Capture and Abandon: Social Reproduction and Informal Land Tenure in Jamaica

Rachel Goffe

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

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CAPTURE AND ABANDON:
SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND INFORMAL LAND TENURE IN JAMAICA

by

RACHEL GOFFE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Earth and Environmental Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2017
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Social Reproduction and Informal Land Tenure in Jamaica

by

Rachel Goffe

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Earth
and Environmental Sciences in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date
Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore
Chair of Examining Committee

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Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore
Dr. Cindi Katz
Dr. Don Robotham

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Capture and Abandon:
Social Reproduction and Informal Land Tenure in Jamaica

by

Rachel Goffe

Advisor: Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Capture and Abandon: Social Reproduction and Informal Land Tenure in Jamaica examines how ongoing policy development to curtail squatting is shifting state capacity away from a project of land reform and towards one of land management. Scholarship about informal settlements elsewhere tends to understand dispossession as a project of the neoliberal state. I argue that it is strategically necessary to elucidate the ways in which the production of durable but insecure access to land is not novel, but is imbricated in the historical production of a Black labor force that is self-sufficient and yet ready at hand, reproducing themselves through what I—following Sylvia Wynter—call “working a plot.”

This investigation puts into relation Cindi Katz’s concept of topography—an ethnography of a process—with Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s examination of key surpluses and their reconfiguration in moments of capitalist crisis. Through ethnographic research regarding emerging state practices as experienced by residents, I examine how surpluses of land, labor, and state capacity are made idle and are only partially repurposed. In taking up the concept of surplus state capacity as method, I explain how transformations of the state are the “restless outcome” of contradictory
traditions—of Black rebellion, and on the other hand, of making a future adequate to capitalist development.

This dissertation is based on seven months of fieldwork including interviews with state agents and 3-1/2 months of ethnographic research at a location where residents had been served with eviction notices. As with other recent sites of eviction in Jamaica, the settlement was seen as being in conflict with a new tourist resort. A former sugar estate, this site is now at the interface between land made surplus by agricultural disinvestment and a boom in tourism development. As a result, daily life of informal residents traverses uneven development: inadequate roads, water supply, storm drainage, electricity, and sewage infrastructures. This “organized abandonment” lies in full view of new investments in highway, water mains, sewage treatment facilities, resorts, and tourist activity centers. This renders less efficient residents’ work to reproduce themselves, deepening the subsidy to capital. Yet despite evictions and the uneven development of infrastructure, there are remains within the state that resist the delegitimizing of residents’ claims to land in informal settlements. As such, the site presented an opportunity to investigate contradictions within the postcolonial state, contradictions that shape which residents are understood to be in legitimate possession of the land.

Though offered a pathway to regularization, residents were unable to fulfill its legal requirements. Portrayed by regulators as their “failure,” this characterization renders invisible the historical and ongoing processes through which they and so many others come to be in durable possession, but not owners, of land. This research also reveals the futurity of capture: beyond merely possessing a square of land, or meeting one’s basic needs, capture is about inserting oneself adjacent to Jamaica’s emerging landscapes of development; the very instability of capturing land reveals a deeper opposition to the concept of property-in-land than is immediately
apparent. The contradiction evident in policy formation regarding squatting—producing uneven dispossession—has something to do with the recuperation of a sanitized version of the Black small farmer as an agriculturalist. Judged against this respectable figure, the “illegal squatter” is not recognized as a descendant of Black refusal.
To my father
who gave me the ground I dig my heels into, and

To my mother
who tended the earth, as relentlessly as seasons change

Together ground and earth,
A love supreme
Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude to the residents of the place I call Tulloch and all the others who gave of their time and trusted me with their stories. I hope I have done them some justice, and that I will continue to do so.

I went to graduate school fueled by a disquiet with my lack of capacity to explain, as an architect, the dramatic shifts in the built environment in Philadelphia where I lived: the implosion of public housing beginning in the 1990s when I was in architecture school, the flurry of eminent domain condemnations in the 2000s around which my initial activism formed, and continuing through the ongoing real estate boom. My comrades, in particular, Nijmie Dzurinko, Sarah Stefana Smith, Phil Wider, and Todd Wolfson, in the Anti-Displacement Solidarity Committee—a committee of Philadelphia Incite!—and the Media Mobilizing Project engaged me in inquiry and political education that provided clarity for our activism, a union that continues to inspire me.

Thank you to all of you named and unnamed who helped to make this a reality, finally:

To Dr. Charlene Sinclair, my “dissertation buddy,” sister-scholar-activist-friend, whose excitement about my project, and mine about hers, birthed over DuBois, blossomed over Burmese food, and distilled over tequila at her backyard picnic table. We got our heads straight, and got to the end!

To my best friend, Tanya-Sue Young, who put a roof over my head during fieldwork, who always asks the right questions and is never afraid to ask the hard ones. Thank you for showing up for me even when I don’t know to ask. You know me better than anyone. To my sweet aunty, Hilary Sherlock, for evening debriefings of all those days of libraries and government offices and
always being so happy to see me when I finally turn up. We shall eat ice cream in celebration—soon come! To my Kingston cousins—Elizabeth, Marcus, Darryl, Gavin, and Sanya—for love, introductions, dinners, and your love of communities: family, revelry, healing, and social justice. To my aunt Susan whose relentless activism and social media footprint keeps me engaged with and informed about current issues at home.

To my fellow GC-ers: FTC Manning, for being damned smart, stubborn, awesome, for keeping me good company, for always being willing to read, and for being a dogged theorist; Annie for modelling a commitment to complexity and emotional truth as a scholar. To Christian Anderson who has been an enthusiastic ally ever since he was nominated to be my mentor way back in my first semester at the GC. Thank you, Christian, for your willing and smart engagements with conference paper, publication, and dissertation chapter drafts over the years. To Jack Gieseking, for bringing into being the Space Time Research Collective (STReaC) and propelling it with the joyous collective spirit that guided many of us through conferences, dissertation proposals, curriculum vitae, job talks, and on and on. To my beloved STReaCers—I dare not list you, but all the collective brain activity rescued me over and over. To Keith Miyake, who is always so generous with his help, so lucid in his summations of literature, and—at the *same damn time*—stunning in his technical abilities. To Colette Sosnowy, for steadfastly reminding me that the end was in sight. To Ujju Agarwal, who generously shared her embargoed dissertation so that I could learn from her Ruthie-approved “historically informed ethnography.”

To my Philly peeps: Pam Raines and LB Young for getting me out of the house on a regular basis (i.e., keeping me sane). Leniqueca Welcome, for Caribbean scholarship over Philly lunches. Dr. Deborah Thomas, for good talks, inspiration, and introducing me to fellow travelers. John Edwards, and Kira Shepherd, for regularly having a place for me to crash so I could
manage my commuter lifestyle. Adrienne McKinney for giving a cranky architect/PhD student a job and being understanding as I juggled my many responsibilities, not always elegantly. Alia Trindle, my long-suffering housemate while I was writing, Bradley Gardner my sometimes housemate whose intelligent nonchalance offered a welcome counterpoint to my anxiety, and Adam Lemire for being generous … and delivering gold stars when I needed something shiny to keep my spirits up. Kathleen Sprouffske for her lovely house, and before that, along with Kira Shepherd, being my study-buddies/coffee shop soldiers. Daniel Linehan and Tamika Hughes for regular and yet good-natured harassment around goal-setting.

To my mother who has always understood the importance of encouraging me, as a woman, to keep going until I get the piece of paper that proves I did all that hard work. To my older brother, who asked me on the second visit to the site if I was going back there again—thanks for being a pain in the butt, in other words, expecting me to be done already. Love you the mostest! To my father, who was always curious about what I thought about things, ever since I can remember. To Daniel Goffe for clouds, rainbows, and the reminders to look up to see them.

To Marcel Gordon, who walked with me to make sure I got my tired body on 6 a.m. buses to Manhattan in the dead of winter, and many other incomparable acts of selflessness, for having the wisdom to tell me something in the hours after my father died—something, anything, and, it turned out, a wise thing—that the act of listening was something I could hold on to. To Nicola Shirley-Phillips, for Spirit.

Without my dissertation coach, Simonne Pollini, I never would have made it through the months of tedious transcription, data analysis, and preparing to write. Editor Anna Lee-Popham’s cheerful encouragement and skillful corrections accelerated the final (but still daunting) tasks.
Anna and Nancy Maguire made the dreaded oral defense look surmountable, and William Mangold, Hector Agredano, Yasmine Awais, and my uncle Gerry Groves joined others already named in witnessing my mock and real defenses. My awesome niece Nadira Goffe—collected, cheerful, and professional beyond her years—had my back on defense day and also put Cindi’s famous (and numerous!) line edits into cyberspace where I could efficiently respond.

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<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>AGRO 21</td>
<td>Agrobusiness 21, program inaugurated in 21st year of independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPO</td>
<td>Business process outsourcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWI</td>
<td>British West Indies, British West Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community-based organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Community development officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDW</td>
<td>Colonial Development and Welfare Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoL</td>
<td>Commissioner of Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCFS</td>
<td>Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Field officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoJ</td>
<td>Government of Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEART</td>
<td>Human Employment and Resource Training Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMPRO</td>
<td>Jamaica Promotions Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JFJ</td>
<td>Jamaicans for Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIS</td>
<td>Jamaica Information Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLP</td>
<td>Jamaica Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRC</td>
<td>Jamaica Railway Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSIF</td>
<td>Jamaica Social Investment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAMP</td>
<td>Land Administration and Management Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Minister of parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environment and Planning Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>National Housing Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIS</td>
<td>National Insurance Scheme (a social security agency of the GoJ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPIC</td>
<td>Nonprofit industrial complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWM</td>
<td>Norman Washington Manley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Operation) GROW</td>
<td>Growing and Reaping Our Wealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Operation) PRIDE</td>
<td>Programme for Resettlement and Integrated Development Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Parish council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLL</td>
<td>Project Land Lease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>People’s National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNPYO</td>
<td>PNP Youth Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>RADA</td>
<td>Rural Agricultural Development Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural adjustment program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Social Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEJ</td>
<td>Social and Economic Justice, a project of Jamaicans for Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMU</td>
<td>Squatter Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCPA</td>
<td>Town and Country Planning Act</td>
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<td>Jamaica Welfare Ltd.</td>
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<td>Land Administration and Management Programme</td>
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<td>Lands office</td>
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<td>National Environment and Planning Agency</td>
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<td>National Housing Trust</td>
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<td>Squatter Management Unit</td>
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Table of Acts, Chronological

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Act Description</th>
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| 1839 | Ejectment (3 Vict. c. 33)  
      | “An act to facilitate the recovery of possession of tenements, after due determination of the tenancy.” |
| 1840 | Immigration Act (4 Vict. c. 23)  
      | “An act to encourage immigration.” |
| 1840 | Vagrancy Act (4 Vict. c. 42)  
      | “An act to amend an act for the punishment of idle and disorderly persons, rogues and vagabonds, and incorrigible rogues.” |
| 1842 | Friendly Societies Act (6 Vict. c. 27)  
      | “An act to establish and encourage friendly societies.”  
      | This law regulates benevolent societies, and providential societies, and has been amended over time. |
| 1842 | Master and Servants Act  
      | Repealed in 1974. |
| 1851 | Trespass Act  
      | Defined trespass as limited to the first year after which “No person to be dispossessed who has had quiet possession for a year.” Amended version in effect. |
| 1862 | Encumbered Estates Court Act  
      | “Empowered the court to sell heavily encumbered estates” (Satchell 1990, 64). |
| 1867 | Quit-Rent Forfeiture Law (30 Vict. c. 7)  
      | Set the terms of forfeiture to the Crown of land on which quit rent\(^2\) had not been paid. |
| 1867 | A law for registering all lands […] (30 Vict. c. 10)  
      | Required the registration of all land by any tenant, owner, or possessor. |
| 1867 | District Courts Land Law  
      | Required those alleged to be in illegal possession to prove their claim with an original conveyance deed recorded in the land registry. Also allowed the state to act as trustee on behalf of paper title owners and reclaim lands from those in unauthorized possession. |

---

1 Unreferenced quotes are from the body of the law, which can be accessed here: http://moj.gov.jm/laws. Historical laws are linked at this website: http://statutes.org.uk/site/collections/international/jamaican-law/

2 “A nominal rent paid (esp. in former British colonial territories to the Crown) as an acknowledgement of tenure” (OED 2017).
1871 District Courts Land Law
Allowed the government to lease lands it held in trusteeship (for delinquent paper owners).

1871 Aliens Law Amendment
Allowed aliens to buy and sell real and personal property in Jamaica.

1886 Married Women Property Rights Law
Enabled married women to dispose of land without an intermediary.

1881 Limitation of Actions (Land) Act
Set a time limit on the rights of paper title owners to recover land from adverse possessors.

1889 The Registration of Titles Act
Established the Torrens system; titles registered under this system are indefeasible.

1901 Parish Councils Act

1914 Local Improvements Act

1928 Judicature (Resident Magistrate) Act
Allowed the Crown or the paper title owner to make a civil claim against “person in possession without title or right of occupation.” Amended version in effect.

1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act

1957 Town and Country Planning Act
Made provisions for the orderly and progressive development of land, cities, towns, and other areas, whether in urban or rural Jamaica.

1966 The Land Development and Utilization Act
Enabled the imposition of a fine for land held idle and possible dispossession, however, “dispossession” is defined as sale at market value, determined in the Courts (Stephens and Stephens 1986). It is unclear the extent to which it has been enforced either for fines or for forced sale.

1968 Housing Act

1968 Amendment (to the Registration of Titles Act)
“Sections 85–87 of the Act allow persons to acquire a good title against the registered proprietor by possession; squatters are thus allowed to apply for a registered title after a period of time if they are in possession of privately owned land” (USAID 2016).
1969 Registration (Strata Titles) Act
Facilitated the subdivision of land in strata and the disposition of titles, and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith. In effect with amendments.

1974 Employment (Termination, etc.) Act
Replaced the 1842 Master and Servants Act and establishes some employee protections including requiring employers to pay defined percentages of wages at time of termination.

1991 National Resource Conservation Authority Act
Provided for the management, conservation, and protection of the natural resources of Jamaica.

2015 Local Governance Act
Established the hierarchy and structure of community (Community Development Committees, or CDCs), region (Development Area Committees), and parish organizations (Parish Development Committees) involved in participatory planning and development.
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It was about a year before proposing this study that I heard for the first time in relation to Jamaica the use of the term “squatting.” It was one of those moments immigrants experience: the realization that one is no longer in touch with the place one is from. *We* didn’t use that word. The term I had known—a high school friend gestured up the road from where she lived to a number of informal dwellings on a hillside—was “captured land.” Capture is not without a sense of the pejorative, but it has another sense too; one of rebellion.

When I was thinking about what research I might do, I came across a newspaper article. Landslides following heavy rains in the hurricane season of 2008 had killed a number of people islandwide, prompting a newspaper series entitled Living on Dangerous Ground (Brown 2008). Regarding a particularly large landslide, visible across a riverbed from Kingston’s uptown open-air market, the Prime Minister had said, “Those people should never have been there in the first place.” Did he mean because the land was a watershed area, or because the land was “captured” by its occupants? Given public antipathy for indiscipline, corruption, and crime—seen as barriers to long-desired national progress—it seemed that the political overture of the statement was likely a condemnation of the residents’ possession of land that was not theirs. Indeed, that same year, in a budgetary appeal for the Squatter Management Unit (SMU; formed in 2006), the Minister of Water and Housing had offered the jarring statistic that *one third* of the population

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3 An accurate census is difficult to accomplish and estimates vary. See Lee, McHardy, and K‘nife (2007) for an assessment of various published estimates from 5 percent to 20 percent of the population. The source for the Minister’s one-third figure is unclear (Dunkley 2008). A government-commissioned census put the estimate at 20 percent of the population in 2008.
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were “illegal squatters,” towards whom the Minister had proposed a “zero-tolerance policy” (JIS 2008).

These statements belie a more complex reality, historically and in the present. In actual fact, aspects of the state have, in different moments, worked to extend the role of informal tenure in social reproduction, by helping to exclude some Jamaicans from property-in-land. In apparent contradiction, the Jamaican state has also extended the ability to possess land via means other than property. Understanding that complexity, its ongoing reconfiguration, and how the possession of land figures in the struggle over Black autonomy is the subject of this dissertation.

Today, domestic and diasporic Jamaican publics are anxious for development, and anxious about escalating social disorder. In the context of a loss of state legitimacy, the state’s failure to secure economic development is blamed on its failure to control crime and incivility, with a reported dramatic growth in informal settlements seen as one symptom among many. In some sense, the discussion is a recurring refrain; rhetorically, “crime and violence” often verge on the catastrophic. There is however an increasing objective reality to the anxiety. The public is routinely shocked by spectacular acts of violence, and seem inured to the escalation of security forces with increasingly militarized tactics (see Thomas 2011, 2016). Meanwhile, the hopes for social and economic development that the 1962 national independence brought have waned, settling into frustration (see Scott 2000).

Essential to attracting capital to land development is the state’s ability to act as guarantor: of property-in-land, law and order, a functioning economy, and the populace’s basic needs. These functions are being brought into increasing conflict with informal land tenure’s embedment in
diverse social formations. Instead of relieving this pressure, housing programs are constrained by a lack of funding,\textsuperscript{4} accessible only to the middle-income population (G. Williams 2006).

There is in this a contradiction in how Jamaica defines its past. A celebratory recognition of the Jamaicans whose refusal of structures of empire, class, and race included capturing land competes with an impatient desire to substitute modernity for indiscipline—seen as the gift of clientelism, a symptom of a corrupt postcolonial state (see Stone 1980). Both tendencies are represented in recent public policy initiatives and debates regarding informal tenure: titling programs that are touted as at long last securing land for the landless (Observer Staff 2001, 2007); regularization programs through which “squatters” can achieve formal ownership by meeting the requirements of subdivision regulations (Tindigarukayo 2005); consideration of recognizing family land\textsuperscript{5} as a legal form of tenure (daCosta 2008); and, on the other hand, proposals to criminalize squatting (\textit{Jamaica Gleaner} 2010).

With strategies of accomplishing social reproduction stretched thin—to the “limits of labor” (Mullings 2009)—two things seem mutually exclusive for the island nation: the ability for Jamaicans to continue to sustain their livelihoods via land capture vs. the generation of economic growth via land development. Over time, informal settlements are increasingly being seen as targets for social rather than police intervention. However, it remains unclear how a desire to

\textsuperscript{4} More accurately, programs are constrained by the unwillingness to use a surplus of funding to subsidize housing. The National Housing Trust (NHT), formed in 1976, is funded by payroll deductions matched by employers. Having lost the legitimacy to use that funding to develop subsidized housing schemes—in an interview, a Ministry of Housing official criticized that NHT didn’t even know how much it was subsidizing the schemes it constructed—the agency has been registering budget surpluses annually (see Caribbean Policy Research Institute 2016). The reallocation of those funds was unpopular when “borrowed” to cover shortfalls in other areas of government. Nevertheless, legislation was recently passed that routinizes this diversion of funds away from an agency whose historical mission was to turn employer contributions into housing subsidies (Johnson 2017).

\textsuperscript{5} A form of tenure not represented in the legal code in which a forebear bequeathed land to descendants in common (see Besson 2002; Clarke 1999)
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undo relations sedimented in informal tenure might be realized or by what they might be replaced.

Jamaica is in a moment when the contradictory “structures of feeling”6 (R. Williams 1977) represented by the terms “squatting” and “land capture” are open for reframing. The moment calls to mind Raymond Williams’ theory (via Ruth Wilson Gilmore) that cultural traditions are made via the “selection and reselection of ancestors” (R. Williams 1977)—in other words, they are neither the natural nor the only possible outcome of the past. The sentiment of “land for the landless” is a citation of a national hero: the Black small farmer who emerged, bruised but steadfast, from the slave past. The contradiction evident in policy formation regarding squatting has something to do with the recuperation of a sanitized version of the Black small farmer as an agriculturalist, but not a threat to the social order. Judged against this respectable figure, the illegal squatter is not recognized as a descendant of celebrated Black refusal—figures like National Hero Paul Bogle, the leader of the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion (see Robotham 1981). As the future of land development proceeds via the contest over this question, it is crucial to ask: how is the cultural tradition (R. Williams 1977), which equates securing the future with eliminating social disorder including “squatting,” being recuperated? On the other hand, how might “land capture” be recuperated as a Black radical tradition (Robinson 1983) through which other kinds of futures might be realized?

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6 Williams’s term describes “[a] particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or a period” (1977, 131).
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Situating the Research

The Land Question

Inequity in the distribution of property-in-land has been central in Jamaica’s historiography. Alongside this, land capture has played a frequent walk-on, its role often asserted rather than theorized, building on rather than reexamining earlier scholars and observers. Evidence has recently been gathered that shows the current significance of access to land outside the formal market (GoJ 2004, 2008; Lee, McHardy, and K’nife 2007). While historiography tends to engage the land question in relation to the agricultural sector, it is currently framed as a land management crisis. Among other factors—a large number of unregistered parcels and disorganized land information systems (USAID 2016; Sutherland 1995; daCosta 2008), for example—the estimated 754 informal settlements islandwide are thought to curtail the achievement of an efficient land market (GoJ 2008). The reported growth of informal tenure is seen as both symptom and cause of the inadequate management of land resources; settlements are cited as a threat to the environment, havens for criminals, a barrier to investment, a cause of burdensome utility costs, as well as a symptom of failed housing policy. But the significance of informal tenure precedes the declaration of a crisis; a 2004 government-commissioned study (GoJ 2004) estimated that more than half of the island’s settlements have been occupied for over twenty-five years.

Rather than framing the land question in relation to agricultural production or the role of land in the production of value in newer industries such as tourism, this project examines informal tenure through its longstanding role in social reproduction, understanding the disavowal of that

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7 Settlements are defined by official census (GoJ 2008) as being comprised of ten or more households; as such settlements underestimate the incidence of informal tenure.
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history as severing the present from dangerous ancestors. I argue that throughout Jamaica’s colonial and postcolonial history, beginning with the provision grounds worked by slaves, access to land outside of a property relation has complemented the exploitation of labor and the social control of the exploited while simultaneously acting as a platform for a measure of autonomy—in refusal of oppressive structures of empire, class, race, and gender. In the twentieth century, land redistribution and formal housing subsidies, though inadequate, became key initiatives addressing social development but, I argue, did not disrupt the historical reliance of capital on workers’ self-sustenance, originally performed on land within the estates to which they had customary tenure. Following national independence, informal tenure became imbricated in the emerging postcolonial state formation via electoral politics and the nationalization of surplus agricultural land. Now—in an economy shifted towards a globalized service industry—a shrinking social wage and employment together remain inadequate to securing the necessities and pleasures of life on the island.

The Framework of the Research

The research situates the ongoing reconfiguration of the regulation of land in this historical context. The central investigation is ethnographic: of contested informal tenure in one location so as to understand the role of informal possession in supporting and extending the capacity for social reproduction; how the shifting regulation of land proceeds and is resisted; and the interaction of sedimented social orders with processes of land management and land reform.
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The ethnographic research is sited on the six-hundred-acre remnant of a long defunct sugar plantation, which in order to preserve confidentiality I will call Tulloch,\(^8\) where eviction notices were served in 2006. The site is on Jamaica’s northern shoreline along the coastal road. This main route always ran this route, connecting two of Jamaica’s tourism focal points, but it is now a “highway” in Jamaican parlance; although a single lane in each direction, it is wide, flat, and fairly straight and, as a result, much faster than the road it replaced. Before the road improvement twenty years ago mass tourism was at least twenty miles away. As resort development has ventured into new territory, Tulloch now lies at the interface between investment and abandonment.

The property is occupied by a few hundred of the many Jamaicans who are in a strict sense landless, though many of them have had possession of land on the estate for decades. Putting a finer point on it, the “landless” were described by a Jamaican talk radio host, in an apt coinage, as “ownershipless” (Small 2012). What I believe is captured by the term “ownershipless” is the ubiquity of durable access to land, including informal and customary tenures, that falls short of legal ownership. The ownershipless include purchasers who have been unable to secure title but, if government statistics are reliable, the majority are those who are now called “illegal squatters.” This categorization belies that informal tenure is often the outcome of class or state patronage.

The emergence of the term “squatter” is in part a moment of delegitimization triggered when the occupation exceeds—outlives or outgrows—the elasticity of patronage.

“Squatting” has been defined in a report commissioned by the Government of Jamaica as “the illegal or unauthorized occupation of land or housing” (GoJ 2008, 12). The study included a

\(^8\) I will in general modify place names and physical features, and use pseudonyms for respondents and other residents with whom I spoke.
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census of squatter settlements, defined as “a residential area which has developed without legal claims to the land and/or permission from the concerned authorities to build; as a result of their illegal or semi-legal status, infrastructure and services are usually inadequate” (GoJ 2008, 12). As a term, “squatting” focuses on the legal authority to exercise property rights defined by law. The term thus effaces actually existing informal and customary practices not adequately represented by the legal code.

In contrast to the juridical framework of squatting, “land tenure” describes land access that is to some extent durable and may encompass practices that range from usufructuary use (Pierce 2010) to the exclusion of use by others and the ability to create patrimony in land regardless of whether or not it is backed by a legally recognized contract (lease or ownership). The concept of tenure is sensitive to all forms of land access including those that are informal and customary, in addition to rights described through real property law. I use the term “informal tenure” to mean occupation outside of the formal market and “customary tenure” to mean a common practice of negotiated tenure—which is to say customary tenure is informal, but not all land access outside the market can be assumed to be sanctioned by negotiations with community, state,9 or patron.

