DE LA ZAFRA A LAS FINCA AND FROM CLARENDON TO BELLE GLADE:
EFFECTS OF WAGE LABOR AT HOME AND WAGE LABOR ABROAD
ON PEASANT IDENTITIES

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Reading Draft

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Abstract
Drawing on information from Jamaican peasant farmers and Puerto Rican peasant fishers, this paper explores how participation in different kinds of wage labor contexts is likely to influence peasant life in the islands. The discussion involves loose comparisons between Jamaican and Puerto Rican workers in terms of their respective political statuses, experiences with ethnicity and transnationalism, and access to U.S. and insular labor markets. Particular attention is placed on relationships between the space of peasant reproduction -- the home -- and working for wages in the formal economies of the islands as opposed to working as labor migrants in the United States.

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Introduction
"At a meeting attended by 30 growers in Pahokee...very definite statements were made to the effect that the imminent arrival of the Bahamans has resulted in vastly improved work on the part of local negroes. For the first time 'in history'...all necessary labor was available on Monday morning, and negroes were heard to state that they were not going to let Nassaus run them out of their jobs


A relatively large body of anthropological, sociological, historical, economic, and political science literature documents significant differences within capitalist economic processes based on the differential use of people from different backgrounds. The literature on sexual and ethnic segmentation of labor markets argues that among capitalist labor control strategies are practices that reify or denigrate workers' genders or ethnic backgrounds in ways that influence the flows of favors and rewards. Tasks become allocated on the basis of gender, skin color, accent, language use, or a perceived sexual or ethnic predisposition toward dexterity. Observable attributes become endowed with biological, heritable characteristics, which feed back into the ways groups and individuals identify themselves, even if such identifications are in direct opposition or contradiction to, say, capitalist personnel managers' perceptions (Bourgeois 1988).

Other differences among capitalist firms and regions entail further distinctions within and between peasantries that contribute labor to multiple firms and regions. Whether peasants work in predominantly bisexualy or asexually-staffed industries, for example, might influence the ways power is reallocated between women and men back in the peasant community (Ong 1987). Or whether peasants travel from rural to rural regions or travel from rural to urban regions to work might influence allocations of tasks and time over seasons, weeks, and days. Just as gender becomes tangled up with sex, ethnicity becomes tangled up with race, Black with Jamaican, Hispanic with Mexican, peasant with Indian... out of these entanglements emerge concrete, if ambivalent, senses of self.

Feigned behavior further confuses identity. When workers adopt the expected work ethics and behaviors demanded by specific contexts, when they engage in those now notorious weapons of
the weak ("feigned compliance, dissimulation..." -- Scott 1985), do they shift between these and their "real" behaviors and attitudes as easily as, linguistically, they switch codes, or do these feigned attitudes -- these phony yet necessary acts of speech and behavior -- influence how they come to perceive themselves? Questions such as this underlie the genesis of this paper. If capitalist labor processes differentiate between workers based on such features as gender, ethnicity, and nationality, it follows that different capitalist contexts will force workers into different expected behaviors, comparisons with other workers, and different expressions of the work ethics that are preferred by their employers. The garment district of New York City, for example, is quite distinct from the free trade zones of Malaysia or the U.S.-Mexico Border Industrialization Zone, and we would thus expect them to stimulate distinct outcomes of behavior and consciousness. As part of a developing interest, in anthropology, in the relations between political economic and cultural phenomena, here I explore the implications of peasants entering labor markets in their home regions as compared to peasants entering foreign or international labor markets as migrants.

While it is relatively clear how entering foreign labor markets will have political economic implications distinct from those deriving from home labor markets (e.g. differences in legal status, wage disparities, costs of living, and mechanisms of labor control), it is less clear how a discussion of this nature will engage cultural phenomena. The relevance of culture to this discussion, however, derives from the observation that ethnicity becomes a particularly important criteria of identity, economic behavior, organization, and political consciousness when peasants migrate as wage workers into foreign, multiethnic settings. Within the realm of ethnicity, one's concrete sociology and one's cultural understanding of that sociology merge in experience and become objects of critical thought, analysis, and interpretation. Ethnic identity often contributes to the formation of transnational communities in specific ways, ways that utilize, rejuvenate, revise cultural practices to conform to the foreign, often hostile setting. Working in a home labor market, on the other hand, allows peasant workers to continue to participate in the daily reaffirmations of his or her cultural heritage.

