans. Alternatively, a truck with a loudspeaker mounted on top would wind its way through the barrio, playing a pre-recorded tape with messages of liberation. Visually, the cross of light that the state's Faro a Colón projects into the night sky is replaced during the day by a large message painted onto the concrete-covered cliff behind La Ciénaga, above the sewerage treatment plant: 'Christ liberates, come, prepare yourself'. The position and prominence of the message above the crudely constructed

concrete and tin houses is a stark reminder of the state's inadequacies: Leonel Fernandez's Dominican Liberation Party may hold power, but it cannot ultimately provide transcendence from La Ciénaga. Similar messages are painted around the barrio, including a sign nailed to a telegraph pole that reads 'Today I follow Christ.'

Figure 16. 'Christ liberates', painted over 'Christ is coming: prepare yourself' on the cliff above La Ciénaga.

Pentecostal services, known as *cultos*, attract both Pentecostal and Catholic residents. The culto is a religious service involving singing, preaching and testimonials, and takes place both indoors and outside. Unlike the Catholic church, which is centred upon one indoor venue, there are dozens of small Pentecostal churches throughout La Ciénaga. While adherents will normally attend cultos in their own sector, congregations have an element of mobility. This is particularly the case for outdoor services, as amplified music and dance made them a form of spectacle that is worth attending. Perhaps more to the point, outdoor Pentecostal services attract a large audience of local

Catholics, at whom the spectacle is directed. Much of the service is run by church members and the first section, lasting around an hour, is taken up by hymns and Christian songs, which are sung by individuals or the group to the accompaniment of the church band. The band consists of young men who play the synthesizer, congo drum and a *güira* (a Dominican percussion instrument). The music spills out into the street, drawing a crowd of onlookers, particularly curious children, and enticing people to join in the festivities. As Juan explained,

> One day I passed by the church and I liked the rhythm of the music they had, the music attracted my attention, and after I continued attending until I stayed for good. (Juan)

Juan attends the Pentecostal church located in La Clarín, which is a converted house made of concrete block and is the largest of the Pentecostal churches in La Ciénaga. While the music attracts, it is the message of liberation that compels participants to stay. Their notion of salvation as only located in spirituality resonates widely with barrio residents, who have lost hope in secular progress.

Yet while the 'wealth of spirit' that Marcia identified provides a means to spiritually transcend the 'violences of everyday life', it cannot sustain by itself. Without a basic level of security and the means to earn a livelihood, spiritual transcendence of material circumstances does not resolve the problems of the poor. Cienigüeros also look to the political competence of religion for solutions to their situation. As Samuel explains, the churches have intervened in key moments of political struggle:

> When the evictions of 1991 occurred the churches understood that their role wasn't only to pray or preach about God, but that they were also encumbered with a responsibility and that was to defend the rights of the parishioners and the people in a general sense. All these churches understood that they should unite forces, and it was the first time that I ever saw Evangelists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Catholics get together in favour of a cause, to defend the rights of every one of the people who were going to be evicted.

> I remember that all the churches got together and agreed on this. They understood that their role wasn't just to pray, because Jesus Christ came to the world and he didn't only pass his time praying but he also passed it doing a series of works in favour of the people. If they follow Jesus Christ too, they should emulate his actions to serve the people, to help them resolve their problems. (Samuel)

In Samuel's understanding, the churches put aside their rivalries to create a unified front as Christians, inspired by the actions of Christ to help the poor. Today, the pastor of La Clarín's Pentecostal church continues to engage with community politics. His contributions include discussions with neighbours concerning, for example, whether or not residents are morally obliged to pay their electricity bills or should demand first that the government improve the service. Besides cultos, the Pentecostal churches run a few other regular activities, including prayer meetings and elections of church officials. Youth will get together to practice performances such as singing or plays, and the churches take excursions to popular picnic spots on inland rivers to bathe in *agua dulce* (literally, sweet water, meaning fresh water).

Of the barrio's churches, the Catholic church has been the most politically active. Through its activities it provides barrio residents with both moral and material support. It contests state violence and advocates on behalf of the poor, both nationally and globally. The Catholic church's politics is not just about creating 'belonging' and 'identity', as I discussed in the last chapter, but taking concrete action to transform the lives of the city's barrio residents. The church acts as a mediator between barrio residents and the state, assisting them in advocating for themselves and pressing the government for more favourable policies toward the poor. Since Jorge Cela stood in front of a bulldozer during the 1991 evictions, the Catholic church has supported the material development of La Ciénaga. As Altagracía argues:

> Everything good that has been done in La Ciénaga has had to do with the priests. They have moved us forward. Without the priests we are nothing. (Altagracía)

In Altagracía's definition, progreso means development and social order. Since Vatican II (1962-1965), the progressive Catholic church in Latin America has reconciled itself to various forces of modernity, which it previously viewed simply as secularism (Vasquez 1998). Priests, bishops and nuns around the continent embraced liberation theology, which teaches social justice with reference to modern notions of emancipation (Vasquez 1998). Taking a cue from Latin American liberation theologians, the Catholic church infuses religion with politics in its homilies and encourages discussion of community issues in prayer meetings. Liberation theology interprets the bible in a fashion that denies a divine cause for poverty and, as a consequence, proposes a preferred 'option for the poor'. Jorge Cela's book *The Other Face of Poverty* promotes this option for the poor, which entails providing the necessary moral stance to fight inequality. He argues that this fight is 'an essential requirement of the culture of modernity that cannot be reduced to mere rationality or economic liberty. The option for the poor is the form of evangelizing in modernity' (Cela S.J. 1995). I interpret this statement to mean that, in times that are replete with inequality and uncertainty, solidarity with and support for the poor has become a moral necessity for the church if it is to remain true to the teachings of Christ. Cela proposes that 'The option for the poor involves accepting the poor as protagonists in the struggle against poverty, reducing the role of the states, the church, non-government organisations, and the intellectuals to the servants, facilitators, and collaborators, and not the reverse' (Cela S.J. 1995). The CES's political activities complement this view of the poor as protagonists. In their own eyes, they work to enable barrio residents to generate their own political programs.

La Ciénaga and Guachupita form the Catholic parish of San Martín de Porres. The parish is an important one because the offices and living quarters of the Jesuit priests and nuns are located in Guachupita, as are a large church and a community cultural centre where the activities of the church's youth group take place. It also houses the Jesuits' Centro Bonó, which includes the Centre for Social Studies Padre Juan Montalvo (CES), a Jesuit refugee service, the offices of the academic journal Estudios Sociales, classrooms and a library for students, and meeting spaces.

The CES, directed by Father Mario Serrano, was created in 1993 to support Santo Domingo's community organisations. It relies on funding from international aid agencies, consultancies for other institutions, the sale of publications and donations. The centre conducts research on urban poverty, prepares reports and press releases, and coordinates development projects in a number of poor neighbourhoods in the National District and Boca Chica. In 2004 the CES produced a booklet called the Agenda for Work for Barrio Development for La Ciénaga along with Oxfam and a Dutch development agency, CORDAID. This Agenda details La Ciénaga's demography, the infrastructure problems of the barrio and the actions taken by various local and external organisations working for its development.

The aim of the CES is not to direct development projects itself, but to enable community leaders to campaign for funding and liaise with funding agencies in the implementation of such projects. To encourage organised political action in the barrios, the CES founded coordination groups in these barrios. The CES prepared the groups' constitutions and provides on-going training to community leaders, including a Diploma in Community Leadership. During my residency, a number of CODECI officers undertook this diploma. The CES continues to oversee and fund community groups and ensures that they holds the status of legal political entities, sending its own representative to their meetings.

CODECI (Coordination for the Development of La Ciénaga) was founded in La Ciénaga in 1988 following the destruction wrought by Hurricane George. Every fortnight CODECI holds a meeting in its office in La Clarín, which is attended by representatives from most of the barrio's community organisations. Representatives use this forum to report on their activities, request assistance and discuss the barrio's problems. Representatives of outside institutions may also attend these meetings to discuss projects planned for the barrio. For example, at one meeting, a representative from Proyecto Atlas Barrial (Barrio Atlas Project) came along to discuss his organisation's project to accurately map barrios that only partly appear on official city maps. On another occasion, representatives from the government's health ministry discussed an upcoming program to inoculate city residents against the parasitic disease filariasis (elephantasis). CODECI facilitates barrio

residents to participate in development projects that are planned by outsiders and to actively seek funding for such projects.

One of CODECI's biggest challenges has been to resolve the problem of waste disposal, including drainage of contaminated water and rubbish collection. Just as La Ciénaga acts as a terminus for migrants from the country, it also acts as a terminus for various forms of waste from within the barrio and various parts of the city. La Ciénaga's position on the bend of the River Ozama means that things wash up on its shores. During my residency, I witnessed a great deal of rubbish, a dead horse and a dead man[39] that came to rest in a still nook of the river near the barrio's entrance. More recently, in June 2008, I read in the newspaper Listín Diario that a baby had become entangled in fishermen's nets. The experience of living with waste in La Ciénaga is clearly not simply a problem of infrastructure, but of the marginalisation of residents in spaces where death and decay are experienced daily.

Within the barrio, the central symbol of waste is the one and a half kilometre long stormwater drain, known as *la cañada*, that divides La Ciénaga from Los Guandules. This drain channels stormwater from the city through the barrio to the Ozama River. According to residents, the water is contaminated with waste from a hospital. It brings with it rubbish from the streets arriba and does not drain quickly enough into the river, thereby creating a breeding ground for mosquitoes. As Figure 16 shows, a project to cover the canal was never completed, and the steel rods sticking out of the concrete lining of the canal are now rusted and unable to support a cover. As such, it stands as a symbol of not only La Ciénaga's status as a dumping ground, but also the waste involved in carrying out projects that are never completed.

[39] One morning I was walking to the Zona Colonial with two kids and there was a crowd under the bridge, looking at a dead body that had washed up on the rocky bank. I tried to steer the kids away but of course they wanted to have a look –as did most of the barrio throughout the course of the day. The police finally turned up at around four in the afternoon. Rumor had it that the man was a local lawyer who had been murdered and thrown in the river.