The choice of terms is intended to foreground the actually existing economic, political, and social roles of informal tenures. Whereas some scholars have, as an act of advocacy, labored to reveal how the daily life of the possession of land is commensurate with a property relation,10 I am here concerned with the withholding of formal property within the context of an otherwise developed land market: in short, what is it about ownershipless-ness that has been useful in contrast to an actual exclusion from the possession of land? I argue that the durable and yet

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9 Ranging from official state acts to individual acts of partisan actors
10 Gluckman (1943, 1965) is the quintessential example.
insecure possession of land was produced alongside particular qualities of labor: self-sufficient and yet ready at hand. It is out of a desire to show the imbrication of ownershipless-ness with these qualities of labor, which inaugurated in the seventeenth century a persistent subsidy to capital, that I use the language of property only in its bourgeois sense. I do not however intend this to be a foil for the “annihilation of that private property which rests on the labour of the individual” (Marx 1976, 940). Rather I believe that Jamaicans assert possession not just of land, but of the property from which they have been excluded. This is sometimes in direct opposition to the legal annihilation of their property through exploitation in a particular place and time: as a respondent in my research said “them [the estate owners] rob wi, wi foreparents.” At other times the assertion is less territorialized, but questions the social production of the limits to property rights—that is, it is a critique of the exclusion from land that capital has left idle, as in another respondent’s statement, “but the land is so big.”

Given all this, I use the term “property-in-land” or “property” to denote rights with respect to land that are described by the real property code. To refer to the act of taking unauthorized possession of land, I use the colloquial term “land capture.” I will also take up the term “ownershipless” proposed by the radio host to refer to the full range of conditions that achieve durable access to land without full legally titled ownership or legally recognized leasehold.

**Topography and Surpluses: Theory and Method**

To investigate the encounter between emerging state policy and actually existing social relations I undertook a historically informed ethnography. More specifically, the ethnography deploys two
strategies that are each simultaneously theoretical and methodological: Cindi Katz’s (2001a, 2004) “topography” and Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s (2007a) investigation of four surpluses that she finds are the underpinnings of mass incarceration: surpluses of land, labor, capital, and state capacity.

A corrective to a particularist trajectory in feminist literature following Haraway’s (1988) intervention of “situated knowledges,” Katz’s (2001a) topography is an “ethnography of a process,” aiming to retain an intimate connection to place whilst also understanding the imbrication of locales with global processes. “Topographies as method can produce ‘thick descriptions’ of abstract social relations and processes such as those associated with global economic restructuring or the advance of capitalist relations of production, or at a different level of abstraction, deskilling or the disinvestment in social reproduction” (Katz 2004, xiv).

Topography has an orientation towards social reproduction. “Social reproduction is about making a way to make the future” (Katz 2013). The term encompasses the daily and generational reproduction of labor, and the daily and long-term reproduction of the means of production, processes that are mutually constitutive but in contradiction to each other. It includes the securing of the means of existence, including food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and so on, but the term is also attentive to the social production of differentiation in expertise within the labor force and the differentiation by class, gender, race, history, and geography of what is considered to be “socially necessary”—differentiation that is subject to, and the outcome of, ongoing struggle. Beyond sustenance, social reproduction brings into being historically and geographically specific processes, institutions, cultural traditions, and ideas. Education, skill acquisition, livelihood, ideas about what the state (or capital) should provide, the role of the media, the relationship with the environment—all of these are encompassed in what we think
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about when we say social reproduction (Katz 2001a; Bakker 2007). Setting the terms for social reproduction is not only a contest between labor and capital—over wages or benefits, for example—but “is secured through a shifting constellation of sources encompassed within the broad categories of the state, the household, capital and civil society. The balance among these varies historically, geographically and across class” (Katz 2001a, 711, emphasis added).

The framework of this research is relational in that it understands “state and society are mutually constitutive, such that the state [is] confronted less as an abstraction with autonomy from the rest of society than as a manifestation of the materialized social practices of human agents enacting life’s work in complex ways. In short, the state is the restless outcome of human agency that is produced and negotiated through the social and cultural meanings of the multiply manifested normative environment of contemporary capitalism” (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003, 432).

In Jamaica today, the remains of the Bandung era social democratic state, and its investments in social development, are in tension with trends towards neoliberalism. What we find is a state formation stretched between social reproduction on the island and the trajectories of transnational capital. Rather than a normative assessment of the state, this project understands the regulation of land access as a process through which state capacities are created and transformed in particular ways at particular times (Gilmore 2007a; Gilmore and Gilmore 2016).

Surpluses: Land, Labor, and State Capacity

Recalibrating an earlier project of land reform that, at least ideologically speaking, attempted to ameliorate the colonial violence of an inequity in the distribution in land, land management as a project of the Jamaican state instead targets the inadequacies of land policy and land registries that undermine the efficient functioning of land markets, the protection of the environment, and
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the imagined ability for the poor “to transform their land assets into sustainable livelihoods” (daCosta 2008, 3; cf. M. Davis 2006, 79).

I have adopted Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s concept of “surplus state capacity” in order to investigate the changes in the regulation of land unfolding in the present. Gilmore’s method aims to understand why state projects emerge as solutions to crises that are only imagined to be imminent—in her work, the emergence of mass incarceration to fix a crisis in rising crime when crime was in fact on the decline. In my research, in the context of both present and past reformulations of land regulation, the state was tasked with both “help[ing] capital be profitable” and with keeping “the formal inequality of capitalism acceptable to the polity” (Gilmore 2007a, 78). The means to carry out these tasks, as Gilmore points out, are fiscal, institutional, and ideological. “These means—or capacities—are made up of laws and lawmakers, offices and other built environments, bureaucrats, budgets, rules and regulations, rank and file staff, the ability to tax or borrow, and direct access to mass communication and education to produce ‘primary’ definitions of social reality” (Gilmore 2007a, 78). How these capacities are combined and to what end is historically specific.

Contrary to the widely held notion that the neoliberal state shrinks, Gilmore’s research shows that in a moment when capital was in crisis, the Keynesian welfare state lost the legitimacy to act as the welfare state. However, the capacity of the state—unevenly developed through preexisting differentiation—was not eliminated with the return to liberalism. Rather, the “political remains” (Gilmore 2007a, 80) of the institutions of the welfare-warfare state became the “armature” for a new state form. Armature indicates Gilmore’s attentiveness to how sedimentation accrues, is reproduced, and is undone; to the persistence of uneven development—for example (in the
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United States), the occult transcript of Jim Crow inscribed in the institutions of the New Deal; and to the process of turning capacities from one purpose to another.

In the case of Jamaica, sugar’s post-World War II boom had waned by the 1970s, precipitating “organized abandonment” (Gilmore 2008), which made surplus thousands of acres of agricultural land and the people who worked them. The emergence of democratic socialism after 1972 intensified capital’s flight, fearing expropriation and economic decline (Stephens and Stephens 1986). With the economic crisis, the political experiment faltered and the legitimacy of redistributive land reform’s double mission—improving livelihood and achieving national economic independence by fostering small-scale agriculture—waned. The use of state capacity oriented towards that project was delegitimized in favor of larger-scale enterprise (Stephens and Stephens 1986; Crichlow 2003).

As in Gilmore’s work, my project examines surplus land, surplus labor, and surplus state capacity. Whereas in Gilmore’s work, state capacity and land once again provide an avenue for the movement of capital through the mass incarceration of surplus labor, with my work in Jamaica a future adequate to capital has not yet been realized. I examine the realignment of state capacities indicated by the shift from land reform to land management, and how that realignment results in the uneven delegitimization of the ownershipless, who are surplus labor in possession of surplus land. Because my work focuses on policy that is not yet formalized, I find a productive engagement between Gilmore’s examination of key surpluses and Katz’s “ethnography of a process,” to evince how state capacity is redeployed in practice, in contest with actually existing forms of tenure and the social relations in which they are embedded.

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12 “The racial, industrial and regional divisions reflected in eligibility for and the scope of New Deal agencies and programs institutionalized Jim Crow without speaking his name” (Gilmore 2007a, 79).
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For the remainder of this chapter I detail the historical context in which I situate the ethnographic research and the specific methods used before briefly outlining the following chapters.

Image 1: The future yet to come: Surplus agricultural land “For Sale”   Photo by author
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Why History

Why return to the plantation? Although the selected site is an actual former plantation, this was not a goal of the selection process nor is siting the research within a plantation fundamental to answering the research questions. However, as I learned more about other instances, other locations in which the ownershipless dwell, it began to seem less coincidental that the evictees I found happened to be living on a defunct estate. I will return to that in chapter 2.

The return to the plantation that is essential to the work has to do with what Sylvia Wynter (1971) in her essay “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation” has called simply “the plot,” referring to the provision grounds on which slaves grew their own food. This strategy for slave subsistence emerged out of plantation agriculture as early as the seventeenth century (Mintz 1964, 251; Patterson 1967). From there I trace the durability with which working a plantation is accompanied by working a plot. My assertion is that what is now being called squatting is, in part, an instantiation of this relation as it repeats through time.

While plot and plantation are paired themes appearing frequently in the historiography, they tend to appear as a dichotomy, or poles of an antagonism. For instance,

… up to the present time, the development of the peasantry in the West Indies is circumscribed by the existence of the plantation system. As indicated earlier, this has been the pattern ever since emancipation of the slaves created the base for the emergence of peasant producers. In spite of the considerable changes in the social, economic and political order, the problems of the peasant development remain inextricably bound up in a framework of institutional relations not far different from that which existed during the slave plantation period. (Beckford 1972, 47, emphasis added)
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Instead of seeing “the plantation” as an inexorable transhistorical force, in antagonism with “the peasant,” I will focus on the lives that circulate between these sites.

David Scott (2004) has insisted that a critique such as mine must grapple with what he has called the “problem-space” within which arguments and histories were crafted. Rather than see these histories as mere wrongheaded answers, a productive engagement appreciates that our vantage has different questions from those posed in the spacetime of the literature with which we engage. A problem-space is, he says:

> a context of argument and, therefore, one of *intervention*. A problem-space, in other words, is an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs. That is to say, what defines this discursive context are not only the particular problems that get posed as problems as such (the problem of “race,” say), but the particular questions that seem worth asking and the kinds of answers that seem worth having. Notice, then, that a problem-space is very much a context of dispute, a context of rival views. (Scott 2004, 4)\(^{13}\)

In the problem-space of the generation of anticolonialist nationalists, who are the triggers for Scott’s argument, “colonialism is conceived largely as a totalizing structure of brutality, violence, objectification, racism, and exclusion that the anticolonial revolution was supposed to overcome” (2004, 6). Showing his own disaffection with the exhaustion of the Bandung project (Scott 2003), Scott says regarding CLR James’s *Black Jacobins*, “James’s revolutionary narrative also embodies the myth of the hero; the hero (that great 19th-century figure) embodies the forward historical movement and drives the narrative out of the dark and into the light. In

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\(^{13}\) For me, Scott’s notion reverberates with the practice of “generous reading” I learned from Ruth Wilson Gilmore, in which she assigns—as a pedagogical tool with young scholars—a set of questions through which every reading is to be recontextualized within the scholarly debates, political projects, etc. of their own spacetimes. Dr. Gilmore attributes this practice to the close reading of Stuart Hall.
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George Steiner’s elegant and memorable phrase: ‘Salvation descends upon the bruised spirit and the hero steps towards grace out of the shadow of damnation”’ (Scott 2005).

I think that what in part animates the above quote from George Beckford is a vision for a different kind of state which, now that independence had been achieved, might be able to affirm the Black peasant, who had been repeatedly thwarted, dispossessed, and delegitimized by the plantation politico-economic system. To recast Scott’s phrase, I suggest that for Caribbean rural studies, it is the peasant who is the bruised spirit whose emergence into autonomous production transforms him/her into a hero. Long is the bibliography that details the violence against which this hero emerged.

What does this have to do with a study of peri-urban informal tenure in the twenty-first century? From our current problem-space—well into the global neoliberal turn in which the monetization of ever more aspects of social reproduction, and the resultant increased vulnerability and economic inequality, has become normal—I pose that it is strategically necessary14 to elucidate the ways in which the unhinging of production from social reproduction (Katz 2001b, 710) for Black Jamaicans is not new, not a product of twenty-first century postcoloniality nor neoliberalism.15 And what is decidedly not the focus of the plot vs. plantation histories is the mobility of most Black Jamaicans—the daily, weekly, seasonal, lifecycle, or household16 straddle between working a plantation and working a plot. Scholarly interest in the

14 “[T]he idea of a problem-space is connected to the idea that criticism has always to be strategic inasmuch as in judging its purchase criticism ought always to seek to clarify whether and to what extent the questions it is trying to answer continue to be questions worth having answers to” (Scott 2004, 4).
15 This is not to dispute that there has been an intensification in the crisis of social reproduction; indeed that intensification in particular moments is the subject of this study.
16 I would ideally use a term that suggests people with collectivized resources that does not presuppose that the collective is biologically related (‘family’) or cohabitating (‘household’).
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complementarity between these activities, while strong for the time preceding emancipation, wanes for the time following emancipation.

While I point to the durability with which working a plantation is accompanied by working a plot, it is not to suggest that this relation is the same as it ever has been “ever since the emancipation of the slaves” (Beckford 1972, 47). Following Deborah Thomas, I will take up the term palimpsestic time to describe the ways that violence appears in the Jamaican present via a layering of histories, with spectacular colonial violence as a template, but appearing in the present via a series of uptakes, partial erasures, and transformations, and sedimented in different institutions, including “the postcolonial state formation” (2011, 10–11).

In reconceptualizing the question of the plot, I also put it into relation with a range of activities through which social reproduction is accomplished, in whole or in part, outside of the formal sector. Conceptually, working a plot is seen as of a piece with capturing land; with vending and higglering; with landless cultivation, animal husbandry, fishing, and foraging; and in some ways with livelihoods that are not land-based, and those that are less characteristically rural. What I am pointing to is the both/and nature of livelihood strategies that are ubiquitous in Black lives, combining waged work with side-gigs, hustles, and petty commerce. I do not see these activities as being outside of capitalism. Rather I agree that “… the modal condition of work within post-colonial capitalism may [be] … the spatiotemporal flux in and hence tenuousness of capital’s embrace” (Gidwani 2015, 590).
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It is not only labor that sits at the tidal edge (of varied temporalities) of capital, but geography—regions\textsuperscript{17} or locales\textsuperscript{18}—as well. As capital migrates in order to improve its ability to expand, “whatever it abandons—buildings, machinery, labor power, land—is devalued” (Gilmore 2007a, 64). Of course, there are people in these “forgotten places” (Gilmore 2008), and in chapter 2 I discuss the coincidence of surplus land with informal settlements.

Similarly, working \textit{a plantation} is put into relation with waged work, often casualized and poorly paid. The temporality of “capital’s embrace” is the “waxing and waning of formal sector employment … a structural and periodically repeating process that is integral to the longue durée of the capitalist world economy” (Gidwani 2015, 590), but workers leave that embrace, that is, move between formal and informal, not only in times of crisis. Often they live right there in the littoral space,\textsuperscript{19} as the tide of capital waxes and wanes across their daily lives—perhaps working in the formal and then working, or residing, in the informal. It also cuts an arc through their families—with the waged supporting the unwaged, as might be expected, but also, given the inadequacy of the wage, with the unwaged supporting the waged, or as LaShawn Harris (2016) puts it, the unrespectable supporting the respectable, or between the visible labor of production and the invisible labor of reproduction. I will come back to this in chapter 2.

In this way, I draw on scholarly engagement with the pre-emancipation circulation of Black workers between plots and plantations, and extend it into subsequent layers of the palimpsest. There is more to it than that. For Wynter, \textit{the plot} is at once the slave’s sustenance, West African structure of values, transformation through planting those values in Caribbean soil, and, in the

\textsuperscript{17} Such as the sudden departure of capital from particular sectors in times of crisis.

\textsuperscript{18} Such as the disinvestment of real property that eventually results in the rent gap (Smith 1979).

\textsuperscript{19} This both/and existence is, I think, an element of what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2008) calls \textit{desakota} to theorize a politics of grassroots planning. I will return to this in chapter 2.
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present, “a point outside the system … a focus of criticism against the impossible reality in which we are enmeshed” (1971, 100).

Drawing on Wynter’s essay, Katherine McKittrick (2006, 14) has offered an agenda that I wish to take up: that a mere naming of the repetitions of anti-Black violence tends to equate Blackness with a legacy of dispossession rather than pointing to “the ways in which blackness works against the violence that defines it … and … demand[ing] that this deliberate commentary be central to how we think about and organize the planet and our futures” (Hudson 2014, 240). In her “Plantation Futures,” McKittrick says her writing does not cite the plantation as a conceptual pathway that exclusively narrates an oppression/resistance schema; nor does it situate the plantation as the anchor to antiblack violence and dismal futures. Instead, these approaches serve as the shadow to my tracing of the geographic workings of dispossession, which intends to contextualize the plantation as a location that might also open up a discussion of black life within the context of contemporary global cities and futures. (2013, 5, emphasis in original)

McKittrick suggests that

Deciphering a plantation logic, then, works across three thematics: it identifies the normalizing mechanics of the plantation, wherein black subjugation and land exploitation go hand in hand and shepherd in certain (present) death; it notices our collective participation in and rhetorical commitment to reproducing this system as though it is natural, inevitable, and a normal way of life; and it imagines the plot-and-plantation as a new analytical ground that puts forth a knowledge system, produced outside the realms of normalcy, thus rejecting the very rules of the system that profits from racial violence, and in this envisions not a purely oppositional narrative but rather a future where a corelated human species perspective is honored. (2013, 11, emphasis in original)
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Even as I recall the complementarity between plot and plantation, I intend to “also open up a discussion of black life” by which I take McKittrick to mean that in the context of what appears as a “totalizing structure of brutality, violence, objectification, racism, and exclusion” (Scott 2004, 6), Black people have demonstrated “a mode of being human that, while often cast out from official history, is not victimized and dispossessed and wholly alien to the land; rather, it redefines the terms of who and what we are vis-à-vis a cosmogony that, while painful, does not seek to inhabit a location closer to that of ‘the fittest’ but instead honors our mutually constitutive and relational versions of humanness” (McKittrick 2013, 12).

History

Nationalist accounts tell the story of the Jamaican people as ex-slaves who left the estates, emerged as a peasantry, but were forced into land hunger by a plantation land monopoly. We know that the ex-slaves left the estates primarily through the words of planters recorded in the colonial archive. As Walter Rodney (1981a, 1981b) pointed out long ago, the problem this poses for historical interpretation has been glossed over. It seems that even now, that critique still holds.

Attempting to read the historical literature for the things that are not said, I argue that in the conjunctural crisis of mid-nineteenth century British West Indian sugar, agrarian transformation was deferred by the violent production of a Black free labor who were not landless, but ownershipless: their durable yet insecure access to land was complementary to the exploitation of their labor.

Though, as we shall see, this violence was insufficient to save Jamaica’s King Sugar.
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Post-emancipation

The work in Caribbean rural studies that celebrated the post-emancipation emergence of a peasantry recuperated Black people’s cultivation as *work*; work that required skill and demonstrated a tradition of resistance to oppression (e.g., Mintz and Hall 1960). A protracted debate questioned whether Caribbean rural working peoples were properly categorized as peasants, or proletarians, or both … or neither (see Juan Giusti-Cordero 1994 for an exhaustive engagement with and critical assessment of this debate). Studies that argue for a proletarian categorization tend to be country-specific and work to excise territory from the term “peasantry” but do not unpack the term, nor attempt to refine its application beyond the location of interest to their study. Giusti-Cordero points out that extant definitions acknowledge “peasantry” as an internally diverse category, something the proletarian side would have done well to acknowledge.

Scholars have already commented on the shortcomings of the evidential basis of the debate (see Marshall 1979): there is not enough data regarding the question of labor scarcity—purportedly the result of ex-slaves’ flight from the estates (e.g., D. Hall 1959)—and evidence of small freeholds is optimistically assumed to suggest the use of independent access to land as a means of peasant production (e.g., Mintz 1958). A third measure of the “rise of the peasantry,” the

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20 I am indebted to Dale Tomich for referring me to Dr. Giusti-Cordero’s dissertation. Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (2000), Dr. Tomich, and Dr. Giusti were all generous in pointing me towards the comparative work that supported the development of this section.

21 See studies on Nevis (Frucht 1967), Barbados (Marshall 1979; Handler 1965), and Belize (Bolland 1981).

22 For studies that attend to the complexity of rural livelihood strategies see studies of Martinique (Tomich 1990), Puerto Rico (Giusti-Cordero 1994), and Guyana (Rodney 1981a).

23 Robotham (1981) argues instead for the term “tenantry” to highlight the exploitative terms through which land was accessed by ex-slaves. Writing about the conditions preceding the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, he says that for the majority during the post-emancipation era, the experience was not ownership of a plot in a free village but high rents and punitive terms of eviction.
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change in production output by smallholders, is less well examined (but see Eisner 1961). In that lacuna, the causal importance of ex-slave autonomy in planation decline remains unchallenged, allowed ideal type theories based on population density, and the interested testimony of contemporaries, to be taken as truth. The structure of that argument posits an antagonism between peasants and plantations, seeing Black people’s access to land as inhibiting exploitation by plantations, with Jamaica often appearing as the quintessential example (Roseberry 1993). The debate has a productivist bent, envisioning a struggle between alternate types of agricultural producers, even if an unbalanced one.

This neglects an important question: to what extent did Black people’s access to land for cultivation continue to be complementary with the production of staple crops, as had been the case for hundreds of years? As Mintz has shown, a practice emerged in Jamaica going back as far as the seventeenth century in which slaves had customary tenure to small plots within the plantations known as provision grounds. Slaves’ food cultivation, done primarily on the “rest day,” relieved the monetary pressure on the estate to secure reproduction via a volatile food import market (Mintz 1964) though the practice obviated neither Jamaica’s nor slaves’ food insecurity (Sheridan 1976). In this lacuna, the price of subsistence as well as the provision grounds as a site of exploitation tend to remain underanalyzed. Without that, the material reality

24 An explanation originating with colonial planners, which illustrates a key anxiety of the colonial project: the danger posed by surplus land was seen as a certain threat to labor coercion (see Bolland 1981 for a theoretical critique using evidence from Belize). Jamaica had a low density given its terrain, which was blamed for its decline as against Barbados following emancipation.


27 Mintz and Hall (1960) argue that slaves, whom Mintz describes as a “protopeasantry,” extended this practice into a domestic trade. Against Mintz’s characterization, Orlando Patterson argues that slave surplus was just enough to purchase subsistence amounts of salted meat, and that very few were able to amass any savings (referenced in Sheridan 1995).
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of land access and the level of (apparent) autonomy that it provides cloaks the role of land in Jamaican history in myth, myth that operates through the cultural desire to possess a plot of one’s own.

By this observation I do not intend to elevate the proletarian interpretation—which tends to focus on exploitation—over the peasant interpretation—which tends to focus on autonomy (Stoler 1986). Rather I suggest that the conflation of all rural peoples with peasant production occludes the complementarity between land access and the exploitation of labor, particularly for the nineteenth century, and especially in the case of Jamaica (because of the ways that Jamaica appears in the literature on the BWI as the exceptional case where a Black peasantry emerged). As such, the discursive disappearing of “nonresident” workers from the production process is left largely unchallenged (cf. Robotham 1981). Along with this, what is also disappeared is the work necessary to reproduce labor as well as the social reproduction of relations between estates and ex-slaves with respect to land.

Additionally, perhaps through the polarization of this debate, the “peasant” in Caribbean rural studies has been rendered flatter than the term is defined in other literatures (Giusti-Cordero 1994). This has made it challenging to understand the dynamics of relative autonomy, or at least in a way that it is able to be generalized.28

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28 There are studies of individual plantations based on estate papers, but as there is no work that surveys these, and government statistics are typically used as evidence for the “rapid rise of the peasantry,” or the “labor scarcity” (of anti-Black or not versions) narratives, my point remains. As Craton puts it “... a comprehensive and accurate survey of the myriad but generally narrowly focused monographic works on slavery, its abolition and its aftermath throughout the Caribbean should help us to test those almost equally numerous works which make global generalisations about the nature of slavery and its transformation into a system of wage labour as part of the modernisation process” (1992, 38). In regards to one of the generalizations in need of testing, he says: “As to what the slaves wanted in freedom, there was clearly some divergence, which has been seized on by those who, reading forwards and backwards from their own ideological standpoint, are predisposed to suggest either a peasant or a proletarian status. Until very lately, the weight of recent scholarship has leaned towards the former” (42).
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What is interesting is that beginning with research (surveys and ethnographic studies) focused on the twentieth century (Comitas 1973; Smith 1956; Manley et al. 1938, referenced in Post 1978) the predominance of livelihoods straddling plot and plantation (used figuratively here) begins to emerge.

_Labor Scarcity, or Searching for the Invisible Ex-slave?_

Planters’ complaints of labor scarcity before various institutions of the colonial government asserted that “without some or the other form of coercion” ex-slaves would not work “continuously” for wages their former masters were prepared to pay (Marshall 1972, 31). It was imagined that an African (Negro) exodus from the estates to the Jamaican interior and backwards in civilization would threaten the colony with destruction. These destinies were conceived of as problems requiring a transformation of the state in order to fix labor to the estates: ejectment, trespass, and vagrancy laws, and liberalizing land law (Satchell 1990); enabling privately and eventually state-funded immigration of indentured labor (Look Lai 1991, 21); regressive taxation (Hinton 1847, 487–90); limiting the franchise (Wilmot 2006, 227); and so on.

For some scholars, the planters’ claims of labor scarcity are the evidence presented for the “flight from the estates,” which establishes the “peasantry” (D. Hall 1959). This is not the only example of shaky evidence.