Assigning a special importance to ethnicity in foreign labor markets is not meant to suggest that ethnicity is unimportant in one's home labor market. Yet I argue that ethnicity assumes different forms and underlies different behaviors in one's home region than in foreign, multiethnic settings. At home, the society's ethnic composition is part of one's daily sociology. As such, ethnicity at home may well be taken for granted, existing outside the realm of objective, critical thought. How ethnicity is used in the work place, the church, or in the institutions of the state draws upon and replicates the ways ethnicity "occurs" in the wider society -- a society in which a number of ethnic groups may share a common school system, a common language, and a common history. Under these circumstances, it takes crises to bring one's sociology to one's cultural understanding for a critical or interpretive look. In anthropology, we tacitly acknowledge the increased sensitivity and critical sense that derives from foreign as opposed to home environments by insisting that new members of the discipline go through a rite of passage (fieldwork) in a foreign setting.

Entering a labor market in a foreign, multiethnic setting involves a variety of behaviors and social relations that confuse the fundamental relations of power between labor and capital. At the same time, labor migrations between peasant regions and foreign labor markets influence the ways peasants interact with their homelands. Among the more obvious behaviors such migrations entail are long distance travel, remitted earnings, separation from family, reorganizations of roles, tasks, and statuses among those left behind in their households, and various phases of immigrant adjustment to the new setting. Less obviously, migrations into foreign settings often force labor migrants to comparative analysis. Not only do they see themselves in relation to "foreigners," employers force such comparisons through recruitment, hiring, and task allocation practices. According to the manager of a professional Puerto Rican recruiting firm in Southern New Jersey, for example: "We used to recruit from the sugar cane fields and get the jibaros --
the really good workers -- but now cane cutting has declined or been mechanized and we don’t get the high quality workers we used to” (Author’s field notes, interview dated July 28, 1990). Employers in South Jersey and other parts of the Eastern Seaboard who had hired Puerto Ricans confirmed the general acceptance of the manager’s statement through both their comments and their hiring practices. In eight or ten seasons prior to this interview, they had been using progressively more Mexicans, Guatemalans, and Southeast Asian refugees, claiming that they work harder and request fewer changes in conditions of employment than Puerto Rican workers. The assertiveness of Puerto Ricans, moreover, derives from their consciousness concerning their political status and the knowledge that that status gives them the right to move freely through the U.S. labor market. Their citizen status also allows them the use of legal aid and other social services, organizations that routinely help them assert their rights as workers. Jamaicans working in the U.S. possess few such rights.

From Clarendon to Belle Glade: Jamaicans Working Abroad and at Home

With the legal change from "citizen" to "alien" that usually accompanies international labor migration, the state enters one’s experience in a way that demands thought and action, stimulating some degree of political consciousness. In the Jamaican case discussed here, the state presence in the labor migration is particularly pervasive. To gain access to the BWI program, Jamaicans must first acquire "job cards" through local political action committees. These cards originate in Kingston, at the Ministry of Labour, and the numbers fluctuate from year to year depending on the conditions of the labor pool and other features of labor demand in the sugar fields of South Florida. According to a 1982 Minister of Parliament (MP) from Clarendon Parish, rural parishes receive more job cards than urban ones; the MP distributes them to his or her appointees, who distribute them to their appointees, who are committee chair persons (campaign organizers, primarily) affiliated with the MP’s political party. These committee chairs are generally middleage or elderly women and men, either peasants themselves or tightly linked to the peasantry by network and kinship ties. They receive three to five cards, which are further distributed to other committee members and, finally, to the young men, usually kinsmen, who either become eligible for the program or use their cards in their own tangled relations (e.g. paying debts or gaining access to land).