Figure 17. The canal that divides La Ciénaga from Los Guandules.

Figure 18. Installing stormwater drains in Calle 5, La Ciénaga.

More serious is the general problem of drainage in the barrio. During my fieldwork, small drains full of stagnant, black and green water criss-crossed the parts of the barrio located abajo. These provided breeding grounds for mosquitoes and presented a major health problem. Jorge, a security guard who has lived abajo for twenty-two years, became very ill with dengue and had to be hospitalised. He spent weeks off work as he recovered, losing precious wages on which he depended to support his family. Residents residing arriba in La Clarín were not immune either. Juan, who ran the colmado opposite Altagracía's house, became ill with a water-borne disease from drinking untreated tap water rather than buying drinking water from the trucks that pass by every two or three days. As he was recovering, his wife became sick with a different disease from the same cause, followed quickly by one of their daughters. All survived, but not without damage to health and loss of livelihood.

Rubbish disposal is another problem that continually plagues residents. During my fieldwork, rubbish was collected once per week by a garbage truck sponsored by the European Union. The truck would sound its horn as it passed through the barrio, alerting residents who would carry their rubbish to the truck as it went by. If the truck failed to come by, or if residents missed collection, they looked for alternative ways to dispose of their garbage. Altagracía strongly disliked keeping rubbish in her backyard for more than a few days and she would often burn it. Certain parts of the barrio became unofficial dumps, especially next to the sewerage treatment plant and behind the basketball court near the barrio's entrance. The park there, created to provide a pleasant space for children and families, was always littered with rubbish.

During my fieldwork, a range of projects to combat *la contaminación* were taking place through the coordination of CODECI. Some of these projects were small-scale ventures carried out by locals to make an immediate difference to the environment, whereas others were long-term engineering projects funded by the government and aid agencies. One community group that demonstrates how the church promotes political action is the Comité de Ama de Casa Mama Tingó (Mama Tingo Housewives Committee). The Comité was founded on the 5th of September, 2001, and is named in honour of Florinda Soriano Muñoz, a woman from Yamasá who was popularly known as Mama

Tingó. According to popular accounts, Mama Tingó was a black peasant woman who campaigned against the eviction of peasants from their land during a larger peasant movement throughout that decade. She was assassinated in 1974, but her name lived on in a number of organisations, including the Confederación Campesina Mama Tingó (Mama Tingó Rural Confederation). Mama Tingó's face also adorns the logo of CONAMUCA (Confederación Nacional para la Mujer Campesina), a rural women's organisation whose offices are located in the city. Likewise, she graces the northernmost station on Santo Domingo's new metro line that runs from Centro de Los Heroes on the *malecón* to Villa Mella in the north of the city. Other stations are also named after national martyrs, such as the Mirabál sisters.

Comité Mama Tingó was founded in La Ciénaga by América and her daughter Bethania. These women are migrants from the south who came to Santo Domingo in the 1980s after a hurricane destroyed their home. The women have long been involved in community politics and Bethania was elected to the position of secretary of CODECI in April 2005. Positions on CODECI's management committee are coveted because they provide a (small) wage, open up a world of contacts with the outside world, including the press, NGOs, and government, and can provide a springboard into a political career as a representative for the municipality. Bethania has taken part in many of the CES's workshops and courses, and is particularly interested in the church's promotion of gender equality in the barrio 'because you know women are the devil gender – we are always discriminated against. Here they give us the lowest positions; our group struggles for gender equality'. As rural women who once made a living picking red beans, they were attracted to Mama Tingó's political message of land rights for peasant women. Bethania explained to me of Mama Tingó:

> She always went around the countryside singing a song that said, "Don't leave me alone, come with me, because there is land for everyone", and we were inspired by her because she was a very valiant woman and so we named our organisation after her. And our organisation fights to change people's lives because the children aren't studying. It's for the old, the women, for gender equality. (Bethania)

According to Bethania, the group has around a hundred female members, but they retain a male 'assessor' who writes letters and contacts government officials on their behalf. They aim to turn themselves into a legal foundation with an office in the barrio. Comité Mama Tingó organises collective child care for women who work and helps neighbours in need by raising funds for medicine and other emergencies. For example, when a neighbour's house burned down, the assessor contacted the offices of President Fernandez's wife and solicited funds to rebuild the house.

One of their most visible group projects was to clean the cañada of rubbish. Bethania and América solicited volunteers and equipment, such as plastic bags and gloves, through CODECI, and carried out the labour over two weekends. Afterwards Bethania took photos of the canal as a record that could be shown to other residents and outsiders. When I interviewed Bethania in 2005, the group was trying to raise funds to cover the canal with concrete. Bethania believes that the barrio can be made liveable:

> I say that the government is responsible for progress here, because through the government we can solicit help from other countries. We can go to another country and bring them here to see our condition of life and like this they can add their grain of sand. (Bethania)

Bethania's solution is to use the Dominican government as a facilitator in projects that bring together organisations from overseas and the local community. Bethania and other community leaders are aware that the state can provide more than it currently does: cienigüeros have struggled against the state's reluctance to legally secure their place. At the same time, the state remains the primary bridge between them and the outside world. The church provides organisations through which residents can approach the state and request assistance, either from the state itself or aid from NGOs or foreign governments such as the European Union.

An example of how this strategy is used to 'grow', or significantly augment, small local projects such as Bethania's, is SABAMAR's (Sanamiento Ambiental de los Barrios Marginados, or Sanitation of the Marginalised Barrios) engineering work to improve drainage and waste disposal in

sixteen of Santo Domingo's barrios. This is a large-scale project that involved cooperation between a wide range of local, national and international organisations, including community co-ordinations such as CODECI, the Catholic church, the City council, the state government and the European Union. SABAMAR was set up specifically to implement this sanitation project. It began in April 2002 with a budget of AU$13 million, of which approximately AU$10 million was funded by the European Union, the rest being met by the Dominican government.

In La Ciénaga, the project included the renovation of the sewerage treatment plant, covering the major drains running through the barrio and turning them into walkways, major work to install large stormwater pipes underground, and installing a network of smaller pipes to replace the narrow drains running through alleyways. Bethania's brother, Moralis, worked as an engineer on the project and acted as the main point of contact with CODECI. CODECI was involved in all stages of the project, overseeing press releases, talking with engineers and planners about problems they encountered and liaising with residents to inform them of how the works would affect them, and if possible mitigate inconveniences. The project was a major operation that took months to complete. It involved digging up entire roads, obstructing access to people's houses, and required planning alternative walkways, a task that was at times impossible. Discussion of the project often became heated as residents encountered difficulties in carrying out everyday activities. CODECI's input was integral to mediation between residents and technicians to ensure that the project ran as smoothly as possible.

Development projects such as these have made a significant difference to life in the barrio. They demonstrate how a religious institution such as the Catholic church can fill a political niche left vacant by the absence of labour unions and parties that prioritize the poor. Yet for cienigüeros, the idea of progreso is not limited to barrio development. In the following section, I explore some others type of aspiration among cienigüeros and the practical action taken to realise them.

Leaving La Ciénaga: Aspiration and Practice

The church and its organisations ameliorate living conditions in La Ciénaga, not the least by offering the status reversals of ritual life. Nonetheless, most cienigüeros still aspire to leave the barrio in a more tangible way. This is a necessary condition of progreso. Seventy-one-year-old Altagracía commented to me, 'There is nothing good in this barrio. Everything is bad, bad, bad'. In Altagracía's view, the barrio is in a state of complete moral decay where even Jesus would refuse to return.

When I asked residents 'What are the positive things about La Ciénaga?' in my survey of the community, the most common responses were: 'Nothing' (28 percent), 'The barrio is being improved' (21 percent), 'the schools'(17 percent), and 'the churches' (13 percent). This means that almost half of the residents I surveyed believed that La Ciénaga currently had nothing to offer its residents, and only a third of residents saw their educational and religious institutions as positive features. Juan, a young man who is a carpenter and a member of the Pentecostal church, moved to La Ciénaga in 1999 from another part of Santo Domingo after hearing that there were houses available at low rent. He explained to me:

> La Ciénaga is a barrio you can begin in. For people who have the wish to have something in their life, it is a barrio where you can acquire a house with very little money, and from then on try to keep developing. There are very few positive things because it is a barrio where there is an abundance of delinquency, lots of drugs, lots of what you call bars where they drink a lot and do innumerable other things. In reality it's a little bothersome, but one has to live in some place or other until you are able to advance. (Juan, carpenter, aged 32)

The survey included the question 'If you had the chance, would you move away from La Ciénaga?' to which 93 percent of residents responded 'Yes'. Samuel, whom I asked to proof read my survey, tried to dissuade me from including the question, arguing that everyone would say 'yes', and that if anyone said 'no' they were lying. Samuel himself told me:

> The moment I am able, I will leave La Ciénaga because I believe this will contribute to my development, because La Ciénaga is a very marginalised sector. (Samuel)

The 6 percent who answered 'no' were long-term residents, such as an 82-year-old widow who answered, 'No, because I already have been here for so many years, and I have nothing to fear from my neighbours', or a 19-year-old male who was born in La Ciénaga and works in a store, who said 'No, because here I don't pay for water, electricity or garbage collection, and if I move I will have to pay for them'. However, as Samuel anticipated, most 'no' responses were given because the person did not see any possible way they could leave the barrio due to their extreme poverty and lack of abilities to *salir para adelante* (lit. leave forward). There are just a few people who have achieved economic success and continue to live in La Ciénaga; most leave immediately for another part of the city. They are men who *tienen la manera* (have the means) to do as they wish, and they are admired and respected. The majority find their hope worn away by frustration. A few young people told me that they wanted to stay in La Ciénaga to help the barrio develop. Sandra, a young woman who was studying at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) and who worked as a secretary in La Ciénaga's school, aspires to live in a planned development:

> If the opportunity arises, I would look for one of the new barrios they are installing now. There are many new barrios where one can construct or buy a house. But one feels *pegado* (stuck) to your family, the church, the community because there are so many good people. One has hopes but one doesn't know if or when they will happen. If one day God sees that he should help me move from the low part to the high part, this is in the Lord's hands. (Sandra)

For Sandra this dream may well be realizable because her appearance, education, skills and networks make her well-placed to attain a white-collar job. Her friend Margarita (who works with the CES) and her new husband (a contract electrician) managed to find somewhere to live in the adjacent barrio, Guachupita, after weeks of searching. They found that very few apartments were available in their price range, and even fewer of those were in areas they felt safe to live in.