Between 1838 and 1844, a period of six years, 19,000 freedmen and their families removed themselves from the estates, bought land, and settled in free villages. In terms of the total population affected, this figure may represent an aggregate of as much as 100,000 persons. The initial transformation of ex-slaves into independent yeomen farmers on a grand scale was accomplished in less than a decade. (Mintz 1958, 49)
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The nineteen thousand freeholds that Sidney Mintz hails as the establishment of “an independent yeomanry” are in fact in church-founded free villages that were intended as residential communities for estate workers (Mintz 1958, cf. Marshall 1991). As Governor Metcalfe wrote in 1839:

In some instances labourers have purchased small lots of land and thus become proprietors. I should be glad if this were a general practice. It would put an end to the cause of irritation which may continue to exist while they hold their houses and grounds on an uncertain tenure; it would not necessarily throw them out of the labouring class, their properties not being sufficiently large to exempt them entirely from the necessity of seeking other means of support. (Quoted in Paget 1964, 40)

As early as 1840 it became clear that purchase did not mean abandonment of estate labor but was, according to Governor Metcalfe, “chiefly for the purpose of obtaining a secure home” (Holt 1992, 163). However, when landholding off the estate meant the combination of the professions of market gardener and estate laborer—as had obtained under slavery, as Marshall (1979, 246) points out—it suffered the Governor’s repudiation (also written in 1840):

The two professions of Day Labourer and Market Gardener seem rather inconsistent; and as long as they remain united as they now are in most parts of the Island, continuous labor cannot be expected, and all labour must be at the option of the peasant to give or withhold. There is not the same degree of necessity pressing on him as there is on the same Class in other Countries. Or rather there is scarcely such a class in this Island as that of Agricultural Labourers exclusively. The Labourer here goes out to labor for such time only as he can spare from the cultivation of his own grounds: and if the desires of the Negroes were limited to what Labourers in other Countries are forced to be content with: if they were not fond of Luxuries and Smart Clothes and good Furniture and riding Horses or had not the better motives of educating their Children or supporting their Church they would hardly have any inducement to labor. (D. Hall 1959, 159)
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At best, these slippages open the question of Black self-determination. At worst the lack of historical specificity occludes the continued reliance of sugar production on ex-slaves’ labor on the provision grounds and the uncertain terms under which the grounds were now accessed: subject to high cash rents, with the threat of summary eviction at the whim of the estate.

Evidence of land purchase does not equal independence: in the quote above, nineteen thousand purchasers of small plots in villages established by free churches are hailed as an “independent peasantry.” Other literature cites the figure fifty thousand freeholds by 1861 (drawn from Sewell 1861, questioned by Olivier 1936).

Even if that were true, there were about 312,000 slaves at the time of emancipation, and population rose rapidly to 450,000 by the 1860s. With production in decline beginning from the 1820s, pinning down the level of unemployment or underemployment is difficult (Robotham 1981, but see Eisner 1961). Drawing on Eisner (1961), Holt writes, “If decline in produce is taken as a proxy for decline in full-time labor, then by 1845 there were 31% fewer sugar and 63% fewer coffee workers than in 1838, down from 155,000 and 45,000 workers in 1838; decline in production suggests a displacement of 24,000 families” (1992, 155).

Reading more closely, the planters’ specific complaint was that ex-slaves did not give “continuous” labor. What is meant by this descriptor can be inferred from the following quote taken from a document known as the Queen’s Advice, a response to ex-slaves in Jamaica who had petitioned the Queen for assistance in buying land and setting up a distribution company:

“The prosperity of the laboring classes as well as all other classes depends in Jamaica and in other Countries upon their working for Wages, not uncertainly or capriciously, but steadily and continuously, at the times when their labour is wanted, and for so long as it is wanted” (C. Hall 2002, 244, emphasis added). In other words, laborers were to make themselves perpetually...
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available; continuity was measured relative to “the want” for their labor—caprice is the reserve of capital, not the laborer. Any condition short of perpetual availability received the “stock response that the negroes would not work” (C. Hall 2002, 244), rendering invisible the ongoing work to reproduce themselves and their labor power off the estates, as well as the declining need for labor—in particular for sugar, but also on average across all large scale agricultural enterprise.

Testimony before a parliamentary committee in 1847 sheds some light on what was meant by “a labour shortage.” The parliamentarian asks Thomas Price of Worthy Park (a liberal planter), “What you want is this, that at any moment when it suits your convenience you may be able to put your hand upon the laborer?” To which Price replied: ‘Undoubtedly; you could not have better expressed my meaning’” (Holt 1992, 174).

What had always been true was that the ideal labor force for sugar production was a flexible one that could be thrown back onto the land during seasonal shifts in the demand for labor. Sugar production required both an agricultural component and an industrial one. The industrial component needed to be finely tuned to the harvest, with each stage of milling having brief optimal windows (D. Hall 1959). The demand for labor spiked during harvest and milling, and the availability of labor needed to be timed to the precise demands of the production process. For sugar planters therefore, the ideal labor force was casual and yet ready at hand, whose subsistence was accomplished via self-sufficiency. Especially since sugar was in decline…
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A Jewel in Decline: Or, What Is Exceptional about Jamaica?29

The decline of British West Indian sugar in the mid-nineteenth century was particularly steep for Jamaica. It had been the largest producer; by the 1820s Cuba was to overtake this position (Tomich 2015b). The general political economic context was summed up by Mintz as two overlapping processes: “a long-term progression away from dependence upon labor-intensive production—a kind of worldwide technical evolution of industrial agriculture. Yet more narrowly one sees local, shorter-term struggles to avoid the capital commitment30 required by technical improvement, and to maintain cheap, labor-intensive production” (1983, 6).

Differentiation among colonies in light of these trends had contemporary explanations. Planters made envious comparisons to Barbados where imposing a low wage rate was thought to have been aided by the high land-labor ratio; and to Cuba, where slavery still existed. Cumper concludes however that “the scarce factor in the sugar industry was not labour, as the planters believed, but capital” (1954, 64).

A recent explanation of differentiation within British West Indian (BWI) sugar has been offered by Dale Tomich (1997). Tomich (2015a) outlines the interaction among multiple spacetimes of (global) sugar: the event, the conjuncture, and the longue durée. By overlaying long-term market trajectories (rising global sugar production and consumption) onto Kondratieff cycles, and in

29 Higman finds that slaves in Jamaica worked an average of four thousand hours annually, as compared with thirty-two hundred in Barbados (Sheridan 1995, 64). It is unclear whether this includes provision ground labor; because Barbados had a different food system, the difference may be even more stark.

30 Douglas Hall’s (1959) Free Jamaica details the challenge facing British West Indies sugar planters. Inexorable indebtedness was brought to a crisis by the combination of the cash requirements of their new role as employer, falling prices due to the removal of preferential trade, and the exhaustion (or failure) of habitual sources of short-term credit. Free Jamaica does little to counter the planters’ claims that sugar in Jamaica was threatened by labor scarcity or the purported absence of a means of labor coercion. Hall does document the many failed attempts in the colony to shift to new sugar technologies or new industries. He finds that most schemes were doomed by capital inputs that were inadequate to overcoming various challenges of setting up new industries in the colony.
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turn overlaying on the event (Haiti’s sudden exit from export markets), he identifies a contraction, relative to Kondratieff cycles, that pose a conjunctural challenge to BWI sugar. Older colonies, Jamaica chief among them, were characterized by spatial-technical conditions that were adequate to the eighteenth-century market context. However, in colonies at the “commodity frontier”—that is, emerging sugar producers such as Cuba—a “spatial economy” (Higman 1987) was produced that was responsive to competition and new technologies (Tomich 2015b). However, in colonies that were emerging sugar producers, space was produced in relation to the market and technological conditions of the time (Tomich 2015b). A simple example will suffice: whereas in older colonies the size of land holdings impeded effective adoption of new sugar mill technology, in emerging territories agricultural production units were scaled so as to keep a state-of-the-art plant fully occupied.

Sedimented in the landscape, and in social relations, these conditions were resistant to change. For those territories positioned to produce sugar more cheaply, the conjuncture offered the chance to capture dominance in the sugar export market. In the territories where sugar production was expanding fastest, cheaper was the result of increased productivity based on mechanization; more fertile soils; units of production32 scaled to efficient use of the latest technology; and, in the case of Cuba, time-space compression via the development of a rail system: in other words, infrastructure.

With so much material resistance to increasing productivity, saving Jamaican sugar required not merely securing a labor supply, but deepening the rate of exploitation by remaking labor

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31 Tomich (2015a) develops this argument in response to the debate over the “decline thesis,” so dubbed by critics of Eric Williams (1944). He finds that, taking into account these temporal refinements of BWI decline, Eric Williams’s ultimate conclusion holds against refutation based on econometric data.

32 The balance between acreage under cane and optimal input for refinery.
relations adequate to the needs of competitive capital—in short, cheapening labor. Failing that, Jamaican sugar went into even steeper decline. Acres under sugar halved between 1869 and 1900 as the market price of sugar continued to fall. Reduction in output was even more dramatic: from 1 million hundredweight in 1838, production fell to 600,000 cwt in 1866 and 300,000 cwt in 1900 (Satchell 1990). In this moment, the barrier to capital is imagined to be Black people’s moral inferiority, which impedes them from working continuously at the wage the planters are prepared to pay.

“The Land Is So Big…”: Maintaining Constraint to Land Access in the Midst of Surplus

The Ejectment and Trespass Acts had empowered estates to make precarious the tenure to house and grounds on the estates. But what about all that other estate land falling out of the market? With so much abandonment in the 1860s there were many reports of unemployment. In the midst of destitution and plantation abandonment, Black small farmers were able to birth a new Jamaica crop: bananas. Before long, new laws sought to reclaim estates from ruinate and reestablish a land market for large estates. Beginning in 1861, a series of laws were passed to facilitate the reversion of ruinate to the Crown and its redistribution to agrarian capitalists. An 1862 law enabled the state to sell encumbered estates; an 1865 law granted permission to survey land that

33 Included in planters’ efforts to coerce Black labor and cheapen their product for the global market was a new property regime established via rent and eviction. The Jamaica Assembly, dominated by planters’ interests, enacted laws giving planters the right to selectively evict workers, now considered tenants, from their customary tenures within the plantation. In order to remain resident and in possession of grounds and houseplots, the newly “free” were required by planters to agree to contracts and maintain customary hours dictated by King Sugar. Other strategies of labor control included deducting rent from wages, therefore ensuring that work remained tied to ability to exercise possession of land (Higman 2005).

34 Consolidation of landholdings also contributed to this reduction.

35 Quoting a resident of my field site.

36 The Oxford English Dictionary lists two distinctively Jamaican uses of the word ruinate: an adjective describing land that was “exhausted and allowed to revert to the wild,” and a noun indicating land that was formerly cultivated but was allowed to “revert to the wild” (OED 2017).
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was on the market regardless of whether the land was claimed by others (Satchell 1990), exacerbating tensions with Black “squatters,” and culminating in the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 (see Robotham 1981). In the aftermath of the rebellion, the Jamaica Assembly dissolved itself, shifting the seat of governance to Britain (Crown Colony) in 1866. Members of the legislature were no longer to be chosen by an electorate with a rising proportion of Black Jamaicans but instead appointed (Wilmot 1992; Satchell 1990).

An estimated half of plots did not have clear titles in 1866, making land unmarketable. With the legislative body removed to the metropole, additional laws were passed to produce an accurate account of land in the colony. An 1867 law required all those in possession of land—by ownership, lease, or capture—to register the boundaries, area, and use of such land and required those in possession to pay quit rent37 owed. A second 1867 law empowered the Crown to reclaim lands in tax arrears. However, this process proved cumbersome, reportedly allowing forfeitable land to be informally occupied; the law was amended to enable the Crown to act as trustee during the process of reversion. Between 1869 and 1902, about 250,000 acres reverted to the Crown, much of it backlands with little road access. Of this, 33,000 acres were recovered by the Crown from those accused of squatting, 65 percent of that by 1874. The vast majority of these evictions were of those holding under five acres. Through police records of assistance provided to landowners, it appears that those evicted by the Crown may have been a small portion of evictees. Some of those evicted as squatters had likely purchased or been given plots by planters but without registered conveyance (Satchell 1990; for more on victims of unregistered sale see Besson 2002).

37 See note 2 above.
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Legislation then moved to ease the transfer of land, reinvigorating the land market: allowing foreigners to own land beginning in 1871 and married women to hold and transfer real property in 1886, and establishing the Torrens system in 1889. The Torrens system was first established in the South Australia colony in 1858. It entails a cumbersome first registration process in which registrants must establish that the title held (whether or not they are in possession of the land) is as good as “any in the world.” Once registered, title is indefeasible. Because the holder of an indefeasible title has met the legal requirement to clear all others of a claim to the parcel, the system speeds title transfer and offers greater security to purchasers. By 1900, squatting had been suppressed and land had begun to be redistributed via the Crown to agrarian capitalists. One hundred and ninety-one sugar estates turned to bananas, the new King crop (Satchell 1990).

Land for Labor: Complementarity Reemerges in the Literature

Mobility between working a plot and working a plantation becomes the subject of study following labor unrest throughout the British West Indies in the 1930s. Data on smallholders from this period showed that they also worked for wages, whilst data on laborers showed that they supplemented with own-account work, land-based and otherwise. I will cover the data, collected from the 1930s and 1940s, before returning to the question of the resolution of the 1938 rebellion.

Smallholders in the 1930s and 1940s. A 1938 study, spearheaded by Norman Manley immediately following the Jamaican uprising, found that “160,000 of the 240,000 adult males involved in agriculture needed to supplement their incomes by wage labor” (Post 1978, 119). Of the smallholder population, Crichlow says:
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Due to the economic constraints of the small plot, such farmers augmented their income in alternative sectors and/or occupations, shifting judiciously between and among multiple social and economic identities. This was the case even on government-managed land settlements […] According to their economic vulnerability, farmers seek to enact multiple strategies to make farming work, and formality and informality become increasingly entwined. Intrinsic to farming is the engagement in other occupations. (2005, 200)

Another study, this one a government survey from 1942, stated that 45.8 percent of “farmers” in the under five-acre category did not employ labor but rather worked off the farm themselves (Robotham 1977).

**Laborers in the 1930s and 1940s.** In 1944, it was recorded that fifty-six out of every hundred field workers in the sugar industry were in possession of a cultivable plot. Crichlow also notes that, “although wage labor predominated, estates’ owners/operators sometimes provided marginal land to members of their work force as a substitute for wages” (2005, 189). While Crichlow’s work is explicitly on the subject of the “so-called peasants” (182) and their constitution via the developmentalist state in a curtailed and yet persistent relationship with capital, many of the sources of data enumerate “farmers” (and, as Comitas (1973) points out, as “fishermen”) despite the absence of determining—or inability to determine—whether that activity is the primary activity through which people sustain themselves and their families, nor the status of their land tenure. Unfortunately, all of the studies I discuss below take individuals as their object of study and as such they obscure the intrahousehold or intrafamily divisions of labor and the often unacknowledged and unremunerated work without which social reproduction or its more visible aspects—the work of income generation—would not be possible.
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The rural wage economy was overwhelmingly casualized: the labor force of sugar estates, for example, dropped by 40 percent out of crop. Post (1978) estimates that at peak employment periods in the late 1930s as many as three people would have been competing for each one of sixty thousand seasonal jobs. This means that at times in the year the employed population was smaller than the population who sought work during crop time. “Moreover it can be argued that the employers deliberately created a system of ‘casual work’ as defined by Gareth Stedman Jones … where ‘the work offered was insufficient to provide a regular livelihood but sufficient to prevent the worker from straying permanently into some other occupation’” (Post 1978, 120).

“The policy was … followed by the employers of rotating work to new employees over short periods…. Thus as many existed on the hope of a job rotating to them as did upon the few shillings that their employment actually provided” (Post 1978, 120). Landlords “…portrayed their employment policies as seeking to spread out work in the public interest” (Post 1978, 121), for they described estate laborers as “invariably outcasts, some by force of circumstances, some from inherent disqualifications, and were they not so housed and occupied would become praedial and petty thieves throughout the countryside, and some more serious disturbers of the peace” (Post 1978, 121).

The situation in urban areas was similar: more people seeking employment than could find it, with alternatives that “were enough to keep them alive when out of work but hard enough to drive many back into wage labor” (Post 1978, 136). Of the dockers who spearheaded the urban wave of the 1938 uprising, the colonial office labor adviser recognized that it was the irregularity of earnings that impoverished them, as their work was considerably better paid than average but not steadily available. A respondent in my research made a similar observation.
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regarding recent increases to the minimum wage: that a legislated minimum meant little if that wage could only be had intermittently.

An acknowledgement of this reality, a 1944/45 Commission of Enquiry recommended a minimum wage for smallholders, suggesting also that “the average worker would derive a part of his food supply and a small portion of his cash income from the cultivation of an allotment of at least one-third of an acre in area and for this reason, we consider that the estates should make this area available for regular workers, that is, those working for at least five days per week for 75% of the working year” (Crichlow 2005, 188).

1938: Land for Laborers. The salve to the labor rebellion was the promise of land. Announcing—in the midst of the rebellion—a program valued at half a million pounds sterling, though land reform had already been circulating as a possible insurance against social unrest:

Although the Colonial administration seems to have rushed into its proposal for a massive new land settlement scheme as a response to crisis, there can be no doubt that it was well aware of this aspect of the consciousness of rural labour. Other parts of the power bloc and their spokesmen also knew well the dangers of creating a large body completely dependent on wage labour in a situation of limited employment opportunities. As Jamaica Imperial Association had noted a few months before the rebellion, “the encouragement of … existing small proprietors is … one of the first necessities of the Jamaican social and economic situation. It is not too much to say that it is because Jamaica has possessed a considerable body of people engaged in sustenance-cultivation and in growing produce for export who also sell part of their labour to the larger properties, that this island has been free for so many years from anything like starvation on the one hand and serious labour unrest on the other.” (Post 1978, 295)
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Analogous to the tactics of plantation labor recruitment, this spread too few resources too thinly. “The government programme also encouraged the establishment of undersized farms. The politics of settlement dictated that each property acquired be divided between as many people (votes) as possible. Thus, we find that about fifty percent of the land holdings on the settlements are less than four acres in size. One direct consequence of these uneconomic holdings has been to force the farmer to find ‘outside work’ ... it is estimated that thirteen per cent of the settlers under these schemes supplement their income by seasonal work and as many as twenty-four per cent in regular part-time work” (Beckford 1972, 48). Crichlow suggests that lot size and the lack of needed infrastructure—roads, water, and other basic amenities together with state interference with cultivation practices (enabled through the conditions of land settlement)—“guaranteed that settlers would remain forever painfully yoked to other forms of income generating activities” (2005, 135).

It seems that scholars took some time to catch up to what the colonial-cum-developmentalist state knew prior to 1938. Based on research conducted in the 1950s, Lambros Comitas (1973) draws attention to a “socio-economic stratum of rural Jamaican society” that though not wholly ignored did not easily fit within the extant taxonomies of the Caribbean region. Characteristic of this “population segment” is what he dubbed “occupational multiplicity”: a systematic engagement “in a number of gainful activities which form for him an integrated economic complex” (Comitas 1973, 41). Specifically, Comitas argues that half of the Jamaican population does not fit the structural categories defined by the Julian Steward cohort—which includes Sidney Mintz, Elena Padilla, and Eric Wolf. Comitas grounds his exception by citing a 1956 government-sponsored study by M. G. Smith:
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… except among the senior male age groups, farming is an occupation which is rarely carried out independently of other pursuits. Pure wage work is also relatively rare. The typical employment status and occupational combination for Jamaican small-farming populations involve own-account farming and ad hoc wage work. (1956, 5)

And again, with this from a 1961 study:

The farm people worked off their farms to supplement their farm incomes; usually they worked to meet their day to day living and farm expenses but occasionally the income was reserved for unusual expenditures such as buying a bed or a piece of land. Some of the off-farm work was undertaken in slack periods and so did not compete with farm work, but there were exceptional instances when the pressing need for cash forced the people to neglect their farms at critical times. (Edwards quoted in Comitas 1973, 43)

Comitas is less interested in categorizing the types of work in which people are engaged or their relation to capital. Instead he focuses on diversity as an expression of microgeographies of economic opportunity. Eschewing the Steward cohort’s preoccupation with the “rural,” he finds that the fishermen he surveyed were involved in a variety of waged work.

While Mintz’s statements about the peasantry in Jamaica do not adequately attend to the question of social structure—the size and composition of and relationships between “rural groups” that he notes do exist—I suggest that his preoccupation with a qualitative type is mistaken as a quantitative reality. Further, as his portrayal of the Jamaican peasantry, spread across many articles and decades, is taken up by later scholars it tends to be flattened, emphasizing the idea of independence and deemphasizing the complexity he notes for instance in 1973: “we do not need a definition of the peasantry so much as a complex typology in which no rural groups will remain ‘analytically marginal’” (Mintz 1973, 98). This is the crux of the intra-Marxist critique by Frucht (1967), Rodney (1981a), and Robotham (1981): Caribbean rural lives tethered to the estates was a reality eclipsed by an inattentiveness to general tendencies. This is particularly true
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for Jamaica, which Mintz positions as the exceptional case. I think it is worthwhile to point out that one of the subtexts of Mintz’s writing on Caribbean peasantries and protopeasantries is the recuperation of Black work. Still, the scholarly critique is not a mere lack of generosity: Mintz is late in coming to terms with the presence in Jamaica of straddling (1974) and is too quick to celebrate the “rise of a peasantry” in Jamaica (1959)—though it should be understood that this is in relation to Puerto Rico, where it seems that a smallholder population was more limited in number (1959a, 1959b).

Methods

Before embarking on fieldwork my goal was to understand the process through which informal tenure was being delegitimized by investigating the shifting relationship between residents and the state through ethnographic research in an informal settlement that was undergoing eviction or relocation. 38 This was a bit of a long shot—I had no knowledge of a site where eviction notices were soon to be served. In fact, having grown up in Jamaica, the threatened “zero-tolerance” policy itself seemed implausible: land capture was too widespread and too deeply embedded in the social relations of the clientelist state, and the police state too mercurial to uniformly extinguish this relation. My lived experience suggested that something more complicated than outright criminalization was afoot, and that it was likely to be a slow and uneven process. As such, I set out to understand how informal residents navigated the particular processes of negotiation involving various state and nonstate agencies following eviction.

38 I initially intended to do ethnographic work in two communities so that I could learn from the differences and similarities between two sites. However it proved infeasible to accomplish the second site with the same level of involvement in the six months I was in Jamaica.
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I did preliminary research in the summers of 2009 and 2010, interviewing two public officials, and two community leaders who had been involved in land reform programs; gathering official documents and reports; attending public meetings associated with those programs; and having informal conversations with politicians and civil servants local to the region in which I hoped to conduct fieldwork.

In 2013, I returned to Jamaica for a six-month period to do fieldwork, beginning with site selection. I pursued several simultaneous avenues to identify a site where there was ongoing or recent renegotiation of tenure prompted by state intervention.

- I met with civil servants at the Jamaica Railway Corporation (JRC), a quasi-governmental, landowning agency in the process of consolidating their land holdings for possible divestiture. Informal occupation of JRC lands is seen as a major barrier to divestiture. However, since the JRC’s strategy for land consolidation was in a protracted process of internal development, the JRC site I identified was not suitable as a primary fieldwork site. I did however interview three civil servants employed by the JRC, and five informal residents living in a community adjacent to the JRC right-of-way. These interviews provided a valuable counterpoint to those I conducted with civil servants at other landowning state agencies, and residents at the field site I ultimately selected as my focus.

- I conducted interviews with three field officers and two parish managers of the Social Development Commission (SDC), a community development agency of the Government of Jamaica. Field officers are assigned geographical areas in which they engage communities in developing community level projects and governance structure. Parish managers have oversight over all the field officers for a parish. I enquired with the
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officers about “informal settlements” within their jurisdiction. It was through one of the field officers that I learned of the selected site, where residents had been served eviction notices and had gone through a process of negotiations that extended over years.

- I communicated with three leaders in communities where there had been issues of uncertain land tenure.
- I contacted a local human rights organization to find out whether they had worked with communities so affected.

Through the SDC field officer, I made initial contact at the fieldwork site with one of the people who had been a community leader during the negotiations around the eviction. She in turn introduced me to several other residents through whom I made other contacts, and so on, in a respondent driven sampling (Kendall et al. 2008). There were approximately 250 residents of the site, based on a self-survey the residents conducted as part of the posteviction negotiation.

I conducted my ethnography over a three-and-a-half-month period in 2013–2014 on a former plantation where residents had been served eviction notices in 2006. Their negotiations to stay put, or to be relocated, continued over the ensuing years, and have not yet arrived at closure. I visited the site, on average, four times per week, staying for several hours each visit. Many of these visits centered on one or two interviews, with time passed in between in participant observation, informal conversation with interviewees and other residents, sometimes accompanying people as they worked in and around the site or socialized, and occasionally accompanying someone on an errand. Though I interacted with more residents, including youth, I conducted interviews with twenty-eight adult residents ranging in age from nineteen to late-sixties, eighteen women and ten men. I did follow-up interviews with eleven of these respondents. The twenty-eight represented a range of employment statuses, marital/relationship
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statuses, household compositions, and quality of housing (a narrow range, all small and cramped, and from flimsy to secure but all without adequate utilities). I did not collect income data, but it was clear that they also represented some variation in economic ability to secure their household/family needs and wants.

The interviews were semistructured and lasted about ninety minutes. At the interviewees’ option, I recorded interviews with handwritten notes or with an audio-recorder for later transcription, and took photographs of their plots—residential and farming. I went on transect walks with five interviewees, four to visit their cultivation: tree crops on land that had been part of a 1970s land reform project on the site; two fairly new plots with yams, bananas, and other short-term crops; and the fourth with a cash crop failed due to improper use of pesticides. The fifth transect walk was with a respondent whom I will call Janet, up a very steep hill to the community where many residents had lived at one time, to visit the school attended by her daughters, taking note along the way of the infrastructural development in which she had had temporary employment—a road and water main project that, it was hoped, would bring running water to those residing at the largest cluster of homes at the field site.