The important thing to note here is that state penetration possesses a familiar quality, bound up with patronage, kinship, friendship, and ties of obligation which are thereby charged or enhanced by the power of the state; these charged social and cultural arenas, in turn, feed the legitimacy of the state. As the potential farmworker is drawn further into these webs of labor recruitment, however, the exercise of power becomes progressively more raw. Receiving a job card, the prospective farmworker travels to his parish capital early one designated morning and, along with around three hundred others, files through a line where recruiters from the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Jamaican Ministry of Labour, and the sugar industry spend two to five minutes per worker, checking their hands for callouses and their eyes and teeth for general indicators of health. Further probing picks at workers’ attitudes -- toward hard work, toward difficult living conditions, toward critical thinking. "They don’t want you to be too clever," says one speaker in Stephanie Black’s recent documentary, H-2 Worker, referring to the South Florida sugar companies. Workers I interviewed in Jamaica, in the hours following one of these screening sessions, said that the men simply nodded and said, "Yes, boss," to questions like, "Can you eat rice and pork three times a day?" and, "No, boss," to questions like, "Are you going to want Sunday off?"

If they pass these cursory examinations their names are entered into the ledger listing the labor pool, if the pool is low, they stand a good chance of being selected for the program. At selection, the state presence thickens, envelopes: in Kingston they are poked, needled, examined, tested for disease, and then herded onto airplanes and shuttled to South Florida. At the West Palm Beach
airport, customs officials screen them further, after which sugar company buses take them inland, to the labor camps. Their stay in the U.S. is highly regulated by their special legal status, which leads them to confront issues of legal status and citizenship, if only by abiding by the rules in South Florida. Resistance is possible, involving leaving the sugar fields and becoming an illegal alien; such an action clearly involves serious consideration of questions of citizenship and legal status, especially in the years since immigration reform.

Jamaican peasants who remain in Jamaica to work need not confront the state over questions of legal status and citizenship. Their right to remain in Jamaica is never an issue, never something that need be asserted. While their relations with the state may sometimes seem authoritarian, involving the exercise of raw power, relations between government programs or agencies and the peasantry tend to be embedded in the same familiar and multifaceted networks of patronage that dictate the flows of job cards through the countryside. Such political benevolence derives from the state's need for legitimacy. Like the job cards, however, political favors are far from equitably dispersed.

In the Two Meetings Watershed, where I conducted most of my Jamaican fieldwork, one of the principal employers of the peasantry was a USAID-sponsored project, the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP), which provided contracts to peasant farmers to clear hillsides and plant pine trees as part of their overall mission of checking soil erosion. Similar to other public works programs, as well as to the job card distribution network, these contracts are awarded on the basis of political patronage; as such, they are not only embedded in other social relations, they are capable of endowing those social relations with power and thereby enhancing other relations within the peasantry. For example, during the early 1980s, government contracts from the IRDP served as occasions for "well-connected" peasants (those capable of securing the contracts) to assemble crews of workers to help clear hillsides, plant pine trees, etc. under the contract. These crews were composed of members of the peasant's cooperative labor group, and they were assembled, organized, and set to tasks under essentially the same arrangements as those guiding exchange labor relations, with one significant difference: crews assembled to perform government contract work were paid as well as fed, provided rum and ganja, allowed flexibility in their scheduling, given "chocolate" breaks, and so forth. These labor relations thus served to strengthen ties between households, ties that could be used during high seasonal labor demand periods. Out of these cooperative labor arrangements emerge other deals between peasant households, where, for example, poorer peasants acquire access to land by working for wealthier, often older peasants.

Jamaican peasants traveling to the U.S. to work must withdraw, if only temporarily, from these cooperative labor groups. Access to wage labor income in the context of work abroad is more likely to result in hiring of workers on the peasant farm than in struggling to maintain one's "day-for-day" or "morning sport" (cooperative labor) relations. Peasants complain that cooperative work crews are less productive than hired crews, coming late, leaving early, and working at a leisurely pace, even though meals, chocolate (i.e. "breaks"), and rum and ganja are being provided. Hiring workers allows more control over production schedules and entails power over one or more individuals, thus initiating changes in the character of relations among households.