Eventually they secured a flat on the top floor of the same building as the Catholic nuns. Their cramped living quarters and the noise of the neighbourhood were a trade-off against the marginalisation of La Ciénaga. Living in Guachupita allowed them to access their work sites – and for Margarita's husband, maintain the connections he needed to *obtain* regular work – much more easily.

But most residents of La Ciénaga are pessimistic with regard to opportunities to move. Younger residents also face seemingly insurmountable obstacles to leave the barrio. Samuel and Mari have been trying to find a suitable flat to rent in the city for years. Besides escaping the inconvenience of living in a marginalised barrio, they would like to be close to good schools to maximise their children's education and permit them to take part in after-school activities. But low wages, high rents and lack of childcare outside of the barrio make such a move prohibitively costly. While they may be able to scrape together the money for a basic flat, they would have to pay for someone to care for their three children while they are at work. In La Ciénaga, Samuel's mother and brother assist with the childcare. Instead, Samuel and Veronica talk and dream about moving: they keep an eye on rental prices and note abandoned buildings, making up fanciful stories about how they may occupy these wasted spaces. They feel acutely the entrapment of their situation: they cannot escape the barrio until they find better paying employment, but living in a barrio makes it difficult for them or their children to 'advance' in order to gain such employment. This marginalisation affects their children, who are not able to take advantage of a 'good' school which would improve their future prospects.

Entrapment in a barrio is understood not merely as the product of such areas' poor reputations, but also as a failure of national progress. Samuel's father Pedro, though disappointed in not achieving the kind of life he thought he would, has resigned himself to barrio life and appreciates its community spirit, especially the church:

> Sometimes I'd like to leave because when one sees things like Cyclone David one wants to live in the high part, but in many ways this is the best area because it's so close to the city,

> this La Ciénaga. But it's not a good barrio anymore. And at times it's my wish to leave here to live again in my village, in my place, in my village another time, in La Vega. One lives well there. But the church is here and I'm comfortable; the community in my village isn't like this one. This country *Dominicana* is in darkness all over because the power plant isn't functioning. It's not like this in your country, is it? The light never fails there. (Pedro)

The pull of overseas places where the light never fails – a sure sign of modernity – is strong, as evinced by the large numbers of Dominicans overseas. According to the US Census of the year 2000 there were 799,768 Dominicans residing in the United States, comprising 0.3 percent of the total US population and 2.3 percent of the total Hispanic population (Ramirez 2004). Knowledge of what other places offer in terms of lifestyle is central to how residents judge their life in the barrios and form strategies to leave. As Antonio once explained to me, 'If the opportunity arises to work outside the country, I will go because there they live better'. He continued:

> In some countries, because many people have gone to New York here, there is more work, and there are many Dominicans who have had two or three jobs there because they can are able to carry them out. There are lots of sources of work, a lot of industry, and they can find work. (Antonio)

Antonio's view on the benefits of migration is influenced by family and friends who have migrated. Altagracía's daughters both live overseas, one in Puerto Rico and the other in Spain. While they by no means represent economic success stories, they are able to send money back to their mother with some regularity. The father of Antonio's neighbour Juddy travels regularly to Guadeloupe to work as a labourer. He was married to a Guadeloupian woman for visa purposes. He considered himself lucky to have been able to form such a rare arrangement, having formed a friendship with her on his first successful trip there. Another neighbour had migrated to Boston three years previously and was arranging for her teenage children to join her. She would visit them twice a year, bringing gifts such as Nike shoes and MP3 music players. Relative to the poverty and lack of choices available in the barrio, these migration stories speak of success. US census statistics, however, tell a somewhat

different story. According to the 2000 US census, just 64.6 percent of Dominican men and 52.9 percent of Dominican women residing in the US are employed (Ramirez 2004:12). In 1999, Dominican families had the lowest median family income of all Hispanic groups at $28,729, compared to an average of $34,397 for Hispanic families and $50,046 for all American families (Ramirez 2004). 51.1 percent had graduated from high school and 10.9 percent held a bachelor's degree (Ramirez 2004). Yet, despite the tempered success that these figures suggest, migration to the United States represents a step forward for barrio residents. It offers a chance to generate income and savings that would facilitate building a house and acquiring white goods, for instance, that seem unattainable in Santo Domingo.

However, such opportunities are increasingly difficult to come by. As Stephen Gregory (2007) points out, for marginalised people the global economy has created a localisation that is not readily transcended. Residents wish to leave the barrio because they believe it will enhance their access to resources, but of course some resources are necessary to leave the barrio in the first place. Dominicans often cannot even obtain a tourist visa without proof that they intend to return to the Dominican Republic, such as ongoing 'good' employment or ownership of property. As a result, the people who most need the benefits of labour migration are unable to migrate, and it is the middle class, who already occupy good positions in Santo Domingo, who are accepted as tourists or migrants by other nations. One working class woman residing in Cristo Rey, who was known to some residents of La Ciénaga, bought a block of land at a low price through a journalists' union. When she had paid her debt in full, she was able to attain a visa to undertake a short course in Barcelona. This path is not available to residents of La Ciénaga because they do not hold land titles. Lidia, for example, is a middle-aged woman who owns two adjacent houses in La Ciénaga. She lives by herself in one of them and rents the other one out, supplementing her income by selling an assortment of products from her home (such as nappies, toys for kids and beer). Lidia had lived and worked illegally as a laundress in Switzerland on two separate occasions and wished to return there for a holiday. She had applied to the Swiss embassy for a visa, but had been told that she would not be granted a visa because she had previously worked illegally in Switzerland. Furthermore, she had no proof that she would return to the Dominican Republic because she did not legally own her land.

Lidia planned to return to the visa office to find a more sympathetic staff member and held out hope that she would be eventually be granted a tourist visa.

Relocation or migration may be the wish of many residents, but practical necessity orients them toward other types of strategy to counter their positioning. Education is viewed by all social classes and institutions as a vehicle for class mobility within the Dominican Republic, which may then open up the possibility for migration. Bethania describes the difficulties of obtaining progreso for barrio residents:

> Here there are three ways to *salir adelante* (go forward). One is robbing, which isn't good. Another is leaving the country, and the third is to study. And of these three, as I want to salir adelante, I have chosen to study. I'm studying now, I stopped studying when I was twelve years old to come here, then I had my three children. I have a beautiful family. I have a son, two daughters, and a husband who preoccupies himself with the house. I worked a lot with my husband but we saw that we weren't going forward.
>
> One day I saw that my brother had made himself an engineer and with four years' work with the government, he built a house for my mother and bought a good car. So I said, "Oh, but I'm going to start studying again", so I returned to eighth grade. Now I am in the last year of my high school certificate. On Friday I finished the national tests and graduated from school. I'm going to enter university to study law, because I know that if I get a qualification I'll be able to give a better life to my children. (Bethania)

Bethania conceives her plan as obtaining an education for herself followed by a well-paying job. This would allow her to provide a better material life and education for her children. Other adults are not so hopeful for themselves, but focus on improving their children's chances for social mobility through providing them with a good education. Their aspirations are thus re-focused on the following generation, a strategy that has been described in detail for Jamaica by the anthropologist Karen Fog Olwig (2007). Moving from the country to the barrios may be the first step in this path to progress, since education in the city is widely recognized as superior to that available in the country.

Claire and Amélie have found that their own migration from Haiti's south to Santo Domingo has resulted in a limited progreso. Amélie is illiterate and views education as beyond the scope of her own progress. But she is proud of her children's attendance at school and hope their education will give them better opportunities than they received themselves:

> My hopes are, if I don't die, because God is the only one who knows, I want to *echar para adelante* (go forward) but there isn't any money. Without money you can't echar para adelante, it has to be with money. I want my children to study, learn to read, write. I am *pasando trabajo* (having difficulty) because I don't know how to read or write, if it wasn't for this I could work. I don't want the same for my children. (Amélie)

For Amélie, her own progreso lies with the church, but education is key to her children's future. In contrast, Samuel focuses on improving himself and his family by attending university. Neither Antonio nor Samuel attend church, much to the dismay of their parents, who are concerned that Samuel's children will miss their first communion. Samuel's prioritisation of education over religion represents a move away from a localised, family-oriented mode of life, recognising its limitations for social class mobility. Rather than build up networks and standing within the church, Samuel looks outside for his social and cultural capital:

> I have three children and I am studying to be an example for them. It's better for me to knuckle down so that they can see me as a role model. This way they can tell themselves, "I have to overcome things because my father had family and many limitations but he dedicated himself to studying and overcoming". I want this be the norm for them, to think "I'm going that way because I saw my father go that way", so I am trying to give them an education of this manner. (Samuel)

However, Samuel is also aware that the lack of progreso of cienigüeros is not always readily overcome by education, as competition for scarce jobs diminishes the chances of the poor to attain them. Samuel is attending a private university to gain an edge that he hopes will allow him to

transcend the stigma of being a resident of a poor barrio and set him on a path of social mobility. His wife has wavering faith in this strategy for herself: she has just completed secondary education at night school, but is not sure whether or not to continue her studies. She once told me adamantly that 'I'm not going to university, it's no use, you can't get a job when you finish anyway!' On other occasions, her view if different. In a similar expression of disillusion, Samuel's brother Antonio pointed out to me, 'there are many professionals in La Ciénaga who are not working', including lawyers, engineers and technicians. While education is a core strategy for social mobility, it does not guarantee employment. As Tony's story in Chapter 2 illustrates, social contacts and a degree of tigüeraje are often deployed to gain positions. Dominicans attempt to counter the uncertainty of employment by undertaking simultaneous projects in different spheres – the occupational multiplicity indicative of Caribbean life (see Comitas 1973:157-173).