I identified an informal community located on JRC lands, made several visits over a two-month period and conducted semistructured interviews with five residents. I made initial contact there with residents through three sources: the local basic school principal, a resident known to the family of a friend of mine, and a middle-class resident whom I know from her community development work elsewhere who happened to own a home in the area. Though I did not do extensive research there, the data gathered offered a useful counterpoint to other landowning state agencies, and residents of other communities whom I interviewed.
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In order to better understand the varying roles of different state agencies with regard to community development, land management, and implementation of policies affecting informal settlements, I was in contact with twenty civil servants. Because I was interested in the actually existing practices of various institutions of the state I sought out those who were involved in the day-to-day implementation of policy either as managers of staff or as field officers. The nature of my contact with each varied: some were enquiries directly related to the field site—for example, I attempted to verify residents’ understanding that promises to develop affordable housing at the site were never pursued because survey findings revealed qualities of the land that would have made construction expensive, and therefore affordable housing infeasible. Others had to do with general policy implementation. I conducted semistructured interviews, lasting 60-90 minutes with twelve civil servants, and follow-up interviews with five, across the following agencies: two parish councils, the ministry with responsibility for housing—including the Squatter Management Unit—the ministry with responsibility for land, Jamaica Railway Corporation, National Housing Trust, and National Environmental Protection Agency. I made enquiries, documented with field notes, with seven civil servants at the following agencies: Housing Agency of Jamaica (both local and national), a local public health officer, a local rural development field officer, a local parish council enforcement officer and his supervisor, and the local lands office. I also interviewed four people who had been in policy development who shared with me some current and past policy documents, policy assessment reports, and their thoughts and experiences on their involvement with policy development.

Finally, I interviewed a field officer and the director of a human rights organization who had had regular contact with residents at my field site beginning shortly after they were served with
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eviction notices, conducting trainings and assisting with meetings with government officials. The
interviews each lasted about ninety minutes.

Also included in the data are documents given to me by various civil servants to educate me
regarding: primary data collected by or on behalf of government, state agency mandates, and
policy guidelines (a sort of prepolicy document articulating an approach to squatters intended to
be common across various agencies). Residents provided me with documents they had collected
including: legal documents, meeting notes, and training materials they received from state and
nonstate agencies. I also drew on online spatial data maintained by agencies of the Government
of Jamaica.

I also spoke with two landowners whose land parcels have portions that have been captured. One
of these landowners is a resort, where because of a serendipitous miscommunication I was able
to meet with the general manager, whom I will call Mr. Foreman, and two members of the board
of directors. The board member I had contacted thought I was a government employee with some
key to moving forward the negotiations that were in progress for the government to assume
control of the lands that had been captured. After I disabused them of that notion, they did allow
me to ask them some questions. We were seated in Mr. Foreman’s office, in a wing of a
converted “great house” that had been part of a former plantation. As is typical, the house is sited
on a rise looking out over flat land that would have been divided up between cane fields, the
sugar works, and the “Negro village.” The meeting lasted about forty minutes.

I had read a policy document that gave a brief overview of a program in which the resort had
enrolled. One of the directors felt the program had emerged from the resort’s dealings with the
state regarding the settlement. The program offers landowners the opportunity to divest
themselves of the challenge of negotiating with or confronting those who were in possession of
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portions of their land, if the landowner was willing to gift the land (with its inhabitants in place) to the government, along with a surplus allotment that would be developed to offset the costs of regularizing the settlement into subdivided lots and construction of site infrastructure. The residents in this case had originally been limited to employees of the resort, though the numbers had grown beyond what the resort was comfortable with on the fringes of their enclave. Given their role as landowner and employer, and a kind of informal landlord to boot, it was a bit ironic that they mourned the fact that their housekeepers, cooks, groundskeepers, and security guards, etc. lacked access to basic amenities of hygiene—running water and sewage—within the homes from which they came to work to perform the work of hygiene for others. I return to this conversation in chapter 2.

Race, Class, and Power in Jamaica

I decided not to do group interviews or focus groups, primarily because, as I learned early on from residents’ comments to me about each other, the process of navigating the eviction was contentious. I avoided forming focus groups for fear of reopening wounds that might interfere with residents’ ongoing coordinated efforts. However, most of the interviews were in settings—chosen by the interviewee—that meant family members, other residents, or visitors were within earshot. In a few cases, the interjections of others opened up new dimensions of the interview akin to the way that interplay within a focus group generates a co-construction of meaning in which people other than the researcher participate (Wilkinson 1998).

These interactions aided with one challenge I faced as a researcher: how to understand and navigate the impact on personal interactions of my positionality as a light-skinned middle-class Jamaican woman of a particular type—what I grew up hearing called a “nice brown lady.” I will
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return to this below. In one instance, Mary (not her real name) pointed out to me that the interviewee did not in fact understand the consent form I was reading aloud but was shy to admit that to me when I asked. Mary then went on to tell me about some residents’ sense that speaking with me might have a negative impact on their negotiations with the state; it seemed that correcting me regarding the consent form had opened up a space for more frankness. In another instance, a former resident was seated nearby at the yard of the roadside shop where I was interviewing Mr. M, a man in his sixties. Mr. M had been talking nostalgically about his time as a youth on the estate when the visitor interjected that his and Mr. M’s grandmothers had been “like slaves,” to which Mr. M responded, “All me too.” This interjection opened up the complexity of Mr. M’s sense of his past based on his shared experience with the visitor.

The “nice” in “nice brown lady” is not wholly complimentary: it indicates that I do not appear to be very stuck-up, but also that I appear to be naïve of the harsher realities of life, too nice to speak patois,\(^{39}\) for hard work, or for raunchy sexuality. Historically, Jamaica has had a class hierarchy of three racial categories\(^{40}\): at the top, white represents the large landowning families who also held almost exclusive political power into the twentieth century; Black, the working classes, descendants of African slaves. Occupying the intermediary role is brown, which today encompasses both racial minorities and people who appear as a mixture of Black and white—the original definition of brown (Robotham 1981, 32 n3). This hierarchy still structures Jamaican society, though there has been significant class mobility and the emergence of a Black bourgeoisie in the last three decades. As such, while a white-skinned minority now shares

\(^{39}\) A Creole language more often spoken by working-class Jamaicans—though middle-class Jamaicans coming of age in the 1980s and later are more likely to speak patois than previous generations. I should note that though English is more comfortable for me, I speak patois, and understand it better than I speak it. Exemplified by the fact that my brother speaks much better patois than I, men socialize across class more easily than women.

\(^{40}\) The reality is of course more complex. Robotham (1998, 308) offers some insight though a thorough review is not the task of his argument.
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economic power with a brown elite, and the political directorate has shifted over time from white to brown during the era of constitutional decolonization (beginning in the 1940s) up until the 1990s, it was not until 1992 that PJ Patterson became Jamaica’s first Black prime minister elected to office (Robotham 1981). This despite the fact that Black Jamaicans are a large majority—per the census, about 90 percent of the population—with the mixed-race portion at about 7 percent, and whites and other racial minorities sharing the remaining 3 percent.

Ideologically speaking, the former British colony has long favored Anglo culture, lighter skin, and “proper” English, a slant that has gotten more complex with color mobility but has by no means been revolutionized. In my mind, one irony related to my research is that human rights advocates condemn the actions of a state formation that still (but unevenly) operates on the premise that Black life is killable; however, the critique is delivered along liberal ideological lines that characterize the Black state as backward, a critique surprisingly, or willfully, naive of its racist and neocolonialist overtones. Beyond ideology, the fact that these are critiques of real harm, diverse kinds of harm that produce “vulnerability to premature death” (Gilmore 2007a, 28), allow interventions-as-civilizing missions (as opposed to other kinds of politics) to belie the ways they clear the way for new forms of exploitation.

As a brown Jamaican interviewing civil servants—who were primarily Black Jamaicans—I became conscious that the outlook I was expected to have was that of human rights advocates or anticorruption activists. This may have had something to do with name-recognition—I share a last name with my aunt, who has been a prominent spokesperson for a human rights advocacy

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41 See Gordon (1987) regarding Black social mobility in Jamaica, 1943 (the year preceding full adult suffrage) to 1984.

42 The full quote of Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s definition of racism is: “Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (2007a, 28).
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organization. However, my sense is that, regardless of what brown lady sat before them, civil servants are weary of those who have the luxury of critique; not having to make material “the maneuvers of an embattled state” (Crichlow 2003), required by transnational capital to liberalize the economy, a task of significant statecraft.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the emergence of ownershipless-ness in Jamaican history has its roots in the production of a labor force that is self-sufficient and yet ready at hand. This is the historical context for the ethnography that follows. In chapter 2, I look at the social production of space of the field site, as a particular instance of surplus land and surplus labor. With recent investment changing the spatiality of tourism on the island, I analyze how space has been restructured such that my field site now lies at the interface of capital investment, primarily in tourism, and the “organized abandonment” (Gilmore 2008) of agriculture. In chapter 3, I examine the expansion, use, and repurposing of state capacity: its build-out after the 1930s labor rebellions and the deployment of that capacity towards community development, improved standards of living, and redistributive land reform; and, later on, how those capacities become surplus and are partially repurposed towards improving the efficient functioning of land markets. In chapter 4, I look at informal tenure in the day-to-day lives of residents at the field site, understanding the state regulation of land as “the restless outcome of human agency” (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003, 432), as land capture emerges, and is maintained, threatened, and renegotiated in this particular place.

Through these chapters I give an account of the particular contradictions made evident in this moment of continued reconfiguration of the relations between the ownershipless, state, and
capital. The first has to do with emerging policy’s failure to account for the complementarity between *working a plantation* and *working a plot*, and the accumulation in the state of the labor to curtail, in some political economic moments and in others to extend, the appearance of surplus land available for capture or other forms of informal tenure. The second contradiction, signaled by the prime minister’s utterance “those people should never have been there in the first place,” has to do with the visibility of “squatting”—at times invisible, and at other times hypervisible. As I show through my ethnographic work, informal and customary tenures have to do with persistent histories of racial capitalism. The ways in which the ownershipless becomes hypervisible, delegitimized as “squatters,” obscure these histories and through doing so, render invisible the slow transformations of the state and social reproduction.
2  The Front Page: Who, Where, and to What End?

Introduction

As a passerby in the 1980s I knew the location where I did my research as a field of sugarcane along the main coastal road between two towns. There appeared to be little else nearby besides grazing cows and the occasional roadside shop. But even then, some of the people I met during fieldwork lived there, in buildings on the other side of the canefield. These buildings include houses built for estate managerial staff, and tiny structures the residents call sugar board houses.43

The canefields were part of a plantation, which I will call Tulloch Estate, that produced sugar beginning in the seventeenth century. The earliest records I found indicate Tulloch was originally two estates, the second I will call Shiloah. Each estate was one of many owned by two families to whom land was patented after the English took possession of the island from the Spanish in 1655. After an early eighteenth-century marriage joined a member of the family who owned Tulloch to the family who owned Shiloah, the estates appear at times as a single operational unit in state records like slave censuses and agricultural land surveys. I found evidence of two later unrelated owners: one announced as a new proprietor in the late nineteenth century, and the

43 These houses may have been built as boarding houses for sugar workers under a program initiated following the 1930s labor rebellions. In that era, “thousands of houses were built through Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Programs” (Harris 2008, 50), funded through sugar export duties. A program called the Sugar Barracks Relocation Program initiated in 2012 aimed to relocate 876 former sugar workers, or their now adult children, who had been living in barracks on defunct sugar estates (Hunter 2014). “Board” may actually mean boarding house, not an industrial board: the tiny houses did not have kitchens or bathrooms (and still do not); they were provided as temporary housing (seasonal, or weekly for those who travelled home on days off). Certainly at Tulloch there were families living fulltime in the houses and working for the estate.
second in whose name the property was registered in the 1950s. The land was bought by a multinational sugar concern, who owned it for about ten years before the government purchased the estate in the mid-1970s. It went out of production in the 1990s.

Behind the houses, the land slopes steeply up. Up the hill, clustered around a Baptist and a Methodist church, is a village that I will call Belmont. The term “village” has a particular significance in the history of racial capitalism in Jamaica. The Baptists and Methodists were the primary free churches (i.e., not the Anglican church of state) that acted as intermediaries in the post-emancipation land redistribution practice known as free villages (mentioned in chapter 1). While the churches in Belmont are the denominations linked with the establishment of free villages, Belmont does not appear on the list of free villages.

This chapter deals with the production of space of the field site. I will show the emergence of Tulloch as surplus agricultural land (Gilmore 2007a) through phases of restructuring of the state and the economy. Today, portions of Tulloch have been developed as new outposts of resort development but hundreds of acres of the estate have yet to be turned to other uses. As I will discuss, the shifting spatialities of the site and the broader geographies of uneven development produce tensions that infuse daily life at Tulloch and rural, urban, and in-between places like it, where capital’s sometimes surplus people reproduce themselves daily and generationally, self-sufficient and yet ready at hand. As residents rework life strategies to survive forgotten places (Gilmore 2008), through exercising a durable though vulnerable tenure, they insert themselves a stone’s throw from Jamaica’s “front page.”

44 As the former minister of water and housing described “squatters” to me.
45 This is a term used to describe the research site by a resident who lives there.
CHAPTER 2: The Front Page

About 250 people live within the current six hundred-acre estate boundaries. In 2006, people living on the parcel were served with eviction notices by a state agency. According to residents, notices were served quietly at dusk.

They just come one late evening, when dusk deh come down and then run go deh so and run go deh so. And them nah seh nuttin to the people dem. So nobody nuh know who is who or who or not. Them just come and shub i paper\(^{46}\) and go in a vehicle and gone! Nobody nuh know if a gunman, nobody nuh know if a police nobody nuh know a who. Them just shub the paper, then dusk deh come down them just shub the paper and zup! weh. Nobody nuh know who…

The notice is not on letterhead and the signatory’s name is illegible and unidentified. The process of negotiation that ensued unfolded over several years and remains unresolved. For my research, I was looking for people who had been involved in the eviction process. My time there was shared between two main clusters of homes about a mile away from each other. Others who had been involved in resisting the eviction had lived on a section of the estate that was sold for development; they had been relocated by the government and were now living elsewhere. All of the residents I interviewed were still living on the estate.

The place names for these two clusters used by the people who live there correspond to the historical adjoining estates but the properties had been formally amalgamated since at least the time of title registry (1950s); the union possibly dates back to the marriage between the two families who owned neighboring estates. Perhaps since outsiders call the unified site Tulloch, residents sometimes refer to the cluster of houses on the Tulloch estate proper as Tulloch Yard. I will follow this naming pattern. Recently, and still tongue in cheek in use, part of Shiloah has

\(^{46}\) Shove the paper
been dubbed Gaza, a reference to a dancehall artist and his allegiants. This has something to do with the internal dynamics of the place and the people living there, but I will come back to that in chapter 4. We will begin with looking at how economic restructuring changed longstanding patterns of daily journeys in and adjacent to Tulloch before going on to look at how restructuring shifted broader sociospatial relationships.

Villages, Grounds, and Estates: The Journey to Work

Today’s cadaster bears evidence of the historical geography of sugar estate and worker subsistence. The estate, which entered the land registry in the mid-twentieth century at over a thousand acres, primarily occupies flat coastal land. As was common, sugar cane was primarily grown on flat land, while hilly wasteland formed a significant percentage of the entire property (Higman 1988). Meanwhile, the median size of the hillside plots is eight acres, with some as small as two. This belies the pattern of usage however, as informal subdivisions are a common practice.

Almost everyone I spoke with at Tulloch, or a partner they relocated to join, claims heritage from the uphill village, which I will call Belmont. For the most part, their connection to Tulloch was a result of their own or their family’s relationship with its former life as a sugar estate. Tulloch

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47 In 1889, modeled on the South Australian Real Property Act of 1858, Jamaica adopted a Torrens title registry system, but without a legislative imperative that deed holders pursue title registry under the Torrens system. The first registry to obtain a title is undertaken by the property owner, requiring land survey, and a deed search to establish that the deed held is the best known claim to the land. This is often an arduous and expensive legal process. It does not seem out of the ordinary that even a large estate such as Tulloch remained unregistered for sixty years after the passage of the title registry law. It does, however, make it more challenging to understand the history of ownership, and changes in lot size. What I have found out is noted below.

An 1880 newspaper article announced a new proprietor of Tulloch. Subsequently, Tulloch appears on lists of sugar estates in cultivation in 1891, 1899, and 1910. It is also listed as a Pen—a term for properties on which livestock were raised, often on less flat terrain—in 1891 and 1910. The earliest reference to Tulloch Estate that I found recorded it as a burial place in 1701. The deceased was a man whose family was one of a few early plantation owners on the island.
itself is not a village: there are no schools, no public buildings, no places of worship, no water or sewage network, only a piecemeal electricity network; the roads that exist are the remains of land uses that have long since left the site; and the only spaces where people regularly meet outside of their homes are several shops/roadside stalls belonging to residents, and the “Man Yard,” where there is often a domino game in play on the veranda.

Today, the main road follows the coastal plain, traversing the boundaries of estate after estate, after estate, all the way to “R—,” a landmark twelve miles distant. Mr. M, a man in his sixties, says that these were all owned by the same family.

Mr. M: Yeah straight back to the Black Man Line. Is so, yeah, we call it. Yah so from down by the [nearby landmark] below the hotel straight over by Cove

RG: Morass Cove?

Mr. M: Yeah…it go further you know but only what did sell out and leave. Is more than 1200 hundred acre you know but what them cut off and sell because you see Morass Cove now, a lots of it sell out. So they did leave 1200 acre.

I purchased land title reports and was thereby able to confirm that four adjoining estates, in addition to Tulloch and Shiloah, were registered to the same planter.

Paralleling the main road was what two residents told me was called the Black Man Line, the boundary that still runs between the “properties” and land belonging to Black Jamaicans. From an interview with Mr. M:

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48 RG stands for Rachel Goffe.
CHAPTER 2: The Front Page

Mr. M: And would have called over here so the Black Man Land…cause going up the 
hills there now to [Belmont] and when you catch a [Belmont] now you say well 
now the government land\textsuperscript{49} finish now, this is the Black Man Land.

RG: Ok, so [Belmont] is on the Black Man Land.

Mr. M: Yeah. But if there is any district—any district or any property—you have a line 
where the property line stop and you know say over there now is the Black Man 
Land; is just so we call it.

At Tulloch, this line divided the estate from the plots that formed Belmont, the village where Mr. 
M and his family were from.\textsuperscript{50} When I asked how far this line extended he told me about the 
regular journeys he took as a youth to his grandmother’s plot, established via her marriage to a 
man who was from a district five miles distant.

RG: So the land that she was cultivating was nearby to the house?

Mr. M: No, no, no … if you ever know how far we walk go a bush\textsuperscript{51} with my granny. 
Sometimes it’s only two time a week she go. And some bag of yam and some 
bundle of cane what me carry pon this side!

\textsuperscript{49} By “government land” Mr. M is referring to the current ownership of the estate. In the next quote he denotes the 
counterpart of Black Man Land as “the property,” which is a term used for an estate regardless of what entity 
owns it.

\textsuperscript{50} By the time the title was registered in the twentieth century, the Black Man Line had already been established and 
so I was unable to find out whether this land was included in the original patent to the Tulloch and Shiloah 
estates in the seventeenth century and later subdivided. That information may be available in archives of 
plantation maps—B.W. Higman (2001) notes that Jamaica’s plantation history is particularly well documented 
with survey maps, or in registered conveyances.

\textsuperscript{51} “Bush” is a fluid term denoting the condition of being overgrown/unkempt; it can be used as a pejorative to 
describe somewhere as unappealingly rural or undeveloped, but it also sometimes has a positive spin, denoting a 
place that is away from the ills associated with the urban in which one can find respite.
On the other hand, the journey on the road down from the village and back up again was part of the everyday life of many working for the estate. Referring to his grandmother again, Mr. M describes the relationship between Belmont and the estate:

Mr. M: Yeah, yeah, yeah she work for the property man. Ca you know that’s the only place someone can just walk from up a [Belmont] and know so well they know Monday morning them a come a work and Friday them collect ’im pay and ’im want any likkle thing on the property—fruit or whatsoever, same way them just leave and gone a you yard, the only thing you gone buy now a meat and fish. And flour and them way they because banana, breadfruit, and coconut, ackee and everything deh pon the property. 52

In addition to tree crops reaped from the estate, many in Belmont grew foodstuffs on their own land.

Other residents had customary tenure on the estate as a result of their own or family member’s employment on the estate, living in houses and/or farming within the estate boundaries. Jacob, a man in his sixties, learned farming from his father, who worked for the estate, by working on the father’s five-acre farm within the estate. That there might be acres within a farm that are available for uses other than production of the staple crop might seem unusual, but this was a common feature of the properties (see Higman 1988 for historical examples and Crichlow 1988, 264–265; Thomas 2011, chapter 5 for late twentieth-century examples). When I asked if there was a lot of idle land on the estate, Jacob responded, “Yes. So big you cannot farm it; would take the whole of [the parish 53] to farm it.”

52 Taking provisions from the property was a source of contention between workers and the estate rangers.
53 Jamaica, whose population in 2013 was 2.7 million, is divided into fourteen parishes.
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Jacob explained that when the family proprietors left the estate, they had asked his father what he wanted—a tractor? Or land? But the father had said he didn’t want anything. Jacob laments his father’s diffidence; had he asked for something, Jacob thinks his father could have formalized ownership of a plot of land. The question—what did he want—should be seen in the context of informal practices of deferred wages. Formalized in the 1974 Employment (Termination, etc.) Act, severance is set as a fraction of annual wages to be paid to an employee at the time of the termination of their employment whether retirement or being made redundant. The law being replaced dated all the way back to 1842, four years after the hastily terminated Apprenticeship, and was called the Master and Servants Act.

Given the time of the estate’s sale to the government, the employ of Jacob’s father would have terminated under the 1842 law, which did not compel the proprietor to pay a cash redundancy. Several interviewees mentioned nonpayment of deferred wages. Regarding her mother who was a domestic worker and later an agricultural worker, both for the estate, Miss S (in her sixties) said:

Miss S: Him\(^{54}\) never did get anything you know for him wen sick out and from them sick out and die you nuh get anything and mi know seh him should get something for him work with them long.

Jacob’s family member reported that when they were protesting their eviction, a part of the negotiation process involved the government enquiring with the former landowners as to the legitimacy of the evictees’ possession of land, despite the fact that the government had owned the land for over thirty years at that point. As reported to me by a resident, and also by a civil servant involved in the negotiations, the message came back “Those people? We gave them the

\(^{54}\) Male pronouns are often used for both genders in Jamaican patois.
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land to live out their lives on.” I will come back to the social relations of this in chapter 3. Even when it is acknowledged that some debt is owed to former workers, as was done via the act of “giving them the land,” it is part of the production of ownershiplessness; what is offered is not property, but customary tenure for length of one’s life. Of course, even if deferred wages were received they would fall short of the property that is annihilated via the fetish of the wage (Marx 1976, 940).

In this way, the presence of estate workers’ different pathways to informal and customary tenure are layered on the site and linked with the historical geography of worker-estate relations. Whether on customary tenures within the estate, practices of reaping from the estate, or growing provisions on near and distant plots, the informal use of fruits of the land—and the land itself—were embedded into the reproduction of estate labor.

Development, Underdevelopment: National Trends, Locally

National trends in land development that show up at Tulloch are: plantations falling out of active agricultural use, uneven development of road and water infrastructure, and a changing geography of tourism development.

Interfaces, Surplus, Tides

Positioning Tulloch within national trends requires some explanation of why I think the trends are relevant. Regarding surplus agricultural land: I have focused in the previous chapter on an agricultural, primarily sugar, labor force that has historically combined working a plot with working a plantation. However, I follow Lambros Comitas (1973) in noting that combining
subsistence or own account work with waged work that is insecure or low-paying is a pattern in Jamaica that is not limited to the agricultural sector.

To illustrate: in 2014, the Tulloch residents I met grew food or did fishing or foraging; ran small shops selling staples to locals or roadside vending to travelers; or bought and sold in urban food markets or other petty commercial activities; in combination with working construction or cooking, gardening, or working security in the hospitality industry; or working in factories, bars, and restaurants, as domestic servants, and in retail. No one was currently in a wage relation in the agricultural sector, though many had themselves or their parents had worked for the Tulloch estate when it was in operation or another nearby. I will discuss this further in chapter 4. Tulloch went out of formal agricultural use in the 1990s, leaving behind people whose presence there was tied to the historical geography of work. The periodic “organized abandonment” (Gilmore 2008) of people and places is an inherent feature of capitalism.

Theorizing postcolonial capitalism through his research with wastepickers in India, Vinay Gidwani calls for “understanding post-colonial development as a process marked by the waxing and waning of formal sector employment, whether government or private, rather than a secular transition from the informal to the formal” (2015, 590). His view is that “capitalist value production ‘structures-in-dominance’ and is always parasitic on other, relatively autonomous, forms of value making” (581, emphasis added). While often parasitic, the actual relation is particular and a matter for research. Taking to task not the modernization theory narrative that the Gidwani quote refutes, but its Marxist teleological counterpart (for critique see Hart 2006 and Quijano 2000), Mitchell, Marston, and Katz offer this formulation drawn from Braudel: “capitalism does not devour and destroy other economic systems; it needs them in order to reproduce itself. Under certain conditions, many of the elements of material life may block the
progress of capitalism” (2003, 423), while in other circumstances the relationship is one of subsidy.