Hiring workers, as opposed to utilizing cooperative work groups, is something that is particularly telling in the context of housebuilding, because in this context the use of labor merges with the consumption habits of international migrants. As we know from a variety of sources, international labor migrants tend to use their overseas earnings primarily on shoes, clothes, small appliances, and jewelry, secondarily on improving housing, and finally on "investments" in a capitalist sense of purchasing and using ("consuming") means of production. Among these three uses of international earnings, it is usually the case that all money they are able to spare after meeting immediate consumer needs is channeled toward housing. Once housing needs are minimally satisfied, earnings tend to go into productive assets. Peasants working for wages in
home labor markets, although they aspire to improving their housing, usually use earnings to flesh out household incomes and meet daily costs of living, primarily because wages from jobs in Jamaica are usually far lower than wages in the U.S., Canadian, England, or other labor markets in the so-called "developed" world, too low to fund a project as costly as adding another room to a house. Instead, to meet housing demands, Jamaican peasants without access to sufficient incomes fall back on their cooperative labor groups and utilize cheaper construction materials (- primarily thatch, bamboo, or lumber instead of concrete). This practice is particularly significant in the context of housing, because family formation, housing, and cooperative labor, historically, have been closely related in the Jamaican countryside. Young men moving in with their first wives or "baby mothers" typically enlist the aid of a group of friends to build them a small, one room house. Subsequent additions to the dwelling then depend on income, available materials, and access to either hired or cooperative labor. Peasants who travel to the U.S. and return to use their earnings for housing tend to hire workers instead of relying on cooperative work groups. Those who continue to rely on cooperative labor, however, also continue contributing to the idea of the reproduction of family and household based on collective labor instead of on asymmetrical power relations. This alters the nature of the house, the thing being produced to be consumed through living, by altering the quality of the production-consumption relationship noted by Marx in his discussion of "consumptive production:"

"Production... is also immediately consumption, consumption is also immediately production. Each is immediately its opposite. But at the same time a mediating movement takes place between the two. Production mediates consumption; it creates the latter's material; without it, consumption would lack an object. But consumption also mediates production, in that it alone creates for the products the subject for whom they are products" (Marx 1978 [1857-58]: 229).

If we accept that production and consumption mediate one another, and that a house is both a setting for production (i.e. reproduction) and a thing consumed as a home, we would expect that housing would assume a different place in the lives of peasants who build with cooperative labor than among peasants who use hired workers. Raymond Williams notes similar productive consumption/consumptive production relationships at work in his consideration of Jane Austen's portrayals of struggles for social position of those around her:

"The land is seen as primarily an index of revenue and position; its visible order and control are a valued product, while the process of working it is hardly seen at all. Jane Austen then reminds us, yet again, of the two meanings of improvement, which were historically linked but in practice so often contradictory. There is the improvement of soil, stock, yields, in a working agriculture. And there is the improvement of houses, parks, artificial landscapes, which absorbed so much of the actually increasing wealth...This conversion of good income into good conduct was no automatic process. Some of the conscious improvers are seen as they were: greedy and calculating materialists. But what is crucial is that the moral pretension is taken so seriously that it becomes a critique: never of the basis of the formula, but coolly and determinedly of its results, in character and action" (Williams 1973: 115-16).

In the Jamaican countryside, the notion of "bitterness" engages this discrepancy between those who are "conscious improvers" and those who are converting "good income into good conduct" in ways that meet with other peasants' approval. Those who were able to build large homes of concrete, using skilled, hired labor, though often envied, were also portrayed by others as being overly acquisitive; they, in turn, portrayed those who derided their improvement as being "bitter." The irony facing Jamaican labor migrants who build housing with hired workers is that their improvement -- though based on the highly approved of, desirable conversion of income into the setting of domestic living -- takes place through the capitalist mediums of power, inequality, and labor control.
De La Zafra a Las Fincas: Puerto Ricans Working at Home and Abroad