Samuel is attempting to maximise his chances for success through running his own business, using his university contacts to generate a network of clients and thus by-passing open competition in the labour market. In the middle of 2005, he created a co-operative company in function hire and event management with students from his university. Each invested a small sum of money, and Samuel invested the start-up capital in chairs, chair covers, table covers, decorations and business cards. The company is paid by private organisations and individuals to decorate rooms for functions. At the end of every year, the company pays dividends to its shareholders, the students. They use the headquarters of their environmental group as an office and storage space, and transport the materials using a van owned by one of the students. So far, the company has been moderately successful. Their busiest time of year is December, as it is not only the lead-up to Christmas but also the month in which most Dominicans are paid a double salary. During the rest of the year, business has been very quiet, so Samuel took a job in a supermarket.

In his quest for progreso, Samuel's trajectory through religion, education and 'flexible' employment is a familiar one, as he and others attempt to relocate, migrate, or find employment (see Freeman 2007). These strategies are difficult to realise and are also dependent on a fickle labour market. As Samuel has found, one can conform to the social rules for success yet still have one's hopes

frustrated. Samuel has a 'good' appearance, dresses neatly, is articulate, has good manners, knows how to behave in a range of social situations, and is a capable networker. He also considers himself to be the type of person that the Dominican Republic should be promoting, as he is committed to the nation's progreso, not just his own. Samuel's lament is that despite his pride and loyalty, there are few opportunities for him to progress personally and to help his country develop. As his strategies continually fall short of transforming his life, he becomes frustrated with both the state and his fellow citizens. Indeed, he views the latter's individualism as undermining national progress:

> I believe strongly in this country. I would like to be able to progress without having to leave the country because I understand that the country can only progress if we, the Dominicans, decide that the country has to progress and give it our support. Many times the people prepare and after they have studied try to leave the country. We turn our backs to the country's problems and we go and give our support to a neighbouring nation. In this way I think that we aren't going to *echar para adelante*, but until we leave off this idea of running from reality we aren't going to progress as a country. (Samuel)

Samuel's belief is that life in a developed Dominican Republic would be better than life overseas. In his view, national progress is possible, but continually undermined by the selfishness and lack of unity of his fellow citizens. The transformation of the nation therefore requires the transformation of its citizens through education. Samuel remarked:

> I'd like to share a word from the President. He said one time that "Only education can save this country", and I would like to say it in this interview because perhaps someone who sees it in the future will take note of it. Perhaps undertake a strong educational program that can modify the Dominican form of thinking. Until we change our way of thinking, we're going to continue being a sub-developed country – in place of advancing, we're going to retrocede. The other nations continue advancing and if we stay static this is retroceding because the others keep advancing and you are in the same spot. (Samuel)

The onus is thereby on the state to change collective thinking and behaviour – the national habitus, if you will. While Samuel focuses on the benign path of education to transform Dominicans into proper citizens, frustrations expressed by cienigüeros and bureaucrats alike are also rendered in more discriminatory and aggressive terms. A view of disunity as an obstacle to progress is a powerful argument for the state to be seen as the only force that can counter indisciplines that undermine progress. These views speak to long-held popular beliefs about the Dominican people. The historian Martínez-Vergne (2005) has described how, at the end of the 19th century, urban elites engaged in nation-building struggled to create national unity out of localised political groups led by *caudillos* (strongmen). Trujillo was the first leader who was seen to truly bring the nation together under one political system. Balaguer capitalized on this belief in the need for a 'strong hand' to counter the unruly Dominican character and, as I demonstrated in the Chapter 6, this legacy lives on today in the support for police violence in the barrio. Despite a well-developed Dominican patriotism, a common view suggests that a strong(-armed) state is needed to maintain national unity.

In sum, limits on the ability to 'progress,' and disappointments with church and state, including the outcomes of education, lead some in La Ciénaga to invoke long-standing nationalist themes. These include the notion of dominicanidad - defined in contrast to Haitians who are symbolic of backwardness and difference (see Chapter 2). Threads of this state-sponsored discourse are taken up by Dominicans who are frustrated with their attempts to advance. Haitians are scapegoated because they are viewed as illegitimate competition in a field of limited employment. Similarly, other people seen as interfering with the project of unity and progress are classified as dangerous. Characteristics such as appearance, behaviour, perceived morality and residence act as signposts for these classifications. Progreso, then, is as much about who is excluded as it is about who is included. The struggles between barrio, church and state are to a large extent concerned with how these boundaries are drawn.

Unity, Difference and Progress

Perhaps the most salient differences between church and state for cienigüeros are their respective approaches to unity. The church's vision of unity is one that projects a world in which all people belong to the Catholic church under God. At least in principle, any person can belong to the church provided they agree to its moral and ritual terms. This contrasts with the exclusivity of the state, which maintains the bounds of citizenship. For the Catholic church, unity is based on a religion that encompasses citizenship, and ultimately other religions as well. The church is conceived, at least potentially, as a world-encompassing order. The state, on the other hand, has a great investment in its legal, moral and geographic boundaries. The state reaches out to its regional neighbours and even beyond them, but mainly to shore up its own idea of a nation.

The church's projected idea of unity allows it to override, at least in a guarded way, the state's exclusions among the poor. Indeed, the church reminds the state of its responsibilities to its citizens, and to those who aspire to citizenship. The church thereby de-naturalises poverty and criticizes the racism in dominicanidad. Three weeks after I moved into the community, the theme at Sunday morning mass was 'Poverty is not the fruit of God'. This homily used the bible to illustrate that God created plenty for everyone, and that it is through man's wickedness, rather than God's plan, that poverty exists. The attribution of poverty to secular, rather than divine, causes involves a critical position towards the state. The poor are not to blame for their position. Nor should they bear the burden of injustice. After all, the Dominican state is Catholic, as evidenced by the Faro's cross beaming in the night sky. This entails a commitment to uphold Christian principles by treating all people equally – both poor Dominicans and poor Haitians are embraced by the Catholic church in La Ciénaga. Yet this is the limit of the church's politics. It acts to de-naturalise poverty, but not to de-naturalise the state itself. The church lacks the power and the will to contest the state's form of 'unity', which is built in significant part on its exclusions. Nor does the church remark on the state's forms of militaristic symbolism inherited from a past *caudillo* politics and United States intervention. The not-so-gloved fist that in the past worked to persuade Dominicans that an armed state and its exclusions are a natural part of life. Whereas the state constructs a nation of its own select devising, the church provides a meliorist political force with its encompassing project.

The state's selectivity is visible in its Independence Day activities. Independence Day is a performance through which the state reinforces national culture and attempts to cast itself as the primary source of meaning and power for a Dominican citizenry. According to this representation, the state is the agent of modernisation, and capital is simply a tool in its procurement.[40] Through ritual performance, the state presents its own version of transcendence, overcoming the opposition between tradition and change by casting progress itself as a Dominican tradition. The proof of progress as a specifying product of the state comes in defining the nation vis-à-vis its neighbours. In the Dominican view, Haiti represents the antithesis of the Dominican Republic's national progress. The *desorden* (disorder) of an African-derived Haiti with its poverty and demobilized army is located in the past. The new world United States, and the Western European from which it comes, are located in a future of wealth and national security. The nation's task, as defined by the state, is to move at a steady pace towards this future. This is progreso.

In celebrating its independence from Haiti, the state casts itself as distinctly non-Haitian. Haiti is defined as a past devoid of the structuring principles of tradition. Instead, the parade's symbols and ritual are drawn from North Atlantic traditions. The military ensemble was a direct result of the historical impact of US interventions between 1916 and 1922, and in 1965. This bisecting by the state of its nation's identity is startling when placed in the *longue durée*. From their origins as the homelands of the Tainos and Arawaks, through their appropriation as sugar plantations, the importation of slaves, independence, political instability, US intervention, poverty, and long-term dictatorships, the parts of Saint-Domingue that became known as Haiti and the Dominican Republic, have had much in common. Shared elements of a colonial history are read onto both citizens' bodies. Although in Dominican parlance Haitians are negro, while Dominicans are indio, both representations point to a connection with Africa. In the racialised order of the trans-Atlantic, including the United States, it is these similarities, rather than the differences, that motivate the Dominican Republic to differentiate itself, lest it be mistaken as one and the same with Haiti.

[40] Daniel Miller (1994) has recognised how periods of capital accumulation permit the realization of cultural projects in Trinidad.

These issues underpin the Catholic church's cautious politics. Nonetheless, cienigüeros regularly interact with Haitian residents of the barrio. Moreover, shared participation in the church of women like Felicia and Amélie, as well as recent and severe economic reversal in the Dominican Republic, seems to bring them closer together. They recognise each other as 'the poor' and seem to forge a unity of their own. Especially in these difficult times, as Amélie remarks, Haitian practices that were once considered anathema to Dominicans are now gaining wide acceptance:

> Before, Haitians had no value, if you lived here they treated you like a rag because you weren't in your own country. They used to say that arrenque, black beans, cornflower, capique, and sardines were Haitian foods. They didn't eat these things. Bananas were Haitian food. Now there are vitamins in them! Maize flour, *arrenque* is vitamin and nourishing, all this nourishes. Before if you ate this you must be Haitian, but now, ooh! Now it's tasty for them because things are bad everywhere. (Amélie)

However, the instabilities of progreso create uncertainties and promote ambivalence among those cienigüeros who still recall the politics of scapegoating Haiti and Haitians. At one prayer meeting I attended, Soledad read out a quote from the writings of Juan Pablo Duarte, a national hero who is credited with liberating the Dominican Republic from Haiti in 1844. The essence of the quote was to not turn a blind eye to events in the country, but to take action. Soledad argued that Duarte's words are relevant today because:

> We still need to defend ourselves as a nation… Dominicans used to be a good colour like *la americana* [pointing to me], but during the Haitian occupation, Dominican women [read: white] were forced to have sexual relations with Haitian men [read: black], thus changing the colour of Dominican skin. (Soledad)

Amélie, proudly Haitian, protested against Soledad's racism, saying that it is divisive and that they should all work together. Soledad responded that her comment was not about race at all, but rather the Haitianization of the Dominican Republic. She then changed to the topic of poverty, saying,

‘People should be aware that our community is poor for no good reason, because the country is full of resources such as mines, but that these resources aren’t shared’. One woman suggested that the Dominican Republic unite with Haiti to solve the island’s problems together, but Soledad rejected this idea. She observed that Haiti is poor and that the Dominican Republic does not have sufficient resources to share. She then criticized the lack of sharing in the Dominican Republic itself, saying that Dominicans are too egotistical to share. She lectured everyone on the need to work together as a community, to *luchar* (struggle) together for a better life.