Recent research in labor history supports the assertion that “the boundary between wage workers in formal capitalist production and those in nonwage, self-employed, home-based, piece-rate, and contract work, among other forms of enterprise and livelihood generation, is ‘thin and porous … across which labourers travel to and fro’” (Gidwani 2015, 590).”” Regarding these studies he goes on to note that

… the modal condition of work within post-colonial capitalism may not be absolute expulsion of vulnerable populations from capital’s “reserve army” … but rather the spatiotemporal flux in and hence tenuousness of capital’s embrace. Indeed, the routes through which workers are thrown out and drawn back into this embrace, the stratagems by which they are held never farther than an arm’s reach, are multifarious—and considerably more research is required to understand horizontal and vertical mobility within the informal sector as part of generational and gendered lifecycles of informal sector labourers’ working lives. (Gidwani 2015, 590, emphasis added)

Though Gidwani gestures to (without engaging) the work of Marxist feminist theorists, his argument against dual-economy models hinges on the relationship of wastepicking and other informal sector work to the conditions of production and the production of space as value.

… I have tried to make a case for understanding informal sector activities, such as the work of transforming the city’s detritus, as part of a vast infra-economy and the varied forms of labour performed within heterogeneous value chains of waste transformation

55 See Quijano (2000) for a critique of dual system theories.

56 By the “production of space as value” I mean that in his research Gidwani finds that the removal of waste from cities supports the emergence of the neoliberal city as a space of accumulation by making it palatable for consumption by its more affluent residents (Gidwani 2015; Gidwani and Maringanti 2016).
as infrastructural labour that produces what Marx called capital’s “general” and “external” condition of production. The prefix “infra” has a double valence: as “that which forms the basis of” and as “that which is outside the visible wavelength.” (590, emphasis in original)

While theorizing the proximity to production of wastepicking and other informal activities is important for a political project (see Gidwani and Maringanti 2016), it is not the only basis on which to make the argument against dualism. As Marxist feminist theorists have shown, capitalism has always already assumed the appropriation, via the wage, of unpaid reproductive labor (e.g., Dalla Costa and James 1972; Federici 2004, 2012). The reliance of capital on unacknowledged reproductive labor is accomplished not only by a gendered bifurcation of roles, but also via the division of time between working a plot and working a plantation, terms I introduced in chapter 1. Also, the daily, seasonal, life-cycle, or other temporalities along which plot and plantation are sutured together are by no means particular to the postcolonial (see Gilmore 2007a, 200; Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003, 425). This reliance also takes the form of the depression of wages below the cost of subsistence, as de Janvry points out, though in a dualist model (de Janvry and Garramón 1977). In addition, livelihood is uneven globally and often group-differentiated since the imaginary of dignity is not considered socially necessary for all people in all places. Parasitism pertains whether the activity occurring in the informal sector is producing value for capital or use-value for reproducing labor power that is (sometimes) exploited by capital.

Further, it is not only the boundary between formal and informal work, or between the work of production and reproduction, whose porosity is significant, but also the boundary between property and not-property. The role of informal tenure in this space of flux at the margins of capital is in part about how that space allows for livelihood activities, formal or informal: for
example, residents of Tulloch foraged within the parcel they occupied for fruit that they tried to
sell, but some were also contracted by a resort to forage for wood to feed a bonfire, a weekly
beachside spectacle.

As land and other things periodically fall out of the market and become available as use-values,
they do become the ground for value-making, and for the reproduction of labor. Beyond that,
these use-values also become ground for not-work: refusal, a measure of autonomy; meaning-
making, meaning that is sometimes the pleasure of the *plot* itself, sometimes the pleasure in the
capacity to move back and forth between it and the *plantation*.

Talk of tides effaces the violence of “organized abandonment” (Gilmore 2008). The lives of the
residents at Tulloch have been thrown into disorder by capital moving out of sugarcane and
garment manufacturing, and also the slower violence of shrinking social expenditure, which
makes more tenuous the access to healthcare, education, infrastructure (roads, drainage, and
utilities), and protection from environmental degradation.

Organized abandonment is an effect of capital in crisis and its attempts to overcome crisis
through a “spatial fix.” 57 The reorganization of state and capital in moments of crises is
historically specific. Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s (2007a) method in *Golden Gulag* is to investigate
how particular devaluations create the conditions for, but do not guarantee how those surpluses
become repurposed as spatial and social fixes. 58 Surplus land here extends the appearance of

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57 For my purposes I am thinking of “spatial fix” as used in Neil Smith’s theory of uneven development: the
differential investment in development in some spaces and the ability to move between developed and
underdeveloped space (and between urban and rural space) has made the production of geographic differentiation
less a by-product and more an internal necessity for capital (2010, 202–204). The overcoming of crisis through
mobility is what has been called a spatial fix.

58 “Social fix” (Gilmore 2007a, 23) points to the use of, in the case of Gilmore’s work, mass incarceration as an all-
purpose solution to social problems. The thing that is “fixed,” or overcome, in both the terms “spatial fix” and
“social fix” terms is capitalist crises, not the social/spatial.
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land as not-property, making it available to self-sufficiency—constituted by Black radical
traditions and social democracy. This is in distinction to the enclosures of the nineteenth century,
or at least it has been.

_Surplus Agricultural Land ISO_59 _Foreign Capital_

Agriculture has been in decline as a share of the Jamaican economy, and the acreage of arable
land in productive use has also dwindled. Nationally, there is a trend of land going out of
agricultural production. Between 1996 and 2007 there was a 20 percent decline in the number of
acres occupied by active farms. For the same time period, there was a 1 percent increase in the
share of population who resided in rural areas (World Bank 2017).

Regarding the turnover of surplus agricultural land to other uses, I refer to an online video
interview with a member of a white landowning family, the Kerr-Jarretts:

My family came here in 1655 with Penn and Venables to take possession of Jamaica
from the Spanish and we’ve been here ever since. We’ve been involved in nation
building and with service—military, and political, and civil. And the property has been
a sugar plantation, and was an active sugar plantation up until about 2001. However
urban pressure and also transitions within the sugar industry—the closing of the
factories nearby—has really made us reevaluate what our potential is to service the
country. And given that we are right in Montego Bay, and that Montego Bay is a
growing urban center and also a center for information technology, and also, we
believe, corporate headquartering in international finance. A masterplan that we did in
1994, and also was approved in 2000 by Cabinet in principle, builds itself around
those main industries—which is information technology and business process

59 In search of
60 Cabinet approval for Montego Bay South, “an ambitious 20 year Urban Development plan that will transform
Jamaica’s tourist capital into a modern 21st century city, adding 12,000 new jobs and providing approximately
3,500 homes in the process” (Barnett Ltd 2017).
outsourcing, corporate headquartering, international finance, and also retirement and medical tourism. (Nearshore Americas 2011)

In the video, he stands on an 11-acre site bought and developed by Vistaprint, and points out an adjoining 80-acre site earmarked for business process outsourcing and corporate headquartering. Pointing beyond to the Montego River running through the property he says, “The plan there is to channelize that river and to develop it with a broad walk on both sides and to develop it into a beautiful central facility and entertainment area for the whole of the MoBay South development.” Pointing towards the hills from which the river flows he indicates a 120-acre site where they plan to develop a residential park for the operators and expatriate managers of the Tech Park.

When asked if he thought there was pent-up demand for locating business process outsourcing (BPO) facilities in Jamaica he said, “I do, and from speaking with JAMPRO61—who is a promotions agency and is really the conduit through which all of this kind of information comes back to us through—is that there is, there is a demand for Jamaica as an outsourcing destination and right now the critical issue is a lack of space,” by which he means built space.

His vision is to have as many as ten thousand occupants over five years. The key hurdles he says are to find financing—“the rates … the cost of money, the terms of financing”—for the construction of the buildings. The interviewer raises the question of power and telecom infrastructure and logistics of construction. He replies, “We have ample electricity, ample connectivity, we have a very good labor source and the minister of education has actually put in a new training program specifically geared towards the outsourcing and the information

61 JAMPRO is an agency of the GoJ. The name stands for Jamaica Promotions Corporation.
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technology industry. And they will be putting out at least ten thousand students per year trained
towards the whole business processing and IT … all the way from call centers up to the higher
more value-added services.”

He calls the Vistaprint development “a vote of confidence for Jamaica,” especially in a more
technical area.62 “They have said they are very, very happy with the Jamaican employee and
their ability to deliver and their creativity and that’s why they are hubbing out here.”63 Other
parcels of the Kerr-Jarrett’s land holdings have been developed as shopping centers, a water
treatment facility, and a housing scheme with over 1600 homes targeted at the middle-income
bracket.

The decline in active farmland does not however mean that land necessarily finds new uses, or
that the government has embarked on a policy to reclassify the land use for the thousands of
acres of inactive farm land. The above interview is likely inflected by boosterism, given its target
audience,64 and deemphasizes hurdles. Changes in land use are decried by the Ministry of
Agriculture, citing food insecurity (Williams-Raynor 2010), but this is in tension with other
branches of government that advertise arable Crown lands for private development as resorts.

The agency with responsibility for approving change of use applications is the National
Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA). NEPA holds the administrative responsibility of the

62 The previous offshoring activity located in Jamaica was sewing factories, which is generally seen as low-skilled
work, but see Melissa Wright’s (2006) Disposable Women. Several of the Tulloch women—and overrepresented
amongst the leaders in the eviction negotiation process—had been sewing factory workers. I will return to this in
chapter 4.

63 Indeed, the Jamaican employee is touted as a national export with growing promise (e.g., Saunders 2016), inciting
comparisons to nineteenth-century Panama, Costa Rica, twentieth-century cane cutters to Cuba, and H-2 workers
to the United States (agriculture and hotel).

64 The producer of the video has published a series of video interviews in different Latin American (and former
plantation agriculture) countries, including Dominican Republic and Brazil regarding offshoring IT services. The
target audience is “‘buy-side’ decision makers,” that is North American corporate executives looking to offshore
business processes in Latin America and the Caribbean (Nearshore Americas 2016).
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Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA). Under the TCPA, NEPA produces development orders for delineated geographic areas, which are much like zoning codes. However, much of the island falls outside of existing development orders, and while there is a generic code for all the island, it is very minimal.

NEPA has the authority to approve construction projects submitted for review that request a change in land use categorization. A newspaper report regarding arable lands describes how NEPA’s review of land use on a case-by-case basis is in tension with other agencies—such as the Ministry of Agriculture’s assertion that preserving arable land should take precedence over conversion for residential development, a pattern that is creating residential enclaves in suburban locations along the new highways. However, NEPA, as the planning authority, asserts that its vision is more holistic, balancing all land use needs (Williams-Raynor 2010).

In an interview with members of the management board of the Pebble Cove resort, discussed above, I mentioned that I had been in court when a case was presented by my family member who is a commercial lawyer. His client is a corporate landowner who had purchased a parcel of hundreds of acres. I asked the board member who is a landowner and a developer, to comment on an impression I’d arrived at from the hearing: that there is a lot of land in Jamaica that appears to be imminently developable, in prime locations … and yet in practice is barely saleable. I will call him Mr. Rainmaker.

Mr. Rainmaker cited impediments to developing a large parcel of formerly agricultural land he owns as: the high relative cost of development in Jamaica,65 a lack of road access to the parcel—

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65 He said that improvement costs are high: if land is $1k, improvements are $4k. Drainage is a big cost. Also in other countries, the cost of infrastructure is less, or more easily managed. He offered an example in the United States, where he said a developer can spread out repayment of electrical infrastructure costs by paying an increased kwh rate over ten years, for example, instead of paying an upfront cost.
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despite its location in a prime resort area—and informal settlements. Given the tropical climate and hilly topography, the structures needed to manage storm water in heavy rains is a major expense. Of the “squatters,” who he said were in possession of the land through which the access road was to be routed, he said: “If I were to go and say can I tear down your house I would be met by [a gun] in each hand.” He further explained that the squatters’ houses are very big, and made of concrete block. Mr. Foreman added that those houses had better views than the resort he managed. In addition to the implicit criticism that the government has failed to monopolize the delegation of the use of violence, the pervasiveness of informal settlements is thought of as a failure of the state as landowners to exclude unauthorized possession of Crown lands, citing a government figure that 80 percent of informal settlements occur on Crown land.

A palimpsest from other eras of surplus labor is that “the Jamaican employee” is an asset with a particular capacity “to deliver,” and thus secure the national economic future. Alongside this there is also the perception that those capacities are thwarted by a tendency to ungovernability; the state’s failure to master the political present of land capture—indeed the state’s “encouragement” of capture (see Eyre 1997; Weekly Gleaner 2005)—is cited as a barrier to capital. This discourse, though not wholly untrue, obfuscates the entwinement of informal land tenure with class patronage and the exploitation of labor below its cost (de Janvry 1975).

Ironically, the origins of the informal settlement on the resort’s own land, also a former estate, was customary tenure—underscoring my point made in the previous section about the historical geography of informal tenure tethered to sites where Black Jamaicans have worked a plantation,  

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66 It is common for buildings to be constructed out of concrete, but in this case concrete represents that the buildings are not shacks, but expensively built (i.e., squatters are not poor) and impossible to move (and thus relocation of informal residents by the state is made even more contentious).
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metaphorically speaking. According to the board members, originally the people who had lived there were workers at the resort; it had been “a few houses” but the number had grown. Stating that there is no water and no electricity, they said the resort’s interest is in its workers having decent, hygienic housing, as well as security of tenure67 and the ability to have mortgages. Also, the settlement is “not policeable”—a common thread in the public and official discourse regarding informal settlements (see e.g., Manning 2007). Currently there is a thickly vegetated buffer between the resort and the settlement. However, as the settlement grows, the threat to the pristine tranquility of the resort is threatened, making urgent the need for the resort to relinquish its role as landowner to the state. Since squatting is not criminal, possession is a matter of civil law between titleholder and possessor. Should the state become the titleholder, a political project could be made by capital to require it as landowner to contain, or remove, the settlement.

At Tulloch: Surplus Agricultural Land ISO Capital

Until the 1970s when the government purchased the land, Tulloch was a private estate producing sugarcane. Afterwards, sugar continued to be grown there in addition to other crops, but by small to mid-sized farmers who delivered to a central state-owned factory. State agricultural boards acted as collection points for other export crops, such as cocoa, coconut, pimento, etc. grown by small and mid-sized farmers. While the flat was operated under mid-sized farmers, the government allotted smaller parcels of hilly land within the estate for lease under a land reform program called Project Land Lease. At Shiloah, it was during this period when the initial house spots were captured. There are also sugar board houses, which were occupied at the time the estate was sold, and those that have not since disintegrated are still occupied. At Tulloch Yard,

67 A reference to the international development projects inspired by Hernando de Soto’s Mystery of Capital (2000).
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this transition in ownership seems to have had little impact; the residents there had been living in sugar board houses and continued to do so after the transition in ownership.

In the 1970s the democratic socialist government of Michael Manley launched a land reform program called Operation GROW, and a follow-up called Project Land Lease. The program aimed to nationalize tens of thousands of acres of plantation land that even then was idle and bring it back into production under the aegis of small farmers. Many who are now Tulloch residents were participants in the land lease program, which granted leases in forty-nine-year terms for plots of varying sizes. The lease term is not yet expired, but the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) administration, which won by a landslide in 1980, abandoned the program, championing larger-scale entrepreneurialism over small farmers (see chapter 3). Of the people I asked, only one elderly woman—Miss Lucille—continued to exercise possession over her leased plot, though she had moved house because the leased plot is now isolated. Another lessee, Jacob, said of his plot, “only a mongoose could go through there now.” In addition to the exodus of neighbors over decades, Miss Lucille’s son with whom she lives cannot park his vehicle close enough to be able to keep watch over it overnight, since the site has no access road. As a contracted “minibus” driver, the vehicle is owned by his employer and is his livelihood. I will return to the question of land reform in chapter 3.

Since 2000, parts of the estate have been sold for tourism developments. The remaining acreage is now up for sale, but for the time being it remains one of those former agricultural properties whose futures are as of yet unknown, and their presents exist in limbo. The same could be said of the people who live there.

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68 GROW is an acronym of Growing and Reaping Our Wealth.
Uneven Infrastructural Development: Roads and Drainage

Over the past twenty years, with the help of foreign investment, the national road network has drastically improved. New highway projects have brought straightened, leveled, smooth, wide, and fast roads into the everyday life of Jamaicans travelling between major towns. Other routes have not kept pace with this change. Leaving the highways, one is faced with the reality of parochial road financing: drawn from a small pot of money allotted annually to the local parish councilor, and shared amongst many district needs (from an interview with a councilor). Many Jamaicans still journey by walking long distances on roads that are all but impassable to vehicles, or along banks of rivers whose bridges have failed (see Brown 2008), which is a frequent...
outcome of storm water runoff, disasters that are socially produced (Smith 2006). This gradient in development is not easily described as urban/rural. In many cases the failed infrastructure—road, water supply, storm water, and river management—is immediately adjacent to highways.

At Tulloch, the uneven investment in infrastructure meant the main coastal road became a highway—wide, fast, and smooth. Meanwhile the hillside was thrust deeper into “bush” by the collapse of the estate-village road in a tropical storm. Even before that, water service to the village, and to bought and leased land on the hillside, had been discontinued due to deterioration of the physical infrastructure. As a sugar worker with a mid-sized farm on the flat and with the large estate operation that preceded it, Miss S’s mother was able to occupy one of the sugar board houses when the discontinued water service and road collapse made her hillside plot inhabitable. Miss S described the exodus of the hillside occupants to other places, some of them overseas. In addition to her mother’s advancing age—which made the walk down the hill to the estate more challenging—Miss S explained that where the plot was located you had to cross a riverbed—impossible during the rains. As a result Miss S said:

Mi mother wen have one likkle piece of land up deh; it tun standing bush there now. But true the river did part the whole of it, it ina bush deh now, and mash up. You haffi cross the river fi go there … because the road did mash up … and nobody nah live there again … everybody lef it and gone. So if mi lef here so an go build house up deh, a only mi one a go deh in a di bush. For nobody else nuh live deh so … mi woulda live back said place. But up deh so now cyan suit wi again. It nuh make no sense.69

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69 Roughly translated: “My mother had a little piece of land up there but its overgrown now. Because the river diverted, it’s in bush now and ruined. You have to cross the river to go there … because the road collapsed and nobody lives there anymore … and everybody left it. So if I leave here and go build a house up there I would be the only one up there in the ‘bush.’ Because nobody else lives there. I would go back and live there, in the very same place. But up there now it can’t suit us anymore. It doesn’t make any sense.”

See note 51 for a rough definition of “bush.”
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This is a microgeography. The part of the hillside from which people moved was across a river, which becomes difficult to cross after rainfall, and along a road that washed away in a hurricane and was never repaired. Deeper into Black Man Land, the central village road was improved, and government water trucks occasionally deliver water to ameliorate the lack of water service (the piped infrastructure has been unserved for many years). And yet, this is a microgeography of “forgotten places” (Gilmore 2008) that repeats across the island where floods, landslides, road collapses, and even death are the consequences. In 2008, a newspaper series entitled Living on Dangerous Ground documented in several locations islandwide the impact of decaying water management and road networks on the everyday lives of people living in informal settlements (Brown 2008). In some communities, people affected negatively had already been displaced from other plots, some that they owned, because a key bridge or landslide had made life there difficult or impossible.

One can better understand the role of storm water and drainage infrastructure if one imagines the following anecdote: One resident, Joan, would come and find me in Tulloch to warn me of impending flood waters, which she predicted by watching the location and duration of rain clouds hovering over hills inland. During such times, what was usually a dry gully running through the estate earned its name river, carrying a hillside’s worth of water to flood the flat, and movement within the community and between the community and the nearby main road was through ankle or deeper water. The flood water carried whatever refuse had been thrown into the river gully upstream, which, given the lack of toilets, would include human feces. Divination is not a unique capacity of Joan’s; practicing a Jamaican pastime of anticipating the arrival of rains and storm water had to do with her daily habit of sitting on the little veranda of her poorly
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stocked shop on the flat, a good vantage from which to see the sky over the hills. Anticipating
the “river coming down” is not limited to named storms, but includes day-to-day rainfall events.

Within the estate, the floods that followed the river coming down were relatively new. When the
estate had been in operation, the river was regularly cleaned. Mr. W said a channel that was dug
to direct water was part of the regular work of managing the agricultural landscape, something he
tried to impress upon the construction company—temporary occupants of the estate in the
1990s—who blocked the channel that carried the runoff out to the sea, but to no avail.

Given the climate and landscape, the movement of surface water is not only a challenge to public
infrastructure but also affects private development, as noted above by Mr. Rainmaker. Although
no public official would confirm, residents understand that the particular qualities of water
movement at Tulloch may have been the determining factor in the nonresolution of their
eviction; it extended the inability to turn the land to other uses that would either benefit or
displace them.

Shifting Spatiality of Tourism Development

Between 1986 and 2015 visitor arrivals grew from 663,593 to 2,123,042 and cruise passengers
from 278,507 to 1,568,702 (Jamaica Tourist Board 2000, 2; Jamaica Tourist Board 2015, 2).
Number of rooms went from 13,093 to 19,005 while occupancy rose from 58 percent to 69
percent (Jamaica Tourist Board 2000, 52; Jamaica Tourist Board 2015, 54). With a target of
50,000 total rooms over the next five years (more than doubling the current supply),
groundbreaking ceremonies come at a fast clip (Jamaica Gleaner 2016a, 2016b). As a share of
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the economy, tourism is part of the service sector (70 percent of GDP) generating 30 percent of GDP (CIA 2017).

The spacetime compression brought about by the new highway system has been accompanied by a shift in the spatiality of tourism. Mass tourism used to have a shortlist of focal points, all on the northwest coast: Montego Bay, Negril, and Ocho Rios, with cruise ship ports limited to Montego Bay and Ocho Rios. For arriving mainstream tourists travelling from airport to resort, even those at some distance from the main international point of entry in Montego Bay, these journeys treated the intervening space as a drive-by region, shuttling tourists through landscapes that were intermittently pastoral—beautiful to look at, but nowhere that the tourism industry wanted a visitor to linger any longer than it took to drink a coconut (perhaps with a bit of Jamaican white rum thrown in for local flavor) from one of the roadside shops.

However, with increasing foreign investment in the tourism industry, development has been booming. The spatiality of tourism is shifting: intensifying development adjacent to existing resort cores and expanding into new territory. Existing resort centers experienced increasing density of resorts and expansion of existing activity centers to accommodate the rising numbers of visitors (e.g., Brooks 2009, 247). A director of an environment-focused NGO said “… when you have 10,000 tourists per week visiting Dunn’s River Park [in Ocho Rios], and you have 4 mega ship liners coming into the port with approximately 28,000 people, then that will obviously overload the carrying capacity of Dunn’s River, so obviously there is a need for more tourism attractions” (Brooks 2009, 248). As the director of a development corporation interviewed by

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70 A staggering statistic is that overseas remittances are equal in magnitude as a share of GDP.
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Sheere Brooks stated in 2005, “I think that what has happened is that Ocho Rios is literally bursting at the seams; the time has come for us to expand outside of the town” (2009, 247).

With the road improvement over the last twenty years, new resorts and activity parks have become more dispersed. The urban Montego Bay “hip strip” is becoming shabbier, and a few hotel buildings there stood vacant at the time of research in 2014. On the other hand, new massive gated resorts have extended the reach of Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Negril hospitality enclaves into peri-urban areas; two new cruise ship ports have been built at Ocho Rios and Falmouth—new territory between Montego Bay and Ocho Rios—and new resorts and activity centers have infilled along the highways (Sheller 2009, 2010).

At a meeting of a community development organization (one of the community governance structures that the Social Development Commission is now charged with bringing into being—see chapter 3) nearby to Tulloch, a local Pastor exhorted the members to “make something” of the area, so that it did not remain just a pass-through or a place people grow up and leave, forced to make a life elsewhere. But this is a process that was already in motion.

The Tulloch estate land fell out of agricultural use in the 1990s. After the completion of the highway in the late 1990s, the government sold portions of the property, leading to the development of resort areas. Portions of other nearby underutilized agricultural estates have also been developed as large resorts and activity centers for tourists. With this understanding of the changing geographies of agricultural land, public infrastructure (roads and drainage), and tourism, I now turn to examining what these changes mean to living at Tulloch.
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**Here: Tulloch, Then and Now**

When Tulloch was an active plantation, there had been a geography where many people worked for the estate, and walked to work every day; their work was within what was considered at the time to be walking distance: the walk from the estate uphill to Belmont is about forty minutes.

This is captured by this quote from Miss Grange, a woman in her forties who was one of the leaders of the Tulloch community-based organization. She said of the eldest residents of the community facing eviction:

She [a woman in her nineties] had been here from a child working on the cane farm. It [the estate] was from up [Morass Cove] and come down, so she go nowhere else more than just on the farm and it was one owner [for the adjoining properties]. And she had her children and her grandchildren, great grand … you know it was nowhere else to go and live. Cause if you’re in [Jacob] situation, [Jacob] over sixty years old. And [Darlene] the very same way, where do they go? Everybody live on the plantation.

A respondent of Jean Besson (2002, 180), whose ethnographic research was in a free village in the parish of Trelawny, put the geographic relationship in context with land “scarcity,” and flexible employment:

This district is surrounded by properties still. So when the properties want workers, they just notify the district and the workers come … the majority of the grounds that you have now, the land belong to the properties still…. Many people don’t have a square to call their own … lack of land space. The people is like you put a pig in a kraal. That’s just how plenty a poor people live, just like a pig in a kraal.

Not to say that it was “local” or not global. Some of those workers were boarding, travelling home at the weekend; others were migrants working for many estates, like Mr. W before he settled at Tulloch. There was always labor migration, national and international, permanent and temporary; relocation to establish new families, or to create distance from families of origin; the
“giving away” of children and the sending of children to families who were closer to
opportunities—educational and otherwise; there were always higglers whose weekly or daily
journeys reached towns near and far or even overseas, and those for whom their working their
plots required a journey, like Mr. M’s grandmother. But the pattern of daily life was within a
certain proximity. This gave “the district” a strong presence in people’s identities. In illustration,
one of the reasons residents who had lived “here” for generations gave for their faith that the
former prime minister’s exhortation—“those are my people; no one trouble my people”—will
safeguard them from eviction is that he is from “the district.” The district is scaled somewhat
larger than the “here” that people reference when they say they have been “here” all their lives.