The special political status of Puerto Rico underlies the distinctively different experiences of Puerto Ricans, as compared to Jamaicans, in wage labor markets both in Puerto Rico and on the U.S. mainland. Unlike Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans traveling to distant, multiethnic labor markets on the U.S. mainland do not undergo a change in legal status. While the two islands differ regarding the political status of their peoples, until quite recently Puerto Rico's development has not been qualitatively different from Jamaica's. Like Jamaica, the historical trajectory of capital development and associated wage labor opportunities have passed through phases marked by: 1) a predominance of plantation agriculture combined with mixed, smallholder, peasant fishing and farming; 2) a slow expansion of the public sector and associated jobs creation programs; and 3) an increase, in the past 20 years, in service, manufacturing, and tourist industries as the agricultural sector has declined. Indeed, Puerto Rico's famous "Operation Bootstrap" was a model for Caribbean development. Jamaica was one of many Caribbean nations to attempt economic development along the same lines as Puerto Rico. This is not to say, however, that the two islands have followed parallel paths of development. The quantitative dimensions of Puerto Rico's economic and social infrastructure have been distinctive in the Caribbean. Further, with the Caribbean Basin Initiative, Puerto Rico has assumed a new role in the Caribbean, as an "overseer" of the development of other Caribbean nations, providing a wide range of financial, insurance, and other professional services. Historically, as well, Puerto Rico's experience has been flavored significantly by the special relationship between Puerto Rico's peasant/rural proletariat and the agricultural and other low-wage, low-skill labor markets of the U.S. mainland. In reconstructing the life histories of peasant fishers in Puerto Rico, we found that working in the sugar cane harvest ("la zafra") often served as a stepping stone to working in the agricultural harvests of the U.S. ("las fincas"). While the two jobs could have been combined during the same year, since the cane harvest is a winter activity and most U.S. agricultural harvests are summer activities, among peasant fishers it was more common to move, seasonally, between their small scale fishing operations and jobs in "la zafra" or "las fincas," rather than move from the sugar harvest to the summer vegetable harvests of the Eastern and Midwestern U.S. A common life-progression we learned of in our life history study involved working for a number of years in the sugar cane fields followed by working for a number of seasonal migrations to the mainland; with the decline of plantation agriculture in Puerto Rico, a variety of factors have altered this life-progression.

First, agriculture's decline, beginning in the 1940s, has been accompanied by an expansion of the public sector, an increase in long-term migration to the mainland (into factory or other low-wage labor jobs), and, later, the growth of government, service, manufacturing, and tourist job opportunities in Puerto Rico. The expansion of the public sector in Puerto Rico is significant for a number of reasons. Clearly, public sector growth was intimately linked to the unemployment created by declining plantation agricultural production. Not only were training and jobs programs initiated for Puerto Rican jobs, programs were available for placing Puerto Ricans into low-wage jobs on the mainland and into military service, particularly during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. From 1917 to the present, the dynamic that has existed between Puerto Rican and mainland labor markets has created "transnational" Puerto Rican households, networks, and communities. Well-established communities of Puerto Ricans in Chicago and the Northeast provide the social and cultural infrastructures that ease migration between the island and the mainland. Yet the low-wage labor markets of the mainland are undergoing change as well. Currently, within those sectors of the Northeast and Midwest economies that have been targeted by Puerto Rican peasant fishermen in the past (e.g. farm work, factory work, tourism, construction), employers have begun recruiting new and illegal immigrant Mexicans, Central Americans, and refugees from Southeast Asia. Jamaicans who "escape" or leave the BWI program, becoming illegal aliens, also contribute workers to these low-wage, often high turnover sectors of the economy. The resulting ethnic diversity in farms and factories once staffed fully or primarily by Puerto Ricans (e.g. the New Jersey nursery industry) has created both problems and opportuni-
ties for Puerto Ricans. On the one hand, as Spanish speakers who often know some English as well, they have been able to move into occupational niches as linguistic brokers, becoming foremen, crew leaders, labor contractors and recruiters, etc. Similarly, they are often perceived by employers, perhaps erroneously, as appropriate cultural liaisons between the growing Hispanic low-wage work force in the U.S. and employers who recruit them.

Yet far greater numbers of Puerto Ricans have found themselves pushed out of the circles of network recruiting, losing their jobs to newer and more easily exploitable immigrants. These experiences, combined with generally improved knowledge bases about their rights as citizen-workers, have moved many Puerto Ricans to political organization and consciousness, which they have shown to be able to put to good use within the politics of fishing associations in Puerto Rico.