Possibly experiencing her own ostensibly secure position as suddenly insecure, Amélie began a cry of *E’pa ‘lante que vamos!* (It’s forward we go!) that was taken up by others in the group. This affirmation of current state orthodoxy demonstrated Amélie’s loyalty to dominicanidad and tapped into a powerful slogan that projects progress as the achievement of a unified nation. By changing the focus to a unified future, Amélie effectively silenced the discussion of a divisive and tumultuous past. I argue that this is precisely the intention of the slogan when it is used in political discourse, and that its current popularity is due to, rather than in spite of, the economic crisis. Amélie’s assumption of the nationalist mantle in a society where she has lived for twenty years, but is still not a Dominican, revealed both her sense of threat and also the overriding power of the state to confirm the criteria of citizenship. In this way the power of the state cuts through religious community.

While the church provides spiritual transcendence and plays an important unifying role among the poor to affect material change, the state still holds a pragmatic primacy in people’s lives. It defines the society’s legal co-ordinates, produces order backed by force and controls resources. Residents’ struggles over engagement with problems of unity and difference, and their role in working for progress, cannot be understood without reference to the state. It would be misleading to view divisive discourse as emerging solely from tensions between marginalised people as they clamber over each other, like Peter Wilson’s proverbial crabs, to escape their barrel. The ambivalences of cienigüeros in the face of thwarted aspirations draw on both the church’s unifying potential and the state’s propensity to divisiveness. Both church and state contribute to uncertainty in a testing economic and social environment.

Yet the poor have perhaps a greater capacity than most sectors of Dominican society to sense that a unified political path can exist. As Ireland (1991) observes in the case of Brazil, the church can at least allow a space for critique and thereby undermine the 'authoritarian pretensions' of politics. This living critique also allows cienigüeros to recognise many paths pa'lante. Together with the felt *necessity* to pursue this practice, the flexibility of people like Samuel and Bethania maintains strategies among the poor that even when they are unsuccessful – and at least sometimes there is success – builds insight into their position. Indeed, the existence of a *choice* of paths, made available through a variety of sources and at various levels of organisation, is what sustains *hope* among cienigüeros. Although the realization of progreso is never guaranteed and access to it remains difficult, the multiplicity of paths that lead towards an advance allow the chance that at least one vehicle for progress will prove to be more than a mere performance. This is the promise of pa'lante in a Dominican modernity.

Conclusion: *¡E'pa'lante que vamos!*

For residents of a highly localised community such as La Ciénaga, accessing a road *pa'lante* (forward) is not as clear-cut as government slogans would suggest. Their struggles for progreso are restricted by their emplacement in local, national and global orders, necessitating the exploration of a variety of avenues in the hope that at least one will prove successful. Their attempts are made more difficult by the fact that state and media representations mask the economic and social materials from which roads to progreso are built and which determine who may follow them. Finding hidden routes and forging new means of movimiento is not easy for people whose first concern is to make a living.

This thesis demonstrates how integrating two main scholarly approaches to the anthropology of the Caribbean (race, class and globalisation on the one hand, and cultural dualism on the other) can illuminate the experiences of people who are localised *by* and *within* global structures. Race, class and globalisation have long been present in accounts of Caribbean life. This can be the case because structures that develop from trans-Atlantic history continue to shape and stratify the lives of the region's people and their politics. However, recent ethnography suggests that this body of literature may not tell the whole story. Peter Wilson's *Crab Antics* (1973) and Daniel Miller's writing on

modernity, dualism and material objectification (1987; 1994) comprise a more interpretive approach, which emphasizes the creation of cultural value from within a society. This work explores how specificities arise in localised contexts out of the structural conditions that are common to the region. For example, Miller describes how cultural dualism has arisen in Trinidad out of their experiences of modernity coupled with their historical experiences and contemporary characteristics.

These two approaches – the first focusing on transnational structures, and the second on local cultural specificities – provide valid and *complementary* accounts of Caribbean life. As Constance Sutton (1974) suggests, analytically separating these social and cultural layers shows that the creation of cultural value always takes place within a context of power relations. An emphasis on the *bases* of stratification in the sphere of production need not preclude an examination of the ways in which projects of self-creation, such as through material objectifications, allow for the elaboration of cultural value and meaning for individuals and social groups. This thesis, then, has developed a social and political economy of value in Caribbean life to integrate these concerns.

The thesis was designed to address the wider structures of Caribbean social life as well as the forms of value specific to Dominican national culture and the lives of La Ciénaga's residents. In Chapter 2 I discussed the Dominican Republic's history in terms of its transnational context to demonstrate how race, class, and ethnicity have been rendered in Dominican national culture and the implications of these for Dominican social life. I introduced Santo Domingo as a stratified space in which the barrios and their people are marked by these historical exigencies and the nation's current position in the global economy.

In Chapter 3 I demonstrated how important control of space and the characteristics of space are for these popular struggles. La Ciénaga's *centrality* rendered it a suitable place of residence for people whose livelihoods were tied to the city, while its *marginality* as land of little value and irregular administration allowed poor people to occupy the space and build a community. Not surprisingly,

the community's politics arose from their attempts to make the barrio liveable and gain legal control, or at least recognition, of their claims to it.

Chapter 4 described how a crucial aspect of place-making is the objectification of social relations in space. The availability of land in La Ciénaga provided the opportunity for migrants to create households close to their relatives, thereby avoiding what many residents see as a rejection of traditional Dominican sociality elsewhere in the city. The ability to construct a house over time, as resources permit, provides an alternative to the rental market, as well as an avenue for economic advancement and the social reproduction of the family.

Up to this point, my analysis concentrated on the formation of the community and a sociality among its residents. In Chapter 5, I problematised this sense of unity amid struggle by showing how hierarchies are elaborated within the community on the basis of material wealth, ethnicity and perception of moral value. I illustrated how notions of respectability and reputation (Wilson 1973) are implied in a local idiom of arriba and abajo, which residents deploy to classify spaces and the people who belong to them in a local moral geography. This moral geography is not specific to La Ciénaga, but reflects a larger ideology that criminalises the poor barrios located abajo and suggests that the poor cannot live as moral beings in the city.

In Chapter 6 I explored how cienigüeros *internalise* aspects of this citywide moral geography that is consistent with their own views of the barrio's material poverty and levels of crime and violence. However, they *reject* the way in which this moral geography casts all residents as immoral beings and propose a position for themselves closer to the middle of the city's status order. I show how their centrist position can be in part explained by a history of state violence that has limited oppositional politics in the past few decades. I argued that, given the continuation of this climate of violence today, it is not surprising that local politics are concerned with re-situating the community within the city's moral geography rather than overturning it altogether. It is in this context that the elaboration of self and society through material objectifications can be appreciated as a political, as well as a personal, struggle.

More generally, my data point to some interesting features of dualism in the Dominican Republic. There is a third level of moral geography in which the state contrasts dominicanidad with haitianismo. I suggested in Chapter 1 that these oppositions may have formed from social rupture. However, there also appears to be a trend of finding a central position between oppositions. I have already explained how in La Ciénaga oppositions may appear much less in practice than in discourse. Oppositions tend to be deployed when comparing oneself to others in a situation of social rupture, but individuals tend to place themselves in a central position. For example, cienigüeros may describe themselves as middle class. At the national level, the character of the tíguere can be seen as a centrally positioned character, as he is neither delincuente nor gente seria. Furthermore, while Dominicans describe Haitians as *negro*, they describe themselves as *indio*. With the present data, it is impossible to say how widespread this tendency is, but it would be interesting to investigate this further and compare it with dualisms in other Caribbean nations.

In the final chapter, I showed how, given the many constraints that residents face, people use whichever vehicles of progress are available to *echar pa'lante*. The vast majority of residents would rather leave the barrio entirely than wait for its political organisations and the state to transform their living conditions and status. Lacking the resources to relocate, residents turn to education, social networks, churches and community politics as paths to secure employment and a ticket out. But this strategy is difficult to realise and many cienigüeros aspire to mobility for their children rather than for themselves. In describing a range of ways in which residents seek paths to progreso, I demonstrated how the state retains salience in people's lives despite their ambiguous relationships with it. Although the Catholic church looms large in local and national politics, its political role is limited to an amelioration rather than transformation. That is, it reminds the state of who its citizenry are and promotes a more inclusive view of citizenship than is commonly accepted by either the citizenry *or* the state. Furthermore, while the state often treats the poor as marginal, they in fact consider themselves to be an integral part of the nation, shaping it at the same time as it shapes them. The state makes it clear that without citizenship there is no progreso. This insistence on belonging is the basis upon which residents' claims to state resources are realised, the politics of locality are built and links between localities forged.

My focus on the relevance of church and state in local political lives, and their role as mediators with the outside world, goes against recent trends in the anthropology of the Caribbean. In these accounts, transnationalism permits localities to forge direct links with other localities, largely bypassing the state or treating it as a *technology*, rather than as integral to social and cultural processes. Yet to understand how localities may survive under globalization, let alone flourish, it is necessary to understand that the state continues to mediate 'determining social forces' (Robotham 2005:88) *as well as* shape cultural meaning on the ground. This is evident in residents' struggles to forge a particular relationship with the state, characterised by recognition of their legitimacy while maintaining some degree of autonomy. It is also evident in the fact that La Ciénaga's material environment provides residents with *capital* in the form of land, housing and sites of business. As primarily informal sector workers, this access is crucial to livelihood, social reproduction and projects of self-creation. Hence, the productive and consumptive aspects of life in the barrio cannot be separated.