But as the main road was moving ever towards a kind of future in which cars travelled without so
much as the impediment of the well-known Jamaican pothole, just up the hill, former agricultural
workers were once more walking along dirt tracks, or trapped on the inaccessible bank of a river,
and living in houses without access to running water. And by the time the highway was built, the
journey to working for others was no longer just down the hill but down the hill, across the flat,
and to the highway to wait for transit to pay a fare to new work, if they found it.

For some, finding new work took them overseas. Jamaicans have been going overseas to work in
substantial numbers since the 1880s—to Cuba and Central America. Today, the escalating
proportion of GDP that is derived from overseas remittances signals a repetition of the strain
resulting in and caused by migration, what Mullings (2009) calls the “limits to labor” in solving
the latest crisis of social reproduction. Between 1981 and 2003, the real value of official
remittances increased from US$ 89 million to US$ 698 million, and in 2006 stood at 17 percent

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71 In Erna Brodber’s (2004) research, a staggering proportion of the cohort (born in the 1890s) worked in Cuba in
the 1920s.
CHAPTER 2: The Front Page

of GDP (Mullings 2009, 179). A third of the Jamaican population depends on regular remittances to meet daily needs, which prevented poverty rates from rising even in a period of economic decline and shrinking social investment. As Mullings says: “Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Jamaicans, primarily women, successfully rendered a spatial fix to the crisis by stretching the space and scale of their everyday means of existence beyond the nation's territorial boundaries” (2009, 174).

Whether within or beyond Jamaican shores, the distances and effort required to accomplish their social reproduction is expanding, both in absolute terms and as lived (LeFebvre 1991). I am referring to the awareness of being stranded at the interface of the front page with a forgotten place where day-to-day life stands in contrast to “what is to be had,” the kind of development to which Jamaica appears to be headed, and drastically different from the luxury to be found behind the walls of the nearby resorts. Those twinned experiences—an expanded field of social reproduction and the perception of a greater gradient between one’s life experience and that of others—are together what Katz (2001a, 227) calls time-space expansion, which is in many places a corollary of time-space compression (Harvey 1990) in modern capitalism. Extending the daily experience of this chasm even deeper into the past is the presence of physical ruins that gesture towards a slave past: the old windmill, for example.
Beyond the physical journey, there is a perceptual shift. Whereas the lives of the generation who first bought or leased hillside land often involved miles of walking every day—to work that was physical—the next generation’s work is elsewhere. In addition to the distance, the practice of walking miles every day means something different now. Daniel, a Tulloch resident and a recent high school graduate, was telling me about his plans to be a *business* farmer of sweet pepper. Though his story tells of generational rifts in social reproduction of work skills—specifically farming—I share it here rather than in chapter 4 because of the insight offered regarding Tulloch’s proximity to the “front page.” When I asked Daniel about learning the required skills, he distinguished his trade from the *local* farmers in his family who live in rural Jamaica. He hadn’t been to see his grandfather in a year because where his grandfather lives, “the walking distance from where the car stop, is like two miles.” And he laughed.

Daniel: Most of the local farmers in my family they have their land title. They have their own land. But to the place where them farm to the type of farming what
them do, them nuh really need no water cause them plant, like all yam. Yam nuh need no water (laughing) […] Mi grandfather come from … what the place name from round there so … look how long mi nuh go mi cyan remember the name!

RG: You don’t visit yuh people!

Daniel: Oh from where they live the walking distance, where my grandfather live the walking distance from where the car stop, is like two miles.

RG: Ok. So you not used to them type of lifestyle then.

Daniel: No mi nuh used to them type of lifestyle (laughing). Mi couldn’t take them lifestyle with the walking … country

RG: So how many mile a day you think your grandfather walk?

Daniel: Whole heap! (laughing)

RG: Him have to walk from where his house is to where his farm is?

Daniel: No him farm on his land where his house is. My grandfather, him have a big land, him have 130 acres land.

RG: Wow! Ok.

Daniel: Yeah. But a hillside land them hillside. It’s not a flat land. Yeah so, whole lot of land but you can’t farm sweet pepper, like banana tree and thing can plant over there but the sweet pepper you have to have the …

RG: So is that mostly what he grows then? Banana?

Daniel: Banana, sweet yam and renta72

[…]

72 Renta is a type of yam.
RG: Ok. So how he got, you know how he got to have 130 acres?

Daniel: Really mi nuh really siddung, alright about one year now mi nuh see him. ’Bout
a year now mi nuh see him. Mi and him used to siddung and talk when I was
younger. And him used to tell me like seh, him buy him land from same local
people. Like him buy a likkle piece of land and build it up buy a near site and
build it up, and build it up. Then him get a whole lot of land.

RG: So those people were farmers as well?

Daniel: Yeah.

RG: And they were selling out?

Daniel: And they were selling out.

RG: Ok.

Daniel: Like most of them … alright. Like when you find out seh the older people die,
they stop farming on the land and the younger people sell out. That’s how they
get the land. Like inna Jamaica to how mi see it as a young farmer you see the
next ten year when the older people stop farming, Jamaica go find a crisis with
farming. ’Cause the younger set of people what grow in Jamaica right now them
don’t look to farm. So you going to find food shortage…. The next ten year time
they don’t want to farm they don’t want to put them hand in the soil. That’s my
perspective to how mi see it.

Daniel sees his aspirations as commensurate with securing national food security, which sounds
somewhat like the 1970s People’s Economic Plan of the People’s National Party (PNP) social
democratic government. But Daniel differentiates himself from the peasant ancestor recuperated
during the decades when a national self-image was consolidated. Daniel aspires to be a different
kind of farmer from the object of Project Land Lease: a business farmer, on flat land, supplying
one crop, in bulk, on contract to the hotel industry (instead of mixed provisions to higglers), one
CHAPTER 2: The Front Page

whose crops require irrigation, who eschews the traditional caution against mortgaging one’s land and instead uses credit to invest in labor-saving items, such as eleven-strand stainless steel barbed wire (protection from livestock), and who has a place on Jamaica’s “front page.”

However, without a formal title or lease, Daniel is not actually able to enter the institutional relationships required to be this other type of farmer: he cannot register a company, and therefore cannot obtain business credit or a hotel contract. Additionally, as I explain in chapter 3, the types of agricultural extension services of the era of “rural reconstruction” (Sherlock 1942) have dwindled with the contraction in public spending required by structural adjustment. In fact, though the remains of the developmentalist state persist in the “countless”73 state agencies with field officers responsible for a particular aspect of community life, many of these offices have been crippled by a lack of resources. As such, the present absence of the social welfare institutions of the state offer mostly an illusion of assistance: the lands office field officer told me they no longer deal with leases; he primarily works to prepare Crown lands for divestiture, including monitoring the presence of squatters on lands. The Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) agricultural extension field officer promises to visit but never shows up. As a result, Daniel’s access to information about his prospects (e.g., whether he can obtain a lease for a parcel of land at Tulloch) is just beyond reach. Without the extension services formerly offered by RADA, Daniel’s knowledge about growing a particular crop comes via “the man at the seed shop,” a source too far removed from Daniel’s vision to offer sound advice, as evidenced by the sweet pepper plants withered by the use of Roundup, a pesticide incompatible with Daniel’s selected crop.

73 This was the response from the Social Development Commission parish manager when I asked how many state agencies have a field officer that would be involved in life at a place like Tulloch.
By 2016, Daniel’s job at a resort had eclipsed the thwarted dream of farming, but not because he was content to work for the resort. Now he has plans to marry his Jamaican-American fiancée and migrate to the United States. His new dream is reflected in a new “monster” physique: in the United States, he will pursue professional boxing.

*

That people at Tulloch moved from property towards the flat reveals that the rebellion of capture is not just about owning land (a value with deep roots in Jamaican culture, and noted in ethnographic literature, as we shall see in chapter 4), but also about rejecting being in a “forgotten place”—inserting oneself into the trajectory of the highway.

As illustrated by Mr. Foreman, the general manager at the Pebble Cove resort, scoffing at “squatters’” commanding views superior to those enjoyed from his guests’ rooms, laying claim to Tulloch is about much more than land. It is land that is particularly positioned: what many residents described as the “front page.” Though their houses are easily missed from the main road, there is still a sense that this is no longer “the common” as residents call the flat land, but prime real estate. For that reason, some feel they will eventually be forced out in favor of development. As Mr. M, a man in his sixties, said:

Mi know one day we have to leave here because this is front page. We have to leave here and them ya land here, we cyan go afford them. Yeah! But it’s no problem. If they say that, “well alright, get back further in a de hills.” No problem. Cause mi know say ah probably mi woulda be the first one who go pull down my house. Yeah! And go a likkle further up cause me used to it. Yeah, yeah. Cause me used to it. So well den back page me deh and me well comfortable. Yeah yeah. Up in de hills nice deh man. You nuh see say up deh nice? Yeah, yeah. If mi show which part me live in a my young days you couldn’t believe it. And well happy. Yeah. Well happy. We go a bush move cow …
CHAPTER 2: The Front Page

goat, drink jelly. Chop mountain and river come back a yard and cook [...] We put on we pot and put on and we start eat mama dinner. Nuh one of we you know all five, six of we. And we nuh mek no war and then alright we nuh lick down one another75 we just nice. You know? We just nice. Run up and down in a bush and well happy.

Here I draw attention to the fact that the “back page” is at once more peaceful because it is less visible and because of nostalgia about time spent there in the past. For Mr. M, though he is excited by the recent development at Tulloch, after the eviction he feels “is we eyebrow we cotch on—as you squint so, we drop off.” That the hillside, and the past he associates with it, connotes peace is contradictory: this is also the time when he said he was “like a slave.” I will return to this contradictory structure of feeling in chapter 4.

Conclusion

Tulloch has been dislocated from the formal economy by organized abandonment. The value of the upland as labor source for an estate within walking distance is no longer important for the economy and the class relations—which produced a “here” that straddled Black land and its Other—have been to some extent dissolved, even though those relations are not completely extinguished, as can be seen when verifying the legitimacy of possession by the residents is a capacity of white Jamaican planter family who has not owned the land in forty years.

Before I went to the field I thought that property was withheld from Black Jamaicans. This chapter reveals the futurity of capture; it is not just about possessing a square of land, or meeting one’s basic needs, but asserting one’s place proximate to the “front page.” As such, the very

74 Coconut water
75 We don’t fight.
instability of capturing land may be a deeper critique of the concept of property-in-land than is immediately apparent. The object of capture is not only land; it is also residents’ demand for an economy that doesn’t merely move them around;\textsuperscript{76} it is an exercise in “grassroots planning” (Gilmore 2008). Many respondents demonstrated this critique of their exclusion from property. Edie said incredulously regarding the eviction notices, “but the land is so big”; many said some version of “but you can’t live out at sea, you can’t live in the road”; and regarding the removal of the standpipe, which I discuss in chapter 4, Mr. Jackson said, “Water is life.”\textsuperscript{77} This is echoed by a respondent in Sheere Brooks’s (2008) research in an informal settlement in Ocho Rios who said “How can I be a squatter in my own country?”

While the maneuvers of the postcolonial state (Crichlow 2003) attempt to achieve national economic development through invitations to foreign capital (e.g., highway financing), one result is uneven investment in infrastructures. Since what infrastructure does is render more efficient the level of effort expended, its disinvestment on Black land adds to spacetime expansion, by increasing even more the work required to accomplish social reproduction. This deepens the subsidy of such labor to capital. Additionally, the particular spatiality of the uneven development of infrastructure has rendered white land more efficient whilst Black land is made less so. I say this while also acknowledging that Mr. M’s and Miss S’s use of the term Black Man Land is somewhat dislocated from the present racialization of the “Blackened” Jamaican nation.

\textsuperscript{76} Here I am thinking of Engels’s (1995) \textit{The Housing Question} in which he observes that the bourgeois “solution” for the working-class housing problem is merely to move it around.

\textsuperscript{77} Mr. D’s repurposing of a National Water Commission slogan. The slogan is intended to incite proper care for a water, characterizing it as a scarce, “precious commodity” (NWC 2017).
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(Robotham 2000)—the dramatic rise of a Black bourgeoisie following the social interventions of the 1970s social democratic state, a topic to which we next turn.

It is the land’s liminal state of idleness—surplus, not yet turned to another formal use—that aids in the persistence of capture. But this is a tenuous state. As Mr. M said, “is we eyebrow we cotch on.” To what end have forgotten places on the edge of the front page been put to use?

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78 Robotham (1998, 2000, 13) locates the rise of the Black bourgeoisie in the social development of the 1970s as well as the deregulation and privatization of the 80s and 90s that opened up avenues for Black professional groups to obtain increased economic power.
Putting the Idle to Work: Creating and Repurposing State Capacity

Introduction

The Squatter Management Unit was established in 2006 within the ministry with responsibility for land. Its inception followed the 2004 completion of a National Squatter Survey, which found that an estimated 20 percent of the island’s population reside in informal settlements.

Early on, confusion as to the purpose of the unit was common. As Basil Forsythe, director of the SMU, shared: “you have to be … keep explaining the function of the Unit because they [housing ministry staff] thought we were specifically for the ministry lands, you know? At one point we were put under Land Administration but I said no—while we will work with the ministry, this is for the entire national outlook on public lands as a coordinated and collaborative … more policy oriented unit. Because with two persons … didn’t expect more than that.” Mr. Forsythe made mention of the slim resources relative to deliverables that have been expected of the Unit in support of the ongoing policy development process.

The public announcement of the SMU’s formation was also misconstrued: the Squatter Management Hotline frequently got calls from people who thought the Unit was an enforcement

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79 Under the then Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Under Jamaica’s parliamentary system, each administration forms its own ministries. This means that the name of the ministry under which, for example, agriculture or housing fall will change, grouping somewhat different concerns. I have found it more straightforward to distinguish by specific portfolios rather than by the ministry name under particular administrations.

80 A World Bank report co-authored by Pauline McHardy, Michael Lee, and K’adawame K’nife (2007) notes that the methodology of arriving at this figure is unclear in the survey. Other figures that have been put forth are 25 percent (Tindigarukayo 2004) and 33 percent (Ministry of Water and Housing quoted in Dunkley 2008).

81 A section of the ministry with responsibility for housing dealing with lands it owns.

82 In 2013 at the time of the interview, the SMU was still comprised of two staff members and administrative support.
body that would monitor privately owned lands, a role that would have been welcomed by many. An inaugural public education campaign communicated that maintaining possession is the responsibility of landowners, not the government, although the hotline does take the responsibility to identify and notify private or public landowners when third parties call to report trespassers.

Public confusion may have resulted in part from the inclusion of “management” in the Unit’s name, but the “zero tolerance” rhetoric of elected officials of both parties didn’t help either. Turns out, this rhetoric was obfuscatory because the policy described as “zero tolerance” in fact had a more modest goal: to stop the growth of informal settlements, with a focus on government lands. In some ways these statements signaled a break from de facto state policy, which ranged from official blind-eye or acquiescence. On the other hand, settlements on government land are occasionally evicted, sometimes violently: like the 2001 bulldozing, without notice, at 2 a.m., by security forces of a community at Steer Town, St. Ann. In response, residents—those evicted and not—blocked the main road, one traversed by tourists to reach the airport, for several hours (G. Davis 2001).

At times a pattern of dispossession emerges from the intermittent pace (Eyre 1997). Despite moments of excess—such as the politically motivated 1960s demolitions that made way for the garrison community Tivoli Gardens (Lacey 1977, 91)—the central tendency towards informal tenure of various iterations of the Jamaican state has been non-enforcement. The recent zero-tolerance rhetoric is now giving way to an acknowledgement that regularization and containment

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83 For a 2002 statement by PJ Patterson, then Prime Minister, see Jamaica Gleaner (2002). For a 2008 version by Minister of Water and Housing, Horace Chang, see JIS (2008).

84 Seventy-five percent of settlements are reported to occur on lands owned by government entities (GoJ 2004). Private landowners are responsible for maintaining possession of their own lands.
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

is the preferred approach: less expensive and contentious than relocation, less politically explosive than demolition, and without the deleterious effects (imagined and real) of uncontrolled growth.

This chapter (1) examines how state practices regarding informal tenure are shifting, (2) positions these changes in what I argue is a longer term recalibration\textsuperscript{85} of social reproduction in relation to the institutions of the state, and (3) reviews an ongoing restructuring of the state in the present under the rubric of land management. Additionally, though these shifts have resulted in an increased sense of vulnerability to dispossession for Tulloch residents, I will show that instantiations of the state that are not entirely hostile to the ownershipless are persistent, making informal tenure a good lens for observing contradictions within the postcolonial state.

Far from being a steady movement of a neoliberal state towards routinizing dispossession, the current moment exhibits the persistence of developmentalist, social democratic, and clientelist impulses that are differentiated between local and central government functions and also produce a differentiation amongst those communities that are legitimized, those that are evicted, and those that remain in limbo.

\textsuperscript{85} Here, I draw on the idea of neoliberal policy as not novel, but as “an exaggerated indexical representation of a much deeper and older problem” as expressed by Ujvil Aggarwal (2013).
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

Section 1 The Remains of Social Democracy

In a survey conducted in 2002, 36 percent of the informal settlements islandwide had been in existence for over twenty-five years, that is prior to 1977 (GoJ 2004). There was no category for a longer duration; based on the survey data we do not know whether there was an uptick in establishing informal tenure just prior to 1977, or whether that many Jamaicans always already occupied land outside of the market.

But there was something afoot in the mid-seventies. Having swept into power in a landslide victory in 1972, the People’s National Party, under the leadership of Michael Manley, took comradeship with other Third World countries emerging from colonialism in attempting to achieve nonaligned development (Prashad 2008; Stephens and Stephens 1986). Jamaica was still a primarily agricultural economy, specifically plantation agriculture. Land reform was a key aspect of the nonaligned path, seen not only as a redistributive program aimed at improved consumption and income levels, but also as a national economic imperative—to reduce dependence on imports and improve balance of payments (see de Janvry 1975, 496 for rural development vs. land reform in Latin American policy). Across the Third World, strategies for achieving fundamental shifts in economic power included expropriation of the colonial elite; nationalization of resources such as land, transportation systems, utilities, and so on; as well as

86 Robotham (2006) and Stone (1989) note that the postindependence policies of both political parties, the PNP and the JLP, were in significant alignment with regards to social welfare, an alignment that Robotham calls social democracy: “whether explicitly enunciated by the PNP or pragmatically implemented by the JLP” (Robotham 2009, 228). Stone notes a divergence in the 1970s; however Robotham states that up until 1989, the social contract with the population was to “develop a strong welfare state which would regulate and protect the local market, foster import substitution manufacturing and redistribute revenues in the form of a social wage in health, housing, education and other benefits”—“the foundation of the legitimacy of the state and the two political parties” (2006, 11).

87 In a 2008 Government of Jamaica report, dubbed the Rapid Assessment, 66 percent of the settlements islandwide had been in existence for over twenty years (the longest category in the survey), that is, prior to 1988 (GOJ 2008).
the redistribution of private property. For small island states reliant on imported goods, a key factor in economic independence was reducing the need for foreign exchange. In Jamaica, increased domestic food production was thus seen as a prerequisite to economic independence.

“In order to meet the food self-sufficiency target (as well as for distributive reasons) land reform was necessary. Idle lands needed to be brought into production and currently utilized lands reoriented to different uses” (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 61, emphasis added).

It was not novel for someone in political office to condemn the ubiquity of idle land, seeing land as a solution to twinned problems of national economic development and grinding rural poverty. Norman Washington Manley (whom I will call NWM in distinction from his son, Michael) said in a 1955 parliamentary debate regarding a proposed Land Bonds Law, which would have issued bonds in lieu of cash for the compulsory acquisition of private land by the government in penalty for its underutilization:

You are no more allowed to brutalize and destroy your land than you can your children because you hold them in trust… A man who owns his land is under a sacred obligation to use it or develop it, or means must be found to put it to use for the benefit of the people as a whole. This country cannot afford to have one acre of idle land.

(Quoted in Manley and Nettleford 1971, 213, emphasis in original)

In a 1964 broadcast titled “Land Policy for Independence,” responding to the ruling party’s rumor that the PNP intended to expropriate landowners, NWM clarified while still condemning the statistic that only a fifth of land held by “the big men” was under cultivation:

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88 A reality in Jamaica also because colonial development was skewed towards the production of primary products for export and importing goods for consumption, leaving the larger value-added manufacture to occur in the metropole.

89 Manley and Nettleford (1971) is an edited collection of Norman Washington Manley’s speeches.

90 Independence was in 1962, the PNP was the opposition party at the time of the broadcast.
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

Don't let me hear anybody talk nonsense about the other four-fifths being not “cultivable.” The 120,000 people on the rockstone land and in the hills managed to cultivate their little holdings which only averaged one and three quarters acres per family to the extent of 70 per cent of all the land they have. [...] What we say is this: do not interfere with the land of the small people. They are doing their best. They want every sort of help—money, markets, training and knowledge; more, not less must be done for them and more land is what they want. That is point one.

Point two is this. Work out plans for land use. Make it law that any man who has more than 100 acres of land must see to it that all his land over the first 100 acres is put to use according to a national plan or else Government will step in and take it over to put it to the best use for the country and our people. (Quoted in Manley and Nettleford 1971, 326)

While not inimical to working people’s sentiment, these statements were engaged in debates regarding the legislative means by which idle land might be freed from the large estate system; they were arguments for public policy rather than endorsements or incitements to popular action. In contrast, the 1970s PNP—a party in power rather than in the opposition—did both, enacting land reform and politicizing land capture as an anticolonialist politics. It’s not that there was a party consensus regarding capture: the official slogan was “Put idle lands into idle hands” (Kaufman 1985, 98), leaving the means by which this was to happen vague. But elements within the party were explicit: the minister of national mobilization for example went so far as to describe capture as “repatriation” (Stephens and Stephens 1986), a term with clear Pan-Africanist overtones. On the other hand, though Manley was committed to redistribution, he rejected suggestions from agricultural consultants hired by his administration to use expropriation as a means to increase the acreage available to reform programs, stating its
unconstitutionality (Downie 1985). Instead, the administration purchased and later—when under budgetary constraint—leased private lands for its redistributive programs.

The larger economy was expanding rapidly from 1950–1970, even as unemployment rose, while the share of GDP devoted to bettering the living standards of working people had been rising since the aftermath of the 1930s labor rebellions (Stone 1989). Sugar on the other hand had been in decline for a decade, plagued by issues similar to a hundred years prior: low productivity and limited reinvestment of capital, which in turn reinforced the descent as equipment aged without replacement. As a result, sugar estates were only too happy to divest (Downie 1985; Feuer 1984). Tulloch was one of many estates nationalized during this period. I turn now to looking at the trace of social democratic land reform—in both its radical and legislated forms—at Tulloch.

(1) Material Remains of Social Democracy: Land Reform at Tulloch

The Tulloch ownershipless are (1) lessees of social democratic land reform programs, (2) capturers of land, (3) clients of class patronage, and (4) clients of political patronage. None of these roles are mutually exclusive and all have relationships to particular historical forms of the Jamaican state.

According to a respondent, Tulloch had at one time been part of a 1200-acre expanse under a single owner, and was a sugar estate until the 1990s. At that point, it had already been farmed by smaller entities for a couple of decades; although residents did not mark this moment in our conversations, the property on which they lived was purchased by the state in the mid-1970s for about a million Jamaican dollars (in 1970’s dollars, about US$ 900,000, converted based on the

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91 Another ownershipless role I came across when I did research on a land titling program called LAMP was the “landless” beneficiaries of long ago land settlement programs who had been unable to complete the tasks to obtain formal title—e.g., commissioning a land survey.
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

exchange rate at the time). Land on the flat continued to be planted in cane by smaller growers. Hillside land within the estate, where the coastal plain begins to give way to hilly interior, was leased in small parcels under Project Land Lease (PLL) announced in 1972, the first year of the PNP government (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 70).

The idle lands owned, acquired or leased by the government formed the basis for a number of programs […] which were aimed at bringing land to the land hungry and at increasing domestic food production. Of these, Project Land Lease was by far the largest and the only one which met with any success. (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 74)

There were three phases of PLL, each of which had slightly different terms. Based on the lease term and size of parcel, Tulloch must have been a Phase II site. According to Downie (1985) and Stephens and Stephens (1986), under Phase II, idle lands owned or leased by the government were in turn leased for forty-nine years in 2–5 acre plots to those who were already farming in the area as supplement to their income. This phase did not involve a significant amount of infrastructural development. Further,

as an incentive to Phase II farmers, those who proved to be good stewards of the land entrusted to their care, would in the long run, inherit the land and be able to pass it on to their heirs. On the other hand, those farmers who were not productive, who failed to utilize the lands, would have their leases terminated. They would however, in the interests of fairness, be compensated for any improvements made to the properties. (Downie 1985, 385)

And “by the end of 1980, 37,661 farmers had been placed on 74,568 acres of land in the [PLL] program” (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 74).
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Although supplying 2–5 acres was the stated policy, actual distribution\(^{92}\) indicates that approximately 40 percent of the sample occupied one acre or less (Crichlow 1988, 206). Additionally, for many of the lessees, this land was not a supplement, but the only land they farmed. So, though the program was popular, it reproduced occupational multiplicity, transforming neither livelihoods nor the relations of production (Crichlow 1988). A success however was a huge increase in the supply of domestic food crops: jumping from 4.6 percent in 1976 to 19.5 percent in 1980 (Crichlow 1988, 207).

At Tulloch in 2014, many of those who had leased plots no longer occupied them even though they referenced them to mark (one version of) their legitimate occupation of the estate. The reason for this is that the plots were within the isolated area that, Miss S in the last chapter said, “can’t suit we again” due to the collapse of the road and water infrastructure. Miss Lucille, a woman in her seventies, who still actively uses her plot, complained that she frequently found that people had reaped from her trees. In contrast, other residents at Tulloch think of the hillside as a sort of commons, the “bush,” which suggests the presence of fruit trees as nature.\(^{93}\) Many residents go to these hillside plots to gather fruit to sell at the roadside, or to carry to market to sell there. In this way, the 1970s era of land reform has had modest but continued economic significance to the present.