The recent expansion of wage labor jobs in Puerto Rico has not stimulated similar responses within Puerto Rico, however. Development organized around 936 companies has been accomplished with comprehensive hegemonic arguments about the importance of these industries to the island and the necessity of keeping wages low and workers docile. The workers themselves have internalized many of these arguments, associating labor unions with communist insurgency and its associated atheism, boredom, food lines, and other highly publicized, skewed portrayals of Cuba under Castro. Further, wage labor environments in Puerto Rico are rarely as multiethnic of environments as their counterparts on the U.S. mainland. While gender has become a part of the 936 companies' strategies of labor control, Puerto Rican society is not ethnically differentiated enough to be useful to such strategies. Ethnic difference that do exist are subtle, subtly recognized, and quite often overshadowed by common linguistic patterns, religious beliefs and practices, schooling, visiting patterns, house designs, and other features of a Puerto Rican's daily sociology. Most Puerto Ricans do differentiate themselves from Dominicans, Cubans, Anglos, and others, but the available evidence suggests that this is only just beginning to effect task allocation or labor control inside manufacturing firms or tourist hotels (Baerga and Thompson 1990).

The mere fact that ethnicity enters into labor relations on the mainland while having little relevance in Puerto Rican labor markets, however, cannot alone account for the different ways Puerto Ricans experience capitalist labor relations at home and abroad. Yet the discrepancy between the two contexts cannot be lost on those who have worked in both contexts, particularly when comparisons between Puerto Ricans and other ethnic groups become central in disputes over questions of access to sectors of the labor market. Periodically, questions of this nature emerge in the context of the H-2 program, specifically because many officials in the Department of Labor believe that Puerto Ricans, as domestic workers, should be offered the sugar and apple jobs before the Jamaicans. In the late 1970s, for example, the U.S. Department of Labor attempted to force West Virginia and Virginia apple growers to hire Puerto Ricans, going so far as to bring in plane loads of Puerto Ricans and housing them at local hotels. By the time the Puerto Ricans arrived, however, local growers already had Jamaicans picking the crop. The incident grew progressively more problematic and complex, engendering a great deal of public reaction, and eventually led to a legal dispute between the Department of Labor and the growers. The relevant point here, however, is that during the time that the Jamaicans and Puerto Ricans shared the same "labor market space," in apple country around Martinsburg, West Virginia, they became the subject of public comparison: editorials and local newspaper reporters cast the Jamaicans as hard-working, productive, currently gainfully employed workers while characterizing the Puerto Ricans as welfare cases who were staying at local hotels and making long distance phone calls back to Puerto Rico at the taxpayers' expense. Such comparisons could not have been lightly received by the Puerto Ricans. Recent observations of Bearga and Thompson are relevant here:

"It would seem that many Puerto Ricans suffer from what might be called the 'Puerto Rican dilemma.' The leave their country in search of better economic conditions and establish...
themselves in the United States in search of employment, better salaries and working conditions. Once there, they confront ethnic (and frequently racial) discrimination, cultural and social differences, and the absence of family and friends, all of which affect their desire to return. This Puerto Rican Dilemma often results in several journeys to the United States and back again...

The return migration underscores the fact that the Puerto Rican people share strong cultural ties, bound by family, language, custom and national sentiment, whether or not they are nationalists politically. Put another way, the migrants may leave in their capacity as wage laborers but they return in their capacity as Puerto Ricans” (1990: 670-71).

The Department of Labor’s attempt to place Puerto Ricans into these H-2 jobs represents part of a much broader government response to rising unemployment in Puerto Rico accompanying and following the decline of the plantation economy. The state’s job placement and training programs were supplemented by two schemes designed to provide housing to the rural and urban poor: the parcelas and the caserios. A consideration of these housing schemes here is relevant because of the significance of housing not only among Caribbean peasants, as noted in our earlier discussion of Jamaica, but also in the overall migration and economic decisions of Caribbean residents.