Writing on favelas in Brazil, Holston (1991) has described house building as a conservative politics, but I suggest that when people's lives and livelihoods are bound so tightly to space – when their material environment is both their capital and the objectification of their social relations – their use of this space is in fact highly political. There is nothing conservative, for example, about residents rebuilding following a state eviction, land claims, young people protesting, political oppression, affirmation of respectability in the face of criminalization, or assertion of citizenship against a racist state. Nor is it conservative for residents to want to improve their material environment, gain decent employment and move out of the barrio. Rather, these are manifestations of their thorough localisation, which entails the concentration of the political and social in the one place.

This brings me back to my original research question: given the recent opening up of political space in the Dominican Republic, what possibilities are there to challenge the state, its unequal modernity and its politics of citizenship? Can Dominican civil and political society re-think racial ideologies such as antihaitianismo to imagine the Dominican people as sharing a structural position with other Caribbean and Latin American nations? I pose these questions because it seems to me that without

an idiom with which to speak of the relationship between race and social class, the politics of locality cannot effectively address the structural conditions that reproduce social hierarchy.

Some promising signs exist. First, many people are aware of globalisation and the detrimental effects it can have upon those too poor to realise its advantages. Cienigüeros learned this lesson quickly in 1984, when the peso was devalued overnight. They know their fate is tied up with that of the global economy and can identify powerful actors within it. They are well aware of the unfair conditions in free trade zone factories, the problems of investment of international capital and the insecurity of the tourist industry. People generally keep in touch with politics through a variety of forms of media and talk with each other about politics on the street. Various interested parties, local politicians, special interest groups and journalists get involved in state development projects such as the construction of new resorts.

Second, there is a trickle of something resembling 'black consciousness' into the Dominican Republic, though it is arriving four decades late and is largely routed through the United States. It is promoted by scholars, young people, the Catholic church and grassroots movements such as CONAMUCA (Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas). Recognition of a common structural position between marginalised peoples could enable a political platform from which to transform the *ideological* environment in which these struggles are played out, as well as the *material* one.

Third, it is worth pointing out that the Dominican Republic is viewed by outsiders as conservative[41], but this does not at all reflect the spectrum of politics on the ground. Leftist movements have been relatively strong since Trujillo's assassination in 1961. In September 1963 left-wing Juan Bosch was ousted from the Presidency by a right-wing military coup. By 1965 he had enough internal political support to return him to power through force – if the USA had not intervened (Calder 1984). The Juan Bosch bridge continues to bear his name as a symbol of the

[41] North American anthropologists have told me that this is because the Dominican Republic aligns itself with Europe and US, not Latin America or the Caribbean.

failed 1965 revolution in which its twin, the Duarte bridge, was successfully blockaded by civilians. Political violence during the two long reigns of Balaguer (1966-78 and 1986-96) weakened all forms of oppositional politics, democratic or not. Yet opposition survived in the form of a drawn-out ideological battle between Peña Gomez, Juan Bosch, and Joaquin Balaguer. The deaths of these leaders – in 1998, 2001 and 2002 respectively – signalled the end of this battle.

Many Dominicans lament the shift away from the ideology-based politics of those years *despite* the upheavals and insecurities they entailed. Perhaps they sense that today the stakes have been lowered and the politics have gone offshore as the project of modernity has become less about what the nation should *be* and more about how it should be situated in - and take advantage of - the global order. The problem with the state's current neoliberal agenda is that it treats the self-creation of the nation as fundamentally an *economic* rather than a *cultural* project. The part of modernity that speaks of human value is left out at precisely the moment when Dominicans are best able to realise their own self-creation. Thus 'national culture' is frozen in time, providing a sense of *rootedness* but not of *progress*. This split between *culture* as tradition and *economy* as progress is convenient for the state but denies the experiences, practices and strategies of the Dominican people.

Finally, despite their cynicism toward government slogans such as ¡e'pa'lante que vamos!, I feel that Dominicans still *believe* in the possibilities of pa'lante and modernity's progreso. They retain hope in the sort of world that both Robotham and Miller hint at: one which provides for the self-realization of the individual as a social being through global connections, whether their basis rests upon Robotham's (1998) 'global sociality' emanating from the global division of labour, or on Miller's (1994) objectifications through mass consumption realised by the market. My point is *not* that these two possibilities are equally feasible and available, rather that neither should be ignored because they are both present in the strategies and practices of marginalised people seeking to overcome their emplacement abajo el puente and achieve a modern life. Given the restrictions that cienigüeros face in their political and creative projects, respectability and place-making can be radical. After all, the bridge remains not just a symbol of economic development, but of revolution.

Glossary

abajo el puente	under the bridge
almuerzo	lunch
animadora	animator, women who help coordinate church meetings and mobilize residents to attend
antihaitianismo	anti-Haitianism
arriba	above
abajo	below
bala perdida	stray bullet
barrio	neighbourhood, usually poor
barrio caliente	hot barrio
barrio marginados	marginal neighbourhood
Barrio Seguro	Safe Barrio (police program)
batey	sugar plantation
blanco	white
bulla	noise, uproar
café dulce	sweet coffee
caliente	hot, troublesome
calle	street
callejón	alley
camino bueno	good path
campo	Country, field (rural area)
cañanda	Gulley, canal, stormwater drain
capitaleño	Resident of the capital city, Santo Domingo
carro publico	public taxi
cartón negro	particle board
casa buena	good house
caudillo	political strongman
CEB	comunidades de base (base communities)
Centro Bonó	Jesuit-run research and education centre
CES	Centro de Estudios Sociales Padre Juan Montalvo (The Father Juan Montalvo Social Studies Centre)
cédula	national identity card
chiripero	street vending or odd jobs
cienigüeros	residents of La Ciénaga
Ciudad Alternativa	Alternative City
clase obrero	working class

club de billard	billiard club
CLP	Comité de la Lucha Popular (Popular Struggle Committee)
CODECI	Comité para el Desarrollo de La Ciénaga (Committee for the Development of La Ciénaga)
colmado	small grocery store
colmadón	small grocery store with a bar
comedor	food stall or small restaurant
Comité de Ama de Casa de Mama Tingó	Committee of the Housewife Mama Tingó
CONAMUCA	Confederación Nacional para la Mujer Campesina (National Confederation of Country Women)
Confederación Campesina Mama Tingó	Mama Tingó Rural Confederation
COP	Colectivo de Organizaciónes Populares (Collective of Popular Organisations)
COPADEBA	Comité Popular para la Defensa de los Barrios (Popular Committee for the Defense of the Barrios)
corrupción	corruption, meaning moral weakness
cristo liberta	Christ liberates
culto	literally 'cult', meaning 'worship'
cultura	culture
CUT	Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (United Confederation of Workers)
delincuente	delinquent
desalojo	eviction
desorden	disorder
dominicanidad	Dominicanness
echar para adelante	throw oneself forward
ensanche	'widening', referring to a particular type of planned neighbourhood
¡E'pa'lante que vamos!	It's forward we go!
¡E'pa'fuera que vamos!	It's out we go!
Faro a Colón	Columbus Lighthouse
FLACSO	Facultad Latino Americano de Ciencias Sociales
gente de trabajo	working people
gente pobre	poor people
gente seria	serious people
guagua	mini-bus
hablando vaina	speaking rubbish, gossiping
hacer daño	do damage, cause trouble
hispanidad	Hispanic-ness
hombre de la casa	man of the house
hombre de la calle	man of the street
IFZ	Industrial Free Zone
IMF	International Monetary Fund
indio	Indian, a racial category
Junta de Vecinos	neighbourhood council
La Ciénaga	The Swamp, the name of the barrio
La Clarín	The Radio Tower, referring to a part of La Ciénaga
la mano dura	a strong hand
llegó la luz!	the light arrived!
luchar	struggle
los doce años de Balaguer	the twelve years' rule of President Balaguer from 1966-1978
malecón	waterfront
marido	common-law husband
mercardo	market

modernidad	modernity
monte	wilderness
motoconcho	motorbike
motoconchista	motorbike taxi driver
moreno	brown, a racial category
movimiento	movement
mujer sin vergüenza	shameless woman
negotiante	small business owner
negro	black, a racial category
ONE	Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas (National Statistics Office)
palacio de la policía nacional	national police palace
palomito	'little dove', meaning adolescent male sex worker.
para adelante	onwards, forwards
Pastoral Materno-Infantil	Mother-Infant Support Group
PLD	Partido de la Liberación Dominicana
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Dominicano
Proyecto Atlas Barrial	Map of the Barrios Project
POLITUR	Policía Turística (tourism police)
prieto	pitch black, a racial category
progreso	progress
PUCUMM	Pontifica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (Mother and Teacher Catholic University)
ranchito	small house made of wood, tin
residencial	planned neighbourhood
resolver	resolve problems
Revista de Estudios Sociales	Journal of Social Studies
SABAMAR	Sanitación de los Barrios Marginados (Sanitation of the marginalised Barrios
sacar adelante	take forward, move forward
tíguere	tiger, street-wise person
tigüeraje	tiger-like behaviour
trabajando para la comunidad	working for the community
tranquilidad	tranquility, peacefulness
UASD	Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (Autonomous University of Santo Domingo)
vagabondería	laziness
zona colonial	colonial zone
zona franca	Industrial Free Zone, IFZ
zona turistica	tourist zone

Appendix 1: Survey of La Ciénaga

Encuesta para el proyecto Clase Social y Cultura en La Ciénaga

SECTOR:……………………………………

FECHA:…………………………………......

General

Género M F

Año de nacimiento 19....................

Lugar de nacimiento...

¿Cual es su nacionalidad?..

Estado civil:

Casado/a..............................

Soltero/a.............................

Unión libre..........................

Separado/a..........................

Divorciado/a......................

Viudo/a…………………...

¿Cuál es la nacionalidad de su pareja?...

¿Qué color de piel dice su cedula? ....

¿Qué color de piel cree usted que tiene? Porque?

Educación

¿Qué estudios ha terminado?