(2) “Repatriation” at Tulloch

Me: … did you just come and say ok, I going to put my house right here or did you have talk to Mr. Westminster [the “bookkeeper”] or…?

\(^{92}\) Per a sample survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, quoted in Crichlow (1988).

\(^{93}\) Further discussed in chapter 4.
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Mr. M: No that time, those man was dead out in those times now\(^94\) so we just come down [from Belmont] here and just put up a house [in 1978]

Me: Ok.

Mr. M: Cause nobody never have no argument ’bout land. You just live and plant
you know seh what the society wen want to see … you just live there and you
plant it up and thing [emphasis added].

In 1978, when Mr. M put up his house and started to plant up the Tulloch estate, then owned by a foreign interest, he was doing “what the society wanted to see.” According to *Jamaica Gleaner* coverage as analyzed by Stephens and Stephens (1986, 162 n14), it was in 1977 that land capture mushroomed. By then tensions within the party—between the party mainstream, its radical left, and an even more radical PNP Youth Organization (PNPYO)—were becoming apparent. According to Stephens and Stephens, as tensions between left wing and the party core intensified, the PNPYO became “unhinged” from the party mainstream. Responding to IMF concessions made by the PNP government, debate between factions internal to the party escalated and “the rhetoric and ideological posturing of the left became more publicly visible” (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 179).

Members of the YO were involved in several instances of land capture. In 1977, the government said that it would acquire land on a compulsory basis where “social pressures” existed, that is, where there was excessive rural unemployment, yet land on large estates lying idle. It was believed that this played a role in stimulating the increasing instances of land capture which was important because it created an area of uncertainty for land-owners. (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 180)

\(^94\) The bookkeeper or Busha lived in a concrete house that is still standing. That position was vacated when the estate was nationalized and after some years the house was captured.
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The *Gleaner*, a daily newspaper in publication since 1834 and Jamaica’s main print news source, was at that time an anti-PNP, establishment paper; Stephens and Stephens note a shift in editorial tone in 1975, after which attacks on the government became more frequent.\(^{95}\) It’s not clear therefore that it is a reliable source from which to make a determination as to the timing and extent of land capture. In a 1977 speech to his constituents, Minister DK Duncan (of the PNP left) claimed the managing editor of the *Gleaner* was bitter about a land invasion of his family’s estate organized by the PNPYO. Referencing anti-imperialist politics, he described the act as the *repatriation* of land to the people of Jamaica (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 180).

Despite the uncertainty about the extent to which there was a “mushrooming” of capture in 1977, land capture had long been a tenet of defiant grassroots self-determination. The PNP’s ideological stance regarding land reform can be seen as not so much a counterhegemonic, consciousness-raising rhetoric, as a signal that a practice already among the toolkit of oppositional politics (which also includes roadblocks, as at Steer Town in 2001) was no longer completely out of line with prevailing state power.

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\(^{95}\) Describing the increasing antagonism of the *Gleaner* to the PNP government, Stephens and Stephens explained, “In this period [first quarter of 1977] the paper moved beyond its previous practice of reporting the events of the day selectively to outright distortion and wholesale manufacture of the ‘news.’ The least heavy-handed of these new tactics was exaggeration of a single incident into a much larger phenomenon such as the case of the land capture incident in St. Thomas” (1986, 162). The St. Thomas “incident” referenced in the quotation is explained on page 154: “In January [1977] the *Gleaner* reported several cases of capture […] of housing in May Pen and of land in St Thomas. In both cases, the squatters were reported have been chanting ‘Is socialism time now.’ The text of articles, particularly the one on St. Thomas, makes it clear that the impression given by the *Gleaner* headlines exaggerated the situation” (1986, 154).
Kaufman’s data suggests a series of surges beginning earlier: “In the countryside there were waves of the ‘capture’ of idle land or land used for grazing, especially in 1972–3, 1975, early 1977 and late 1978” (1985, 100). Though numbers are hard to estimate, he notes that there were at least several thousand involved in these land captures, joining tens of thousands who were already squatting. He continues:

Land capturing touched many of the parishes. There were occupations in Portland, including one on land owned by Errol Flynn. One large capture in the south-west parish of Westmoreland was outside of Savanah-la-Mar, on rich, unused land owned by

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96 Some were evicted; Kaufman does not say how many.
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another leading family, the Clarkes. This capture was partially organized by a left-of-
centre PNP MP, but included the participation of supporters of both parties. In
Manchester, in the centre of the island, takeovers included a 1974 capture by 30 people
of land that had been idle for 12 years. In St. Catherine there was the capture of a 335-
acre property at Succaba Pen owned by the Wong family and idle for 18 years. By the
mid-1970s 1000 families had settled on this land and had built housing. Finally the
Ministry of Housing bought the property in 1976. And in St. Ann, in one instance, the
Anglican church was forced to lease some of its idle land. (Kaufman 1985, 100)

In 1976, Mr. W was the first person to capture land at Tulloch. Other residents were living there
before him, but they or their parents had customary tenure as employees of the plantation, and
they continued living there after it ceased operation. Mr. W cut cane for several estates including
Tulloch.

As Mr. W describes, he was recruited from his rural village as a teenager to work on another
estate belonging to the family that owned Tulloch. His father, who never provided for his
schooling, had “given him away”97 to an aunt who mistreated him. So when he received the offer
of work, he went and got his clothes and it was five years before he saw any family again. He
journeyed to the north coast working as a cane cutter for various estates. Several years later the
landowning family was selling out their estates one by one. Tulloch was sold to a foreign
company, who ran it as a sugar estate for a few years before it was nationalized. Mr. W enquired
with the headman about a vacant house previously occupied by the landowning family’s Busha.
He had been living in a multiunit board house owned by a bus company operator, working as a
caretaker and collecting rent from tenants in exchange for housing. When the operator came by

97 “Giving away” children is a common practice. Brodber’s (2004) calls it “the dispersion of children” linked to
sharing labor and resources between households but her justification elides the trauma even adult children like
Mr. W and others I interviewed spoke of.
one day and chastised him for cutting down a tree to do repairs on tenants’ units, Mr. W left saying he wasn’t going to take “facetyness.” So, needing a place to live, and getting no answer from the headman, Mr. W moved into the house at Tulloch, and got no reprimand. He still lives there today with his wife and some of their grandchildren. Two of their daughters live at Tulloch also, and one overseas.

The beginning of capture at Tulloch shortly followed a national escalation or increased visibility of the practice. However, residents do not say yes, this is why we came. Residents couch their assertion of tenure in a multitude of languages—legal, nationalistic, common sense, and so on—but less often cite social democracy as social democracy. A few respondents told me that Manley said a version of “if you see land idle, take it, and plant it up,” an incitement that referenced anti-imperialist/pro-Black tenets. The following statement was made by Michael Manley in a radio broadcast in 1977 when the PNP government was struggling with whether to accept IMF conditionalities to solve a balance of payments crisis. Though later in the administration it is an example of how anticolonial nationalism referenced histories (and presents) of racialized exploitation.

> The Government on behalf of the people will not accept anybody anywhere in the world telling us what we are to do in our own house and in our own house there will be no other masters but ourselves. Above all we are not for sale … we reject any foreign imposed solution to the present crisis we face. (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 150 emphasis added)

Manley knowingly spoke into a tradition of popular struggle. A feature of the party that distinguished it from the JLP, the other major political party, was its grassroots organizational

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98 Facety means disrespectful or impertinent.
structure (Senior 1972; Stephens and Stephens 1986). Senior describes in brief how local party organs acted to gather information about what people were concerned about and how the party might articulate an engagement with these concerns.

It was a mixture of planning and opportunism utilizing science via computers, surveys and in-depth interview techniques; reflecting pop culture in the bandwagon [a feature of local campaign stops] and the use of popular music slogans and symbols and capitalizing on religious consciousness in the creation of the “Joshua” Mystique. (Senior 1972, 56)

During the previous two years the party leaders had held meetings with farmers, businessmen and young people, teachers—virtually all interest groups were invited to come and tell it like it is. This helped to give Party leaders useful information on the way the various groups were thinking and enable them to suitably alter party posture and also had tremendous psychological impact on the group themselves in view of the criticism that JLP leaders refused to listen. (Senior 1972, 57)

The PNP referenced, and by doing so affirmed, the practice of asserting tenure on idle land. That a radical PNP arm actively affirmed while a party mainstream made allusions to restructuring but intended the populace to wait for government to enact “putting idle land into idle hands” mattered little. The political significance of capture “was that many landless Jamaicans took to heart the government’s promise of a better life and access to land but were unwilling to wait forever for government land reforms to reach them” (Kaufman 1985, 100). This is despite the fact that “the response of the party leadership was hostile [and t]he Prime Minister opposed the land captures because they represented indiscipline” (Kaufman 1985, 100). And so when the first resident captured land within the estate at Tulloch, they followed in a longstanding popular tradition that was amplified through contemporary national political discourse. I suggest land
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

capture as a practice of asserting tenure is in line with the idea of the Black radical tradition (Robinson 1983).

But, as I have mentioned above, the ownershipless are not only those whose possession is antagonistic; it also encompasses the social relations of wage work, often generational.99 For many at Tulloch, the land they captured was land that they were connected with via their own or their family’s employment.

(3) Passing Clients from Capital to State

As discussed in chapter 1, customary tenure had long been an aspect of the social reproduction of agricultural workers. Several households at Tulloch were the children of former workers who had lived on the estate, some in what the residents called sugar board houses.

To amplify that customary tenure related to wage work has persisted even today, I refer back to chapter 2’s discussion of a resort near Pebble Cove. Part of the resort lands is the site of an informal settlement originally occupied by resort workers. The resort is in negotiations with the ministry with responsibility for housing to “give” informally occupied lands to the state, a program which the Ministry details in its policy documents as a means available to private landowners to extricate themselves from informal settlements on their land, allowing the residents to maintain possession.

99 Of course, antagonism and relations of wage work are not mutually exclusive. Thomas (2011, chapter 5) tells the story of the informal tenure of an employee who had generational connections to the estate on which he worked. His attempts to assert different terms of his tenure precipitated the Coral Gardens Incident in 1963, an attack on Rastafarians by police in concert with the white Jamaican landowning family. In the incident eight Rasta were killed, many were beaten and had their locks shorn, and hundreds were jailed. See also the film Bad Friday: Rastafari After Coral Gardens (Thomas, Jackson, and Wedderburn 2011).
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A requirement of this program is that the landowner includes a bonus acreage that can be used to generate income through sale or market-rate development for the construction of infrastructure. The interim squatter policy guidelines (GoJ n.d.) require a socioeconomic study of any settlement prior to any decisions being made as to the fate of that settlement. A GoJ report regarding the resort’s land states that the local parish council initiated contact with the resort regarding the settlement on its land because of lack of sewer facilities.100 So sewage disposal becomes a practice through which the “responsibility” for the ownershipless is contested. And given that “squatters” are in that case, as at my field site, employees or former employees, this push-pull between the state and private landowners has a particular significance.

What I’m pointing to here is the passing of clients between state and capital without extinguishing the status of ownershipless-ness. Sometimes this happens directly as in the program in which the Pebble Cove resort is engaged. Other times capture of surplus land precipitates nationalization as in this situation from the PNP 1970s administration: “According to a PNP organizer who took part, six people went in on a Sunday morning. Within hours there were 600 people on the site. Although police moved in and evicted the squatters, the incident put enough pressure on the Ministry of Agriculture that the property eventually was leased by the government” (Kaufman 1985, 101).

Engaging Trevor Burnard (2004), Deborah Thomas (2011) theorizes how the client-patron relation appears in the present as a palimpsest of the slave past, rather than a direct relation. Burnard argues that alongside the measure of autonomy made possible by the provision grounds,  

100 An important question here for future research is the extent to which divestiture by capital of land on which their clients live contributes to the preponderance of government land as a site of informal settlements, as opposed to the kind of state clientelism that is called corruption. These divestitures would include 1970s nationalizations during sugar’s failure and the current program, which is more explicitly about the presence of the ownershipless on the land.
the “property-like” relations between slaves and planters with respect to provision grounds set up a kind of patronage relationship. As a result, he says, slaves were tethered to the estates by their desire to maintain customary tenure, beholden to planters for the continued possession of their not-quite property, and for the protection of their possessions from others, including other slaves. As a result, provision grounds tethered slaves to

the land—indeed to specific plantations—instilling in them a sense of commitment and loyalty to "their particular patch of ground and their particular plantation," as well as a "wary conservatism typical of peasants and petty commodity producers." As the result of connections Afro-Jamaicans made between genealogy and locality through the belief, for example, in the inalienability of family land and because slaves’ attachment to property was a customary right but not one that was legally protected or recognized, white plantation owners were able to secure their hegemony. (Thomas 2011, 49, with quotes from Burnard)

Uptaking a desire for property as well as a “conservatism typical of … peasants” from the archives takes the argument too far. What we can know is that slaves, and later ex-slaves, fought to maintain access to the space of working a plot and all that meant to them.

While Burnard’s argument extends further than I am comfortable into the consciousness of the subaltern—speaking through the diaries of a planter (!)—Thomas makes good use of his observations. Rebutting the public discourse of culturalist explanations for the increasing incidence of spectacular violence in Jamaica, Thomas brings us back to histories of violence dating to slavery:

101 One alternative framing is this scholar’s engagement with Sylvia Wynter’s Plot and Plantation: “Key to the development of this plot system was the noncapitalist sensibility of Africans who associated the land with the earth (rather than with property), who understood cultivation in terms of food production, had nonlinear models of time, and perceived death and burial as a ‘mystical reunion with the earth’” (DeLoughrey 2011, 60).
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[…] violence and the spectre of violent death was in fact foundational to state formation in Jamaica, during the colonial period and beyond and that it therefore stands to reason that the development of political institutions in the post-Second-World-War might occur through an armed process of carving up space and garnering allegiance to the distribution of scarce resources such as jobs and housing contracts, among other things. (2011, 51)

Thomas is discussing “political garrisons” (Stone 1980), an aspect of what Carl Stone dubbed the clientelist state. Stone also noted the rural landlord as a precursor to the relations he documented in the clientelist state (see Scott 2003). What Thomas is asserting is that the kinds of relationships between Black people and their (class) patrons via the land are repeated in the twentieth century via the geographical expression of partisan clientelism in the postcolonial state formation. She says:

Continued loyalty was the result of continued patronage, and this laid the groundwork for the system’s more explicit manifestation through the construction of housing schemes that were —informally—made available to people on the basis of party membership. With this innovation, political “garrisons” became territorially rooted homogenous voting communities where political support was exchanged for contracts and other social welfare benefits […]

While this is what garrison politics in Jamaica looked like by the end of the 20th century, what I am arguing here is that this contemporary manifestation was grounded in a system of political authority on sugar estates oriented toward loyalty to a powerful leader and reliance upon that leader for work, benefits, and protection. […] This is why there was support for the garrison political arrangement, and why modalities of organizing political life and social development that are rooted in the cultivation of mass political consciousness (like Rastafari, or like the People’s Freedom Movement or the Black Power Movement) are seen and subdued as a threat, not only to Jamaican
sovereignty and US hegemony, but also to the worldview that positions black bodies as the instruments of profit—both economic and political—for others. (Thomas 2016, 182)

The next section continues with a brief explication relating Thomas’s argument about the territoriality of patronage to a broader pattern of informal tenure.

(4) The Clientelist State and Land Tenure

Mr. M:  [Manley said] any unidle land you want to see you occupy it. You want plant it up […] and PJ\textsuperscript{102} come in and he said the same thing

Early in the history of Jamaican trade unions, redistribution via the state took on a partisan character, with the assignment of public works and trade union jobs allocated to a particular party’s constituents. By the 1970s this had taken on a territorial character, initially with the provision of housing and later with the coercion of residents in an area to vote for a particular party. Many of these garrison communities have since become unhinged from their former domination by elected officials accomplished via “area leaders,” as these “Dons” began to draw on more diverse sources of revenue. The allocation of public dollars and other public resources has been outstripped by extra-legal activities (in which politicians are often implicated), including transnational drug shipping (Scott 2000; Thomas 2016). However, securing tenure through political patronage is not limited to the violent end of the patronage spectrum that garrisons represent. Fewer than 10 percent of constituencies islandwide can be identified as such by their homogenous voting patterns (Price 2004). I would suggest that this pole of the spectrum (of patronage) overshadows a reality in which land capture has functioned—far beyond the small number of garrisons—as a sort of de facto social housing program through localized contest,

\textsuperscript{102} PJ Patterson, the PNP prime minister from 1992 until 2006.
negotiation, and official blind eye. Additionally, the less violent geographies of tenure linked with state patronage are not always strictly partisan, as they were not at Tulloch. Though residents said that most people there were PNP voters, a significant minority were not, including some of the leaders of the posteviction negotiations.

In illustration of clientelism-as-acquiescence (rather than the coercion of garrisons), I offer a quote from a 2008 newspaper series that followed informal occupants vulnerable to the hazard of tropical rains. The quote speaks of an informal occupant whose house, perched on a riverbank had succumbed to a storm surge:

> Clive D, whose red-oaked floor is the only reminder that a house once stood there, said 25 years ago he and others were warned about the potential dangers but had hoped to relocate before disaster struck. “Yes we did get warning from Government and Public Works Department but they later allowed us to go ahead and so we build house just fi mek life fi a time.”

In chapter 4, I will turn to how land tenure figures into the ownershipless “making life for a time” at Tulloch. Before that I will examine the emergence and repurposing of the social welfare capacity of the state nationally, and at Tulloch.

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103 just to make life for a time
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Section 2: Repurposing the Development/Welfare Capacities of the State

1938: Rebellion, Land Reform, and the Seeds of Community Development

In the moment of 1938, certain “state capacities” (Gilmore 2007a) emerged as a salve to labor unrest. In order to quell the rebellion, the Governor announced large-scale land settlement (Palmer 2014; Post 1978). Following that, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDW) of 1940 was passed to address rural social conditions that were a political embarrassment: “the graphic accounts and pictures of housing was a major reason why publication of the [Moyne] final report was suppressed until after the War [WWII]” (R. Harris 2008, 44). Whereas post-emancipation, land was secured as property via the state—supporting the outcome that Black Jamaicans would become labor—in the postlabor rebellion moment land settlement (and social welfare) as a means of ending the uprising and ameliorating its precipitating conditions brings the developmentalist state into being. What had happened informally—both by capture and by patronage within the estates—one hundred years later was taken up as part of public policy vis-à-vis labor.

In this era, “thousands of houses were built through Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Programs” (R. Harris 2008, 50), funded through sugar export duties. This is also the period in which Jamaica Welfare Ltd., the private sector predecessor of the Social Development Commission, was founded by NWM and funded initially through a levy on banana exports. The CDW had a dual objective: to improve the capacity of capital on the one hand—through infrastructural

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104 Land settlement had emerged as a policy response to a generalized crisis of chronic unemployment in the BWI coming out of the 1897 Royal Commission. See Crichlow (1988) for a comparison of land settlements with later land reform policies.
development, enhancing colonial purchasing power for British goods, and, later on, industrial
development of the colonies:

We are not in the situation where there is a large amount of capital all eager to be
invested and which has to be regulated and controlled. [Thus…] it is intended to lay a
special emphasis on attracting foreign capital to Jamaica and the provision of incentives
by way of tax concessions, tariff protection and industrial space will be continued.
Government will also ensure that basic facilities such as water, roads and
communications are provided whether by itself or by private enterprise. (From the

On the other hand, the development called for by the post-1938 Moyne Commission Report also
charged the state with generating a “general improvement of education, health services housing
and slum clearance, the creation of labour departments, the provision of social welfare facilities
and land settlement” (from the Moyne Commission Report, quoted in Crichlow 1988, 116). And,

… as Jamaica moved inexorably from Crown Colony to self-governing colony to
independent nation, the functions of the state expanded, as did the number of
departments and agencies. […] In the aftermath of the 1938 civil unrest, the Moyne
Commission in its recommendations for Constitutional reform concluded that the
executive and legislative branches of government ought to be more closely linked …
[with an executive council] whose members would … assist in the formulation of public
policy. […] Then, as the many departments were integrated into the expanding
ministerial system in the late 1940s, the state assumed more responsibility for public
health, education and social welfare. In addition, new emphasis was placed on
economic development projects that would facilitate domestic and foreign private sector
investment. […]
Its new responsibilities notwithstanding, the Jamaican state bureaucracy was at the time of independence in 1962, still rather small and its functions specialized and limited in scope. (Downie 1985, 210)

Following adult suffrage in 1944, and bracketing independence in 1962, was another era of growth in social welfare. Both political parties between 1950 and 1970 had broad public support for investment in social spending: education, healthcare, housing, agricultural extension services, and financial support for small farmers and a public retirement plan were areas of investment (Stone 1989). This was facilitated by the leaps in GDP in this period but growth in public spending outstripped even the rapid growth in GDP. On the heels of 1960s unrest, the landslide 1972 PNP victory that promised “better must come” was an indication that change had been insufficient to meet the demand not only for an improved quality of life but also for a radical shift in Jamaica’s structures of race, class, and empire.

The failure of the PNP’s “democratic socialism” to transform the economy coincided with the capitalist crises of the 1970s, a moment in which the legitimacy of the welfare state was undermined in many places. In Jamaica, the immediate precipitating factor was a balance of payments crisis resulting in disciplining measures of structural adjustment—deregulation, devaluation, austerity, and privatization—which together weakened social programs. Inflation and a declining standard of living in Jamaica discredited democratic socialism, making way for a different kind of state. With the trend towards liberalization, agricultural policy forsook “peasants” as traditional beneficiaries of redistributive land reform in favor of local entrepreneurs in state agricultural development projects (Crichlow 2003), social housing is

105 Jamaica’s 6.5 percent growth rate was the highest GDP growth in the Caribbean-Latin American region between 1950 and 1960. The 3 percent growth rate between 1960 and 1970 was the fourth highest. Stone (1989) details the reasons for the rising GDP, which included the renegotiation of bauxite levies by the Manley administration, resulting in a quadrupling of bauxite income.
replaced by sites and services, and community development is refocused on civic engagement rather than state-funded projects. Though the 1980s demonstrate a shift away from former social commitments, the process of economic liberalization intensifies through the 1990s (Robotham 2003, 2006). In the 2000s, we see the emergence of participatory democracy\textsuperscript{106} in land development and land reform policies. Today, as Thomas notes:

If sovereign state formation in the British West Indies was originally built on a developmentalist alliance between peasants, political parties, and unions, who channeled (coopted, for some observers) the energy of the region-wide workers’ strikes during the late 1930s into a legible anti-colonial struggle, and if this alliance was eventually destabilized in places like Jamaica by the adoption of economic development policies—at the behest of multi-lateral institutions—that ultimately maintained dependency, and by the emergence of garrison politics writ large, where the emphasis was on loyalty not to party or principle but to individual leaders (both politicians and strongmen), what we are now seeing is an attempt to dismantle the latter without truly exposing the transnational entanglements and geopolitical machinations that have facilitated the wealth, privileges, and protections that have made this kind of system possible over the many years. (2016, 191, emphasis added)

In fact,

[...] it was the anti-communist labor agitation supported by the North American branches of United Steelworkers that violently split the progressive arm of the trade union movement and helped to solidify clientelism as the hegemonic modality of political participation. (2016, 189)

\textsuperscript{106} Participatory democracy as one hallmark of neoliberal state is analyzed in the Jamaican context by Kuymulu (2011).
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Thomas goes on to investigate foreign involvement in defanging grassroots political movements—such as Rasta and Black Power—in favor of less transformative area leader authoritarianism. However, my goal here is to look at the dismantling of two imperatives of the developmentalist state: the realignment of land policy away from redistribution and the shift from community development to participatory development. Both realignments are rooted in global political economic trends. And both structure the negotiations at Tulloch.

*Agricultural Development: From Livelihood to Agribusiness*

With the demise of the PNP’s “democratic socialist experiment,” the 1980s marks a shift in agricultural development policy away from the commitment to small scale farming as a corrective to inequity that was also integral to national development (import substitution).

Unlike the Democratic Socialist Plan, which targeted Jamaican youth and “sufferers,” i.e., landless and urban employed, AGRO 21 deliberately bypassed this stratum focusing instead on new social strata, identified as pivotal to the development of the agricultural sector. (Crichlow 2003, 34)

In addition, multilateral lending banks’ structural adjustment programs required the strict monitoring of public spending. One of the reforms required was that the government sell or lease idle or underutilized Crown land; ideologically, policies of the social democratic state—which advocated the removal of idle lands from *private* hands—had become the barrier to development, chalked up to the inefficiencies of the state vis-a-vis the imagined entrepreneurialism of private capital. No matter that these lands had so recently been freed from being capital’s surplus.

Institutionally speaking, this change in policy occurred via the creation of new entities. New policy was administered by the new executive-directed agency moving agricultural initiatives out
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of the Ministry of Agriculture. The significance of this move is that it undermined the institutions through which land reform policies had been effected:

During the 1970s, all structures created to facilitate the operation of Project Land Lease, Project Food Farms and the sugar worker cooperatives remained under the Ministry of Agriculture's jurisdiction, restructured as a result of AGRO 21. […] Though old institutions had been stripped of their traditional responsibilities, the state had been invested with new agencies which assured its continuing role in reform and development. This political maneuvering sought to replace old farmers, particularly smallholders, with new entrepreneurs and marginalize small farming with modern export-oriented “agribusiness.” (Crichlow 2003, 42)

Legitimation crises for particular social programs had particular expressions: policies, such as PLL, that supported smallholders were charged with inefficiency and uneconomic fragmentation. This charge underwrote the abandonment of land redistribution as a response (though inadequate) to a crisis in livelihood. Thereafter, state intervention in the unequal distribution of land narrowed its focus to a single aspect of livelihood—housing—the provision of which was also undergoing restructuring in this period.