The parcelas and caserios, though both sponsored by the Commonwealth, represented two distinctly different approaches to the Puerto Rican housing problem. In the parcelas, families were given plots in areas designated for settlement; these areas were provided with basic services (water, electricity, infrastructure, etc.) and settlers awarded title to plots then constructed their own homes with their own materials and labor, often drawing upon community work groups. According to Garcia-Passalacqua and Heine (1988),

"The government provided a minimal infrastructure in the form of roads and utilities but, by and large, the parcelas are the product of the residents’ own efforts and community work -- the outcome of both individual and collective attempts to resolve a densely populated island’s serious housing problem. The result is a Gemeinschaft of private home owners who, whatever their other problems may be, share pride of a place marked by strong community bonds" (1988: 21-22, quoted in Griffith and Valdes Pizzini 1990: 10).

The parcelas approach to the Puerto Rican housing crisis led to a variety of housing styles capable of expressing both individual tastes and the flavor of the community.

The caserios, however, similar to the notorious "Projects" of the inner cities of the U.S., were wholly designed and built with government funds and subsequently rented to occupants for amounts that varied according to income. These are concrete, block-like dwellings that few Puerto Ricans can use for self-expression; in some of the more rural municipalities (outside San Juan, Ponce, Mayaguez, and Arecebo), many of the units stand abandoned and crumbling. Further, the rental policies of the caserios, where rents vary according to incomes, encourage participation in the informal sectors of the Puerto Rican economy, since incomes in the informal sectors of the economy are easier to hide. These activities include peasant fishing and other "peasant" or "cottage" economic activities (trading, food processing, crafts production, etc.). Indeed, in a related paper, we recently noted that peasant fishers sometimes levy injury claims against corporations, claiming they can no longer work, and then work "secretly" as fishers while collecting disability payments.

While caserios residents are encouraged to engage in informal economic activities, the incentives to emigrate from the caserios to the mainland remain. First, the caserios do not adequately address the housing problem for Puerto Ricans who still dream of owning their own home. Second, as the setting for drug traffic, gang violence, crime, etc., the caserios are easy to leave.
Their association with social service agencies further allows caserios residents access to job placements through the U.S. Employment Service, which include openings on the U.S. mainland.

The caserios dwellers find themselves pulled toward the economic opportunities in the Puerto Rican informal economy, while simultaneously pushed toward work on the mainland. Owners of homes in the parcelas, on the other hand, having satisfied their housing needs at least partially, have fewer incentives to migrate. At the same time, some wage work opportunities on the island allow parcelas dwellers to move between small-scale fishing and wage work in a complementary way. These include fishers working seasonally (as in a tourist related industry) in the formal sector and fishing during the off-season as well as fishers who work part-time, fishing during those parts of the day or week they are not at their jobs. Many gears allow this, in that some (beach seines) are most productive during certain times of the day and others (traps) need only be set and checked every few days.

Among fishers we interviewed who used wage work to complement their fishing operations, however, few worked in the "936" companies that have been at the helm of Puerto Rico's "model" economic development. These companies, operating with lucrative tax breaks under section 936 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code, stand at the forefront of "export platform" production, known throughout the literature on trends in international capital as "Free Trade Zones" (FTZs).

Conclusion

In both the Jamaican and Puerto Rican cases, the presentation moved from a general discussion of labor markets, ethnicity, and the state to a more specific consideration of the place of wage work in the space of reproduction: that is, in the peasant home. Housing is important in a discussion such as this because large proportions of overseas earnings are earmarked for construction materials and the hired labor costs of house-building. Wage labor at home, however, may be more closely intertwined with the daily "consumption" of the home. Peasants often attempt to organize their participation in the formal economy around home production schedules, either seasonally or through securing part-time, flexible employment with businesses in their home regions. Wages earned in their home labor markets under these circumstances tend to be directed toward the daily activities of maintaining -- of consuming -- the home. Among peasants, of course, this "home" includes domestic production, or production oriented toward reproduction, which lies at the heart of the mediation that takes place between consumption and production that Marx referred to in the passage quoted earlier.

Peasants who are able to combine home production schedules with wage work seem, at first glance, in a very rosy circumstance, even if we acknowledge that their home production subsidizes capital by absorbing much of the cost of reproducing labor supply. It is unlikely that peasants recognize that their labors subsidize capital in this way, since the children of peasant households constitute labor only potentially; even if the subsidy were recognized, would it make a difference in a peasant’s attitude toward the reproduction of his or her, or toward his or her children?