....

¿Qué idiomas habla usted y a que nivel?

....

¿Qué más le gustaría estudiar?

....

Familia y Migración

¿En que año se mudó para La Ciénaga? 19...........

¿De dónde? ....

¿Con quién vive usted actualmente? (no escribe nombres)

Relación (hijo, amiga....)	Edad	M/F	Actividad (trabajar, estudiar)

¿En que otros países tiene familia?

Trabajo

¿Qué tipo de trabajo o oficios hace usted? (salariado, en casa, comunitario)

....

¿En qué zona es su trabajo?

....

¿Cuántas horas trabaja por día? ....

¿Cuánto gana usted mensual? ....

¿Es miembro de un sindicato? ¿Cual?

....

¿Cuál fue el trabajo que usted mas ha gustado, y porque?

....

¿Qué tipo de trabajo le gustaría hacer?

....

¿A qué clase social cree que pertenece usted?

....

¿Cree usted que los ricos son más felices que los pobres? ¿Por qué / por qué no?

....

Para usted, ¿es la riqueza necesaria para ser feliz? ¿Por qué/ por qué no?

....

Religión

¿Cuál es su religión?

....

¿Con qué frecuencia atende la iglesia, y donde?

....

¿En cuál otras actividades religiosas participa usted?

....

Cultura

¿Cuáles son sus pasatiempos?

....

¿Qué actividades sociales y culturales hace usted en La Ciénaga?

....

¿Cuántas veces por semana sube arriba a la ciudad y para qué?

....

¿Cuándo fue el ultimo vez que usted fue a un concierto, galería de arte, teatro o museo? Cual?

....

¿Cuándo fue el ultimo vez que usted fue a un festival, por ejemplo Carnaval, aquí en Santo Domingo o en otras partes del país? ¿Cual?

....

Información

¿Lee el periódico? ¿Cuál / con que frecuencia?

....

¿Tiene un radio? ¿A que estaciones y programas escucha, y con que frecuencia?

....

¿Tiene un TV? ¿A que canales y programas mira, y con que frecuencia?

....

Comunidad

¿Qué cosas positivas hay en La Ciénaga?

....

¿Qué cosas negativas hay en La Ciénaga?

....

¿Cuáles son los mejores zonas de La Ciénaga, y por qué?

....

¿Cuales son los peores zonas de La Ciénaga, y por qué?

....

¿Cuales son los mejores sectores o barrios de Santo Domingo, y por que?

....

¿Cuales son los peores sectores o barrios de Santo Domingo, y por qué?

....

¿Si tuviera la oportunidad, se mudaría de La Ciénaga? ¿Adónde y porqué?

....

¿Le gustaría mudar fuera del país? Dónde y para hacer que?

....

Organizaciones

¿En cuál organizaciones comunitarias o deportivas participa usted y cual es su función?

....

¿Cuales organizaciones son más importante para La Ciénaga, y porque?

....

¿Qué beneficio portan las organizaciones al barrio?

....

¿Qué más deben hacer las organizaciones para el barrio?

....

Muchas gracias por su ayuda.

Appendix 2: Survey of perceptions of Santo Domingo's barrios

Encuesta sobre crimen en Santo Domingo

Lugar ....

Fecha ....

Género M F

En que sector vive usted? ....

Cuál es su ocupación? ....

Cuántas años tiene? ....

Ha sido víctima de un crimen dentro de Sto Domingo? Qué pasó, dónde y cuando?

....

En su opinión, qué tipo de gente hacen atracos?

....

Cuáles sectores de Santo Domingo son los más peligrosos? Porque?

....

Que ha escuchado de estos sectores en los medios? Dónde? (periodico, tv, radio)

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Qué ha escuchado algunas de estos sectores de otra gente? Qué dijeron?

....

Ha visitado estos sectores? Porque o porque no?

....

Que tipo de gente viven en estos sectores?

....

14) Qué deben hacer para combatir el crimen en Santo Domingo?

Appendix 3: Report on Survey of La Ciénaga's community organisations

Análisis de Encuesta para el proyecto Clase Social y Cultura en La Ciénaga

Agosto 2005

INTRODUCCIÓN Y METODOLOGÍA

Esta encuesta fue realizada como parte de el proyecto Clase Social y Cultura. La encuesta forma parte de mis investigaciones para mi grado doctorado en Antropología Social de la Universidad de Sydney, Australia.

Encuestamos 50 personas en cada uno de los 6 sectores de La Ciénaga, dando un total de 300 personas. La encuesta se realizó durante Agosto 2005, lunes a viernes durante el día.

El objeto de la encuesta fue conocer las opiniones de los moradores de La Ciénaga acerca de una variedad de asuntos que indican en la comunidad y sus organizaciones. Por este fin la encuesta fue diseñada como más cualitativo que cuantitativo. Aún así, la encuesta contiene una selección de datos sobre género, estatus civil, migración, educación, y empleo.

Este reportaje presenta algunos de estos datos y algunos ejemplos de las respuestas a las preguntas abiertas. La fila 'encuesta1data.xl' puede estar usado para obtener más resultados

que no están presentado aquí. Espero que esta encuesta ayude a las organizaciones de La Ciénaga en su búsqueda para soluciones a los problemas del barrio.

Cordialmente,

Lic. Erin Taylor

Octubre 2005

CARACTERÍSTICAS DE LOS ENCUESTADOS

Género por sector

	M	F
1. San Ignacio	17	33
2. La Esperanza	13	37
3. Nuevo Renacer	18	32
4. Maria de la Lucha	12	38
5. Camin con Jesús	20	30
6. El Arrozal	23	27
	34%	66%

Nacionalidad por sector

	Dominicano	Haitiano
1. San Ignacio	50	0
2. La Esperanza	49	1
3. Nuevo Renacer	49	1
4. Maria de la Lucha	49	1
5. Camin con Jesús	50	0
6. El Arrozal	48	2
	98.4%	1.6%

Edad del encuestado por sector

	-18	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
1. San Ignacio	2	10	9	12	5	6	2
2. La Esperanza	2	17	6	11	5	8	2
3. Nuevo Renacer	0	11	12	10	9	6	4
4. Maria de la Lucha	2	17	13	8	7	2	1
5. Caminando con Jesús	5	12	6	6	13	6	2
6. El Arrozal	0	15	19	9	8	3	1
	3.6%	27.3%	21.6%	18.6%	15.6%	10.3%	4%

Lugar de nacimiento

1. La Ciénaga 17.6%
2. San Juan de la Mag. 10.3%
3. Barahona 9%
4. Santo Domingo 8.3%
5. Neyba 6.6%
6. Elias Piña 6.3%
7. Cotuey 4.6%
8. Santiago 3%
9. Moca 2.6%
10. Yamasá 2.3%
11. Haití 1.6%

Estado civil por sector

	Casado	Soltero	Unión libre	Separado	Divorciado	Viudo
1. San Ignacio	2	15	28	1	0	4
2. La Esperanza	7	8	30	0	0	5
3. Nuevo Renacer	5	17	22	2	0	4
4. Maria de la Lucha	11	16	22	0	0	1
5. Camin. con Jesús	10	14	22	1	0	3
6. El Arrozal	7	7	35	1	0	0
	14%	25.6%	53%	1.6%	0%	5.6%

TRABAJO

Ocupación por género y sector (más común respuestas)

	1. San Ignacio		2. La Esperanza		3. Nuevo Renacer		4. Maria de la Lucha		5. Camin con Jesús		6. El Arrozal		TOTAL
Tipo de trabajo	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Domestica	0	3	0	13	0	15	0	19	0	13	0	17	26%
Ninguno	2	1	2	3	9	9	5	7	4	4	0	1	19%
En la casa	1	19	0	11	0	5	0	5	0	3	0	1	15%
Negociante	0	5	3	2	5	0	0	2	3	3	8	3	11%
Chiripero	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	3%
Seguridad	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2%

El sueldo mínimo reportado es 800 pesos mensual para un comerciante, y el máximo es 15,000 para albañilería y 'salariado'. Otros ejemplos eran ($DOP mensual):

2000 – negociante

6000 – comerciante

1500 – limpia una oficina

2000-5400 – domestica

5000 – pescador

1500-5600 – seguridad

6800 – lavar en una clínica

8000 – chiripeo

15,000 – colmado

5600 – zona franca

8000 - mecánica

EDUCACIÓN

Nivel de estudios logrado por sector

	Ninguno	Primaria	Segundaria	Bachiller	Universitario
1. San Ignacio	8	30	10	1	1
2. La Esperanza	5	30	7	3	4
3. Nuevo Renacer	6	37	1	4	2
4. Maria de la Lucha	5	32	9	3	1
5. Caminando con Jesús	4	31	13	1	1
6. El Arrozal	5	29	6	8	2
	11%	63%	15.3%	6.6%	3.6%

¿Qué más le gustaría estudiar?

	M	F	Total
Nada	32	55	29%
Algo, no sé qué	15	28	12%
Bachiller	5	24	10%
Ingeniería	14	12	9%
Derecho	6	11	6%

Medicina	3	8	4%
Idiomas	6	4	3.2%
Belleza	0	9	3.%
Computadores	2	6	2.6%
Contabilidad	0	6	2%
Mercadera	3	2	1.6%
Profesora	0	5	1.6%

MIGRACIÓN

Año de llegada a La Ciénaga por sector

	-1960	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2005
1. San Ignacio	1	3	19	16	8	5
2. La Esperanza	0	4	15	16	8	5
3. Nuevo Renacer	0	1	5	24	15	3
4. Maria de la Lucha	1	1	8	19	12	9
5. Caminando con Jesús	0	2	19	11	6	1
6. El Arrozal	0	0	7	16	9	4
	.06%	3.6%	24.3%	34%	19.3%	9%

Religión

¿Cuál es su religión?

	Católico	Pentecostal	Nada	Cristiano	Adventista	Jehová
1. San Ignacio	33	5	7	5	0	0
2. La Esperanza	30	10	7	1	2	0
3. Nuevo Renacer	32	5	8	2	0	3
4. Maria de la Lucha	28	5	9	4	2	1
5. Camin. con Jesús	33	10	4	3	0	0
6. El Arrozal	35	7	6	3	0	0
	63%	14%	13.6%	6%	1.3%	1.3%

¿Con qué frecuencia asiste a la iglesia?