Nevertheless, four observations lead us to question the evidently complementary relations established by peasants who move regularly between wage work and peasant production. First, such peasants are not in the majority, and many of those who work in their home labor markets still yearn to migrate abroad. Second, peasants who acquire the flexibility that allows regular movement between wage work and home production acquire this flexibility, usually, at the expense of higher wages and more comprehensive benefit packages. They are usually part-time or "independent" contracting/sub-contracting workers, categories of workers that have been invented by capitalist firms for the purpose of rationalizing reduced benefits, lower wages, and less job secur-
ity. Third, the movement between capitalist and peasant production sometimes undermines the peasant's propensity to engage in political struggles involving organized labor, if for no other reason than peasant production tends to be based on time-consuming, labor-intensive attention to detail. Finally, and most importantly, the trajectory of capitalist development is toward an increasingly more regimented and disciplined work force, especially in off-shore production locations. It is these settings that Puerto Rican peasant fishers and Jamaican wage workers are more and more apt to find themselves. Under such circumstances, the opportunities to continue contributing time to cooperative or community labor projects are reduced. Continued peasant production is contingent upon the reallocation of tasks in the household, upon hiring labor, or upon recruiting new members of the enterprise through consanguineal, fictive kinship, or affinal ties. Each of these will have a distinct influence over the character of the peasant home, with corresponding changes in relations between the sexes, between generations, and between peasant households and families.

Not only has the development of capitalist labor markets involved more regimented work forces with less flexible scheduling, but the changes taking place in Caribbean labor markets are liable to further segment, internally, the home labor markets of Puerto Rico and Jamaica. Changes in the Puerto Rican economy have been accompanied by increased Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico, which has laid the basis for increased ethnic diversity in Puerto Rican labor markets. This "migration within the periphery" has been documented elsewhere in the Caribbean as well (Grasmuck 1983), suggesting increasing reliance on ethnic segmentation within the home labor markets of Puerto Ricans and Jamaicans.

NOTES:

1. Of course, that political consciousness may range from simple acknowledgement of one's constrained or limited rights in the receiving area to a critical appraisal of one's relation to capital and to the means of production in an orthodox Marxist sense. In places like Jamaica and Puerto Rico, where political campaigns bring into public discourse the rhetoric of structural dependency and political status, a range of arguments exist for the choosing, unlike the "exceptionalism" we find among U.S. workers.

2. Every year, over 10,000 British West Indians, most of them Jamaican, migrate, legally, to the U.S. to cut sugar cane in South Florida and pick apples along the Eastern Seaboard. They are issued H-2A visas, contracted to work for a single employer, and repatriated after their contract expires.

3. While Jamaicans are recruited to a number of apple harvests in the U.S. as well, far fewer Jamaicans work in apples than in sugar (around 2,000 to 3,000 in apples vs. 10,000 to 15,000 in sugar, fluctuating according to the conditions of the crops). It is primarily the sugar industry that drives labor demand for the program, and the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association organizes the migration for apple as well as sugar growers.

4. Complete withdrawal is not always necessary; I learned of wives bringing food to crews in the husband's absence, to maintain the household's standing in the group. In other cases, migrants claimed to help with plantings prior to going to South Florida, and to help with harvests immediately upon their return. However, for other reasons besides temporal and spatial problems, many migrants choose to withdraw from labor groups.

5. From 1987 to the present, Manuel Valdes Pizzini and I have been engaged in a series of studies of Puerto Rican fishermen and Puerto Rico's low-wage labor force, and it is this work that informs this portion of my discussion.
6. When I raised the issue Puerto Rican labor to a U.S. Department of Labor official involved with the H-2 certification process, he said, "Puerto Rico's the bean in the barrel." He went on to explain that the Puerto Ricans are really "supposed" to be offered the jobs first, but that the sugar and apple companies prefer Jamaicans to Puerto Ricans because the former constitute a "captive" labor force: they are not free to move on to other jobs in the U.S. labor market.

7. As Scott Cook has untiringly argued over the past fifteen years, activities noted here that don't involve food production, though often urban-based, approximate peasant economic activities by virtue of their reliance on household labor, simple technologies, small scales of operation, orientations toward household maintenance and reproduction, and so forth.