	2+ semanal	Semanal	A veces	No voy
1. San Ignacio	4	9	19	16
2. La Esperanza	9	6	19	16
3. Nuevo Renacer	12	4	13	21
4. Maria de la Lucha	11	10	14	13
5. Caminando con Jesús	13	12	9	22
6. El Arrozal	7	3	22	16
	18.6%	14.6%	32%	34.6%

CULTURA

Esta sección muestra que los residentes de La Ciénaga tienen una baja participación en la vida social de Santo Domingo. A la pregunta ¿Cuáles son sus pasa tiempos?, las respuestas más comunes eran, 'mirar televisión', 'descansar', 'jugar domino' y 'beber mi traguito'. Cuando preguntamos, ¿Qué actividades sociales y culturales hace usted en La Ciénaga?, la mayoría dijeron, 'nada', una minoría mencionaron jugar deportes o asistir a organizaciones comunitarias.

A la pregunta, ¿Cuándo fue la ultima vez que usted fue a un concierto, galería de arte, teatro o museo? 35% de los encuestados dijeron que nunca han ido a tal cosa. Más común es la participación en el Carnaval de Santo Domingo o el Festival de Merengue. Aún así, La Ciénaga tiene una grande población que casi no sale de La Ciénaga, ni para ir al mercado.

INFORMACIÓN

¿Lee el periódico? ¿Cuál?

	Listín Diario	El Nacional	El Día	Diario Libre	Hoy	Cualquier	Ninguno
1. San Ignacio	7	4	2	11	3	6	16
2. La Esperanza	11	12	1	9	2	8	6
3. Nuevo Renacer	0	1	0	1	0	22	30
4. Maria de la Lucha	3	0	3	10	3	13	21
5. Camin. con Jesús	4	4	1	13	1	13	12
6. El Arrozal	2	1	0	10	0	19	17
	9%	7%	2%	18%	3%	27%	34%

Muy poca gente que leen el periódico lo compran. Lo leen en su lugar de trabajo o lo consiguen de otra gente. Lo más popular era Diario Libre con 18% de los encuestados. Caminando con

Jesús tenía lo más alta numero de personas que dicen que leen el periódico a 46 y Nuevo Renacer lo más bajo con 24.

¿Tiene un radio?

	Si	No
1. San Ignacio	33	17
2. La Esperanza	27	23
3. Nuevo Renacer	27	23
4. Maria de la Lucha	42	8
5. Camin. con Jesús	33	17
6. El Arrozal	28	22
	63%	37 %

¿Tiene un TV?

	Si	No
1. San Ignacio	34	16
2. La Esperanza	34	16
3. Nuevo Renacer	34	16
4. Maria de la Lucha	45	5
5. Camin. con Jesús	36	14
6. El Arrozal	37	13
	73%	27 %

¿Qué cosas positivas hay en La Ciénaga?

	1. San Ignacio	2. La Esperanza	3. Nuevo Renacer	4. Maria de la Lucha	5. Camin. con Jesús	6. El Arrozal	TOTAL
Nada o muy poco	21	15	18	11	3	15	28%
El arreglo del barrio	4	10	15	14	11	10	21%
La escuela, preescolar	4	6	5	14	21	18	17%
Las iglesias	4	3	3	9	13	8	13%
El destacamento, patrullo	2	5	2	9	0	12	10%
La gente, comunidad	4	5	0	9	7	2	9%
Hay mucha agua	6	4	3	2	5	2	7%
Cerca de la ciudad	6	1	3	1	5	2	6%
Los deportes, la cancha	4	5	0	1	2	2	5%
Hay mucha luz	2	3	3	2	1	2	4%

¿Qué cosas negativas hay en La Ciénaga?

	1. San Ignacio	2. La Esperanza	3. Nuevo Renacer	4. Maria de la Lucha	5. Camin. con Jesús	6. El Arrozal	TOTAL
Delincuencia, tigueraje	31	26	33	39	32	23	61%
Contaminación, basura	9	6	6	15	2	16	21%
Robos, ladrones	12	10	8	8	6	6	17%
Drogas	6	5	5	9	5	4	11%
Violencia	11	7	3	5	4	2	10%
Falta de desarrollo	4	2	4	5	5	7	9%
Ruido	2	5	1	2	8	9	9%
Corrupción	2	5	0	1	6	2	5%
Armas	1	2	5	3	3	1	5%
Falta de energía	2	2	3	4	2	0	4%

¿Cuáles son las mejores zonas de La Ciénaga, y por qué?

Gente de todos los sectores están de acuerdo que Clarín es uno de las mejores zonas de La Ciénaga. Había una tendencia a nombrar el sector en el que el respondiente vive.

La gente de San Ignacio denominaron su propia zona, especialmente la Calle la Marina, el parque, Calle Primera y Respaldo 9 como la mejor zona.

Los encuestados de La Esperanza dijeron generalmente Clarín, Calle 5, o que no hay una zona buena en La Ciénaga.

En Nuevo Renacer, dijeron Clarín, o que no hay zona buena. Muy poco dijeron que su propio sector era el mejor.

María de la Lucha y El Arrozal respondieron Clarín y Calle La Marina

Las personas de Caminando con Jesús opinaban Clarín y la Respaldo Clarín, casi sin excepción.

¿Cuales son los peores zonas de La Ciénaga, y por qué?

Las respuestas dependieron de dónde vive actualmente los encuestados. Hubo gente que defendieron el sector donde viven.

Para los moradores de San Ignacio y La Esperanza, los peores sitios son La Cañada, Los Cocos, y la Calle 9.

La gente de Nuevo Renacer dijeron que su propia zona es la peor, seguido por La Cañada y Los Cocos

En María de la Lucha, respondieron con una mezcla de la Calle 9, una parte de Los Cocos, La Cañada, Los Cartones, La Pata de la Vaca, la parte de abajo, y la orilla del río.

Los encuestados de Caminando con Jesús respondieron mayormente la Calle 9, El Arrozal, Calle 5 y la orilla de río.

¿Si tuviera la oportunidad, se mudaría de La Ciénaga? ¿Adónde?

19 personas dijeron 'no': 1 en San Ignacio, 4 de La Esperanza, 3 de Nuevo Renacer, 3 en María de la Lucha, 7 de Caminando con Jesús, y 1 en El Arrozal.

Mucha gente respondieron que la única manera con que van a tener la posibilidad de salir de aquí es si son desalojado, especialmente los de El Arrozal.

La mayoría de la gente en todos los sectores dijeron que quieren mudarse para 'un sitio más tranquilo' y no tenían preferencia. Lugares mencionados fueron Las Américas, Brisa del Este, Los Mameyes, Zona Colonial, San Cristóbal, Ensanche Ozama, María Auxiliadora o 'un residencial'.

ORGANIZACIÓNES

¿Participa en organizaciones comunitarias o deportivas?

Los que dijeron 'sí' eran:

San Ignacio: 24%

La Esperanza: 38%

Nuevo Renacer: 22%

María de la Lucha: 28%

Caminando con Jesús: 34%

El Arrozal: 14%

Los Juntas de Vecinos y los clubes deportivos eran los más mencionados.

¿Cuales organizaciones son lo más importante para La Ciénaga?

	1. San Ignacio	2. La Esperanza	3. Nuevo Renacer	4. María de la Lucha	5. Camin con Jesús	6. El Arrozal	TOTAL
Junta de Vecin	18	17	14	15	13	2	26%
No sé	12	3	16	22	5	12	23%
Las Iglesias	10	10	3	4	13	12	14%
CODECI	3	7	3	1	17	2	11%
SABAMAR	0	2	8	3	3	9	8%
COPADEBA	0	3	1	3	10	2	6%
Educativo	1	5	1	1	1	10	6%
Ninguno	0	1	4	1	1	6	4%
Deportivo	7	5	1	1	1	10	4%

¿Qué beneficio portan las organizaciones al barrio?

Había una variedad de respuestas. Los siguientes representan algunos de lo más comunes:

Arreglo de las calles, acueducto luz y combatir la delincuencia

Hacen diligencia para arreglan las calles y limpiar las zanjas y cañadas

Que yo sepa? No sé cuál el beneficio es que han llenado, la calle de hoyo, no sé si la arreglarán.

No aportan ningún beneficio, porque el encargados se queda con los beneficios

Solucionan problema de la luz o cualquier tipo de problema

Ayudan a la comunidad, embarazadas, haitianas, ayudan a las personas de bajo recursos

Ayudar a uno para que haya más paz y armonía

Siempre que hay un patio lleno de agua y casas dañada, la junte de Vecinos siempre aporta algo para ayudar a esa gente

Para mi le dan conocimiento a los personas y se resuelven algunos problemas como escuela y se le consejo a los jóvenes, las organizaciones comunitarias son los que dan más

Muy poco porque hay que salir a pedir mucho y no hay ayuda del gobierno ni nadie

¿Qué más deben hacer las organizaciones para el barrio?

Algunos ejemplos típicos eran:

Investigar casa por casa cómo está la situación y si van a dejar algo dejarlo ahí, porque de contrario se pierde

Combatir la delincuencia; Poner más seguridad en los callejones en el barrio

Por el desalojo de la orilla del río y la contaminación del río

Un club que luchen por la igualdad de condiciones del barrio. Que abran fuente de trabajo, para los sectores marginados.

Comedor económica, para vender comida económica, más teléfono publico

Mejorar algunos ranchos que están en mala condición. Ojalá yo que me arreglan el mío.

Ayuda a la gente que están más pobres. Ayudar a quienes verdaderamente necesitan ayuda

Centro educativos donde los jóvenes pueden ingresar

Buscar alternativa para los jóvenes que no esta haciendo y que por falta de oportunidades están sin hacer nada. Alfabetizar a la población o comunidad.

Ayudar a gente mayores. Aquí hay gente mayores que no puede trabajar y deberían ayudarle

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