Housing Policy Trends: From Provision to Enablement

As land reform that aimed to redistribute land as means of production (at least in theory) disappeared, housing becomes the remaining arena for state intervention in easing inequity in the distribution of land. Land reform projects that did emerge in the 1990s were oriented (after de Soto) towards “security of tenure”: land titling and informal settlement regularization. Land titling programs made small inroads in aiding long ago land settlement beneficiaries to finally
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obtain title\textsuperscript{107} by supplying subsidy and easing bureaucratic hurdles in meeting the arduous requirements of titling under the Torrens system—discussed in chapter 2. Initiated in 1994 Operation PRIDE\textsuperscript{108} created an armature through which informal settlements on government lands could achieve regularization. By creating a governing body able to collect and disburse funds, PRIDE communities could meet the legal and physical requirements to achieve property (Tindigarukayo 2002, 2005).

Housing programs had failed to reach lower income levels, resulting in an acute shortage of formal housing. International development trends in housing policy were generally towards shrinking social provision:

In the [Global] South, there was a clear retreat from government as major providers of housing during the 1980s. In some countries, this was a trend that had begun prior to the 1980s and was associated with the shift from provision to enablement. Many governments had already made significant changes in their housing policies during the 1970s—for instance in the shift away from public housing programmes and a greater priority given to upgrading programmes. During the 1980s, there was a coincidence of several influences:

- a greater market orientation encouraged by many powerful governments in the North and by many multilateral and bilateral donors that was often enforced through structural adjustment;

- for most nations, economic stagnation or decline that in turn limited the capacity of governments to embark on high cost housing interventions;

\textsuperscript{107} Sutherland reports that by 1978, only 20k of 56k of plots under the land settlement schemes had been issued title (1995, 22).

\textsuperscript{108} Operation PRIDE (Programme for Resettlement and Integrated Development Enterprise) began in 1994 and ended under a cloud of scandal.
• democratic pressures from the bottom up and some international donor pressure from the top down that demanded a stronger support for community organizations, NGOs and participation and that explicitly or implicitly supported the expansion of the human rights movement to include consideration of the “right to housing”;

• the growing strength and influence of the movement to reduce the discrimination against women and 'gender-blindness' in housing and basic service provision;

• Increasingly less international funding available for housing projects from the international agencies that had been much the largest supporters of such projects—especially the World Bank and US AID'S Housing Guaranty Program

(UN Habitat 1996, 341)

And in Jamaica:

The [1987] National Shelter Strategy called for dramatic changes to the Jamaican government’s past policies and programs. It recognized that the majority of all new housing was being produced by the informal sector, typically crude shelter without water or other basic services. The output of government [housing] programs was negligible in relation to the need, heavily subsidized, and occupied to a surprising extent by middle income groups. The main theme of this strategy is that government changes its role from directly providing housing to facilitating more effective shelter production by the private sector (formal and informal). (G. Williams 2006, 56)

In a move familiar to students of North American neoliberal public education policy, though with the self-provisioning poor substituted for the market, the state’s failure to provide housing becomes the rationale for why informal settlers themselves are the better providers. Along with
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this shift, a key element is the devolution of the provision of infrastructure. We will return to this.

Community Development Becomes Participatory Development

The Social Development Commission (SDC) was founded as Jamaica Welfare Ltd. in the 1930s, initially funded by a levy on banana exports. The banana industry spiraled in decline several years later, and the levy ceased. The organization was next funded by the CDW but in 1949 became the Social Development Commission, a statutory body of the Jamaican state (Francis 1969). However, in the 1980s, the Social Development Commission was significantly defunded. A change in mission means that it now facilitates the development of community-based organizations that seek grant funding for projects. From the SDC website, “Our mandate is facilitating the building and strengthening of civil society mechanisms and structures with requisite capacities to enable citizen participation in the management of Jamaica’s development processes” (SDC 2017). As Mr. Riley, the former SDC community development officer for the area including Tulloch, explained:

My role was to facilitate the empowerment of the community ahm enabling them to be able to, to make representations … uhm on their own behalf. Alright? Ahm so if you look back at the, the vision statement of SDC at the time ahm it had to do with ahm the empowerment of citizens to be able to ahm make decisions and participate in the decision-making process that affected their lives, their welfare their wellbeing ahm economic and otherwise.

The organizations are actually referenced by two policy areas having to do with land development: local government reform and the Operation PRIDE program. Local government
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reform, which has been in progress since 2002, reimagined a statutory form of community-based organizations (CBOs) as the vehicle for participatory development. The new structures that are emerging from this initiative are a tiered set of organizations, from the most local (the CBOs) to the parish level. These organizations are charged with participating in development planning. Supporting acts having to do with financing and human resource management were passed in 2016. Of the triad of acts, the Minister of Local Government and Community Development said in 2015, “it will provide new and clear standards of accountability for local authorities, and place extensive public consultation and participation at the heart of the new environment of governance” (Jamaica Observer 2015).

Levy (1995, 2012) diagrams local government reform as a return to an era when a network of community development-oriented village councils embarked on rural reconstruction sponsored by the colonial state and capital. However, he fails to note the difference between different iterations of self-sufficiency/autonomy: 1940s development responded to a conjunctural crisis of labor rebellion with a compromise funded by capital and the emerging welfarist state; in the new millennium, community development imbricates the ownershipless (and others) in competition for grant funding—and all the entanglements of the nonprofit industrial complex (NPIC) (Incite! 2007). An example of “the problem” to which CBOs are seen as the antidote:

[Post-independence,] there have been various manifestations of political control and manipulation of the state community development agencies, and jostling for political

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109 “An early form of collective action which the slaves were encouraged to adopt from popular British working class practice, and which was rapidly adapted and institutionalized, was that of Friendly Societies (or variations known as Benevolent Societies and Burial Schemes)… So popular was this innovation that it was deemed necessary to institute a Friendly Societies Act in 1842 to regulate the operation of these bodies” (Maxwell 2002, 15).

110 These are supposed to challenge the partisan character of local government. They are flexible formations that can allow for local elites to exert control in lieu of and in critique of the Black state. But that is another dissertation…

111 The persistent thread has been livelihoods at the border between formal and informal economies.
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patronage has too often been the reality of the way local community organizations have functioned. [...] Somewhat by contrast, the development of a quasi-government programme in the 1990s, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund—partially financed by international agencies—has been structured to avoid public sector red tape and political interference. Its primary function is to assist community based organizations (CBOs) in programmes designed to achieve poverty reduction. (Maxwell 2002, 23)

My point is not that these accusations (red tape and political interference) are untrue; rather I want to hold out that new structures imagined as the absence “of political interference”—a problem of legitimacy of the social democratic-clientelist state—are inattentive to the production of uneven dispossession through purportedly neutral community governance structures. Also, both uses of the CBOs—for land reform and local government reform—devolve to nonstate state actors mandates for which the state had been responsible: representing constituents, obtaining resources, and turning resources into collectively consumed goods (cf. Gilmore 2007b).

There are many ways that ownershipless-ness is unevenly subject to either formalization or regularization. At Tulloch, the failure to form a recognized CBO meant that residents could not benefit from Operation PRIDE. PRIDE was one of the pathways towards regularization suggested to them by the SDC community development officer. Unlike some communities, residents’ efforts were never able to coalesce into the CBO form legally recognized under the Friendly Societies Act.

On the one hand, this program aimed to make a way for poor Jamaicans to make property and housing out of what they have ready at hand: informal tenure, and informal sourcing of labor and materials. This is not a small thing, as it promises (or seems to\textsuperscript{112}) an end to a durable yet

\textsuperscript{112} Desai (2002) documents the privatization of a social housing block in South Africa and finds that property is not the end of dispossession for the poor.
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insecure tenure that Jamaicans have negotiated for generations. This is “what squatters want.” And the inscription of “community” in the process of achieving regularization was intended to deepen democracy by severing the coercive strings of the clientelist state. On the other hand, because land and local government reform first interpellate “community,” which in forming\textsuperscript{113} takes as its material preexisting terrains of difference in which some of the ownershipless are deemed more or less worthy than others (Anand 2011), and then embeds community in processes of securing grant funding, it tends to reinforce and reproduce differentiation within and among local areas.

While some writing about slum clearance as enclosure and accumulation by dispossession position it as a global process rooted in overaccumulation, Doshi coins the term “accumulation by differentiated displacement” to highlight “the multiple ways in which ‘enclosure’ has been and continues to be implemented and resisted” (2012, 2).

In other words, accumulation by differentiated displacement is both a spatial process and a framework for understanding redevelopment that emphasizes the uneven political processes and differentiated subjectivities that enable, rework, and thwart the release of urban land for capital accumulation. (Doshi 2012, 3)

While Doshi accounts for difference among the subaltern, and dispossession as an uneven and differentiating process, in her writing dispossession is a goal that emanates from above (elites); that side of the process appears monolithic, and perhaps even synonymous with the state. In Jamaica, state practices reveal difference and tensions within the state formation.

\textsuperscript{113} One elder resident exhorted, “We have to form!” as a prerequisite to another desire she had: development, by which she meant church, school, roads.
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Doshi further suggests that unevenness is advanced by neoliberalization. That contradicts what I found: local government reform was not first and foremost neoliberal policy—it aimed to shift power from local partisan forces towards something conceived of as less biased, “community.” In so doing it hoped to free residents from, among other things, reliance on area dons (see Scott 2000 or Price 2004) or MPs for resource and all the entanglements of power. These CBOs are a repurposing of preexisting statutes, and differentiation is a likely effect of the new functions ascribed to them. Unevenness is as much the effect of politics, and subjectivities that are not neoliberal but are sedimentations of other traditions, politics, subjectivities, and culture. In fact it may be their very hybridity that disarms opposition—both subaltern and not. They have agendas, and entanglements that exceed dispossession. The referencing of familiar forms (benevolent societies, community meetings, etc.) may be disarming. However, though the new CBOs appear like those involved in 1950s and 60s rural development, a key difference is that the work they undertake is funded in much the same way as nonprofit organizations.

The field officer of a national human rights organization involved in the negotiations at Tulloch spoke to a key criticism of the NPIC—the determining and depoliticizing role of funding structures:

… when you build that hope in them [community members] and when you go back to JFJ there isn’t (pause) that support to take those issues that you’ve now gotten on the table and you’ve gotten their attention at the community level you are not seeing it replicated within the organization at the level of national advocacy. It then helps to create a level of disenchantment and a feeling of my issue being less important than that of the killing of somebody and you’re quite right in terms of … because JFJ is an NGO and we have to understand it from the perspective of what are its limitations. It’s an NGO that retains, obtains funding for specific work and I’ve had to explain it to persons. We get funding for specific work. The actions we are doing under this project
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are prearranged. Yeah, predetermined, prearranged and therefore we don’t have the
flexibility to go out of scope. […] when you look at it from the funding standpoint and
that it, what really helps dictate what an organization, an NGO does. I don’t know if
funding is available is out there to look at these issues. I know that they [JFJ] are able to
secure funding to extrajudicial killings and court representation and thing. But to what
extent they are able to secure funding for land issues … for social and economic justice
issues that’s another thing.

But for me what was disappointing in the project, as I said was that the project was very
limited. I was to educate, I was to identify problems, and I was to assist with advocacy
and then it was done. So then you are not able to … advocacy can take five, it can take
ten years and you’re not able to see the whole cycle of development happening.

At Tulloch: The Path Towards Regularization?

At Tulloch, months and months of work by the community leaders and members who
participated failed to coalesce into an organization that met the requirements of the Friendly
Societies Act. One leader said that by the time the five-day training was to be completed, the
community could not muster the required number of people to attend. Without others’
commitment to the process dictated by the prescribed pathway to legitimacy, she had grown
weary, feeling that she was putting forward an effort that went unmatched by most of the
residents. Other residents said they didn’t see the relevance of the community meetings. At least
one person who questioned the relevance expressed confidence that the minister of parliament
would eventually come through securing either regularization or relocation on behalf of Tulloch
residents, and they would finally get the water infrastructure for which they had been waiting.

So commonplace were statements about the divisions within the community made to me that I
began to make note of the many instances of labor-sharing and cooperation between households I
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saw that did not get reflected in sentiment. One of the many failures blamed on a lack of cohesion was the failure to form the CBO that would have enabled regularization. The set case for this narrative is the neighboring community, which I will call Jamestown, where a CBO had been formed and regularization had recently been rewarded with titles. It was difficult for me to imagine that Tulloch was plagued by conflict so severe that it was the decisive factor in their divergent outcomes. What was markedly different between Jamestown and Tulloch was the appearance of development potential: Tulloch is a large flat area and gently sloping foothills with fantastic views of the Caribbean Sea. Unfortunately for its residents, it is also a much smaller population from which to muster the same number of required members for the CBOs. Indeed the SDC Community Development Officer, Mr. Riley, linked the arc of their eviction, the urgency to remove them, and then lapsing back into a tenuous durability with no immediate end with other potential uses for the land:

The rush to get them off was because there was a train in motion to pass the land or sell the land or whatever to another agency to go into development ahm... So that fell through so there is no rush to get them off the land. Alright? Every time there is a rush for development then whoever is on the land there gonna be a rush to get them off the land. And (plays with keys) what I’ve said to the residents is that you m.... you mustn’t wait until they rush to get you off, you must seek to find legal tenure at some point alright whether it be by purchasing a section of the land and developing a community for yourself.

Mr. Riley had been with the local office of the Social Development Commission at the time of the notice to vacate. He had anticipated the serving of notices: before the eviction, he contacted residents at Tulloch, which was within the geographic area for which he was responsible. Because of the construction of new resorts in the area on surplus agricultural land, he had a sense
that their tenure might be threatened. He said he, in his role at the SDC, tried to let communities know when he heard about emerging situations that might have a negative impact. An elder resident concurred:

He is a good boy. Always look out for us…. We ask and he tell us what to say.

The elder’s words also reflect that the processes of government with which residents were engaging after the notice to vacate were not ones in which many felt competent at “knowing what to say,” in particular because communications were sometimes done via a type of letter-writing campaign in which “communities” must represent themselves as citizens with particular kinds of demands to be redressed by the appropriately addressed agent.

In this case the triggering event was the construction of a large resort on an adjacent parcel of land. The initial action Mr. Riley advised was the formation of a CBO. While these structures appear at times like the community development organizations of long ago, it is important to note that new CBOs receive only minimal public funding but are constituted so as to assume fiscal responsibility for member contributions and grant funding. The Society is a legal entity that has the right to collect and spend funds on behalf of its members. This type of CBO was deployed by Operation PRIDE. In order to be beneficiaries under the scheme, residents of an area were required to form a society under the Act. The Society was to have certain characteristics that were used as a proxy for measuring its representativeness. According to Mr. Riley, the CBO structure:

… requires that communities have twenty-one members [of the CBO] … they have to go through a series of trainings, they have to do the examination … once they pass that then they are legally registered and they are able to now enter into, into legal contracts.
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In addition the CBOs must elect officers to perform certain tasks (including a secretary who kept minutes and recorded attendance, a chairperson, and a treasurer), pay fees to the Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies (DCFS), have a regular meeting schedule and a number of regular attendees, draft rules based on the model provided by the DCFS, and collect dues. Additionally, the steering committee was required to travel to the DCFS offices for a training that spanned five consecutive days. The rigorous structure is required because one purpose of the Society is to perform certain fiscal tasks on behalf of the residents of the area. Again from the SDC officer:

And then in recent years benevolent societies have emerged throughout the island because the Jamaica Social Investment Fund ahm, in … in facilitating ahm community development have requested that these community organizations in order to access their community-based funding must become legal entities. And the shortest route, ah … route to legal status is benevolent society … through the … Friendly Societies coop, which operates out of … I think operates out of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Tulloch never achieved this formal community-based organization and the meetings eventually stopped altogether out of discouragement. I did attend a few meetings of one such CBO in a Montego Bay community called Granville. Having satisfied the requirements to be recognized as a Friendly Society, some members whose tenure was informal had been regularized; the Society was also eligible for, and had already received, grants from a quasi-governmental agency known as the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), in addition to other sources. The grants had funded community events, small-scale agricultural projects, beautification projects, etc. The meeting format was modeled on Robert’s Rules of Order: structured by the minutes (matters arising from the minutes, new business, etc.), with decisions made via motions and majority
votes, and before speaking attendees had to be recognized by the chair who was addressed throughout the meeting as “Mr. Chairman,” a format I experienced as grandiose, but participants seemed to take as part of their education into the workings of “community development,” accepting procedural correction from the chair. Explicit in the meeting was accountability to funders: frequently throughout the meeting the chairman mentioned the different grants-issuing organizations along with a reminder of the specific activity to which different monies were to be applied based on the terms of the grant.

At Tulloch, in addition to the formation of a CBO that would allow engagement in Operation PRIDE, Mr. Riley encouraged other simultaneous strategies. Out of the effort to form the CBO, several leaders had emerged, including Miss Jameson, Miss Grange, and Stacey. Mr. Riley supported the leaders to pursue tactics that the SDC teaches as part of its role to foster civic engagement\textsuperscript{114}: drafting letters to elected officials such as the local councilors, and the minister of parliament, as well as the government landowning agency that had served notice, etc. The SDC was also the initial point of contact between a national human rights organization and the nascent Tulloch CBO.

The human rights organization Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ)\textsuperscript{115} focuses primarily on Jamaicans’ mistreatment at the hands of security forces: spearheading the formation of an oversight body for the security forces, creating public dialogue in the national news media regarding particular cases of police brutality (including the state-sanctioned killing of primarily poor Jamaicans) as well as anticorruption and human-rights-informed legislation and state practices. So it was not a typical

\textsuperscript{114} A newer mission; formerly the SDC had a social welfare orientation, and spearheaded community development projects that were also funded through the agency.

\textsuperscript{115} I am related by marriage to one of the founders of Jamaicans for Justice, Susan Goffe. Susan has also been the chairperson and a board member, often playing the role of spokesperson.
area of activity for the organization to be involved in land rights. However, at that time JFJ was in the midst of a project called Social and Economic Justice that was grant funded and annually renewed. The SEJ had one field officer for the entire island, with some legal and administrative support from the overall JFJ staff and volunteer corps. The field officer’s role under the grant was primarily educational. An aspect of SEJ was to foster the development of civic engagement processes.

**JFJ FO:** The primary goal of the project was to sensitize persons about their rights, to identify upon sensitization and they are now aware to identify what were their social and economic priorities at a community scale at a community level and then to provide support with advocacy around one of those priority areas. So the community was to identify which issue was the number one issue and for me to support that particular issue. So that was the long and short of what was expected out of the project. We recognized from early—JFJ, because it’s an NGO, does not have the means to sustain the project and therefore we approached the SDC, the Social Development Commission, because it was the agency that was most fit to carry out the work at a community level because of their role as a community development organization. We developed a memorandum of understanding [MOU], and we were working with them under several\(^\text{116}\) MOUs, which lasted only a year because of the [inaudible] of the program. They were not required to be the all of it so it varied between nine months and a year so…

[…] essentially that MOU was to train SDC community development officers or CDOs in our community development techniques, training assessment and advocacy so that they could support the community with the skills and the expectation that they had as a result of working with us because it had been successful and it had gotten the communities involved in participating more

\(^{116}\text{renewed annually}\)
actively in governance. Because one of the challenges was the limited interest, the apathy, as it existed in relation to government processes throughout these communities and it was as a result of that feeling by residents—that these leaders didn’t care about us, they ahm really don’t care about our issues, they are only concerned about the vote—we can’t get any kind of change happening, and so on. And so to break the apathy ahm we would use advocacy to these leaders [elected officials] and the leaders hopefully would respond to these advocacy to break that cycle of apathy that existed.

RG: So it was like a … in part a project specifically about particular needs of the community but then it was also about civic engagement long term.

JFJ FO: Definitely, definitely.

Whereas the initial contact at Tulloch was a joint effort by the SDC community development officer and the JFJ field officer, when Mr. Riley was replaced in his role at the SDC by another person, the JFJ field officer continued the relationship directly with the community. Prior to this, JFJ had only worked in the Kingston metro area. The SEJ project created a platform, though short-lived, to engage with communities islandwide, fifty according to the only field officer, and about issues that were different from the organization’s prior focus on extrajudicial killing.

Regular meetings were held for Tulloch and other communities, themed on an issue they were facing, but not narrowly limited to that topic. It was through these meetings that residents deepened their knowledge of a framework of legal rights including those that supported their possession of the land, and its fruits. People came to understand themselves as caretakers of the land, with legal rights to compensation for their labor and money that were over time fixed in the land: short-term crops, long-term crops such as fruit trees, water supply and drainage infrastructure, and so on. In addition to these rights in the Jamaica legal code, residents learned that their tenure might also be protected under international human rights agreements under
which they might have been able to make a legal claim to formal tenure based on the length of time some residents (themselves and ancestors) had belonged to the district.

The field officer felt that while the SEJ’s civic engagement processes were able to effect local acts of intervention (often aided by the very types of “interference” that civic engagement hoped to avoid), the efficacy of the SEJ project was limited by the NGO’s core identity, reinforced by the specificity of funding. Making a national intervention, as JFJ has done with policing, would have required sustaining the temporary inclusion of social and economic justice in the NGO’s definition of human rights. As a result, the project was not able to scale up the common experience of the many communities with which the field officer was engaged, a common experience of living on land in the absence of what she called “social amenities,” or other barriers that prevented the realization of a community or resident’s vision for the land.

Under Operation PRIDE, communities were facilitated to provide for their own infrastructure on an incremental basis; the assistance from government being the concession to allow a formal subdivision without the prior provision of infrastructure. The field officer of JFJ describes:

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JFJ FO: One of the things we observed though is that land issues was a common thread throughout rural communities that whenever we went into them and asked what are your issues its always one of the issues that they raised; either that they had purchased some land and they did not get everything that that were told they would get

RG: In terms of documentation, or …?

JFJ FO: In terms of resources, in terms of sewer facilities, in terms of roads, in terms of light, in terms of water … Norwich … Norwich Heights in Portland was a Operation PRIDE and they got none of the amenities they were promised despite paying over all the monies that the government said they should pay, despite
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taking additional lands out of the community and selling the lands, having the parish council broker the relation to sell the lands and they still did not get the amenities that they were told this land is being sold for …

RG: Oh, so land in the community was sold in order to offset the cost of infrastructure\textsuperscript{117}?

FO: Yes so for example there is a common space, there is land within a common space for a church a community center, that kind of thing. And you and I, we are the residents, we have already paid our share of what we’re supposed to pay to get our house and that water and the land and the road and then five years, ten years down the road, even though paying all that money we were told would give us everything we still have not gotten those things except the land that we are on and the house that we built ourselves … there’s no road there’s no x no sewage, nothing. So … ahm, in order to get that they lobby the, the f… the agency, parish council; the parish council says to them you’re gonna need another three million or another ten million. So they people are like, where are we gonna get that from, here is the agreement that said we were to pay this and we paid it and whatever so the parish council says you have common space within the community you have the church lands … the lands allocated for church, the community center for park for whatever. Sell one or two of those lots and you will be able to make that money to be able to get that road and that sewage and that light and whatever that is still not provided and even after doing that they are still not able to get the amenities that promised.

Footing the cost of infrastructure (with a dose of sweat equity) is one role of the CBOs: to finance from member contributions and sale of community assets. The expectation that communities provide infrastructure is derived from the Registration (Strata Titles) Act; in order for the state to grant permission for the subdivision of existing plots of land, the applicant is

\textsuperscript{117} This telling doesn’t take into account any subsidies that may have been included in the program.
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required to provide for the delivery of amenities to each new lot within the preexisting boundaries. The Act was written with the developer in mind; the sale of a serviced lot or houses would offset the cost of infrastructure, with the developer managing the delay between investment and recoupment through financing. Sewage disposal has a particular significance since the governing Act “binds the Crown,” as such the National Environmental Protection Agency at times emerges as the agency in conflict with informal tenure, despite the fact that adverse possession is technically a civil matter between residents and landowners.

Meanwhile ... Land Management

The office where Tulloch residents used to pay their lease payments in the 1970s was a local arm of the Land Administration Office of the Commissioner of Lands (CoL). The CoL is an agency within the ministry with responsibility for land, a portfolio often paired with agriculture in Jamaica’s ministry system. The local field officer is now charged with preparing idle public land for divestiture, initially a demand of the SAPs of the 1980s. Some of these idle lands are occupied by informal settlements; part of the field officer’s work is to monitor the possession of lands so as to keep land as unencumbered as possible. I got a glimpse into the work of divestiture through my interviews with the Jamaica Railway Corporation, a quasi-governmental land-owning entity whose islandwide portfolio is the right-of-way and associated lands for a mostly defunct rail system. The JRC offices and staff, which used to run a railway, are partially occupied with the work of transforming this portfolio of land into a saleable, unencumbered asset.

A map room of unregistered land holdings, based on surveys mostly too old to meet the requirements of registry, many based on benchmarks, for example the railway tracks, that no
longer exist in reality, together highlight that “divestiture” is a project requiring immense state resources. The land, which is not capital because it cannot be set in motion, is also often in the possession of informal settlers. This underscores one contradiction between land as national asset that might offer a different kind of economic future for the country and land as means of social reproduction. This contradiction is part of the lingering relations of the social democratic state in which an official blind eye towards one’s use of the land is sometimes the difference between make live and let die (Li 2009).

Beyond its own portfolio of land, the Commissioner of Lands also oversees all of the functions of the state having to do with real property: land registry, conveyancing, valuation, land taxes, and so on. Since the mid-1990s the GoJ has embarked on a program to manage its lands as well as provide the kinds of land infrastructures—information and material—that would enable land to be other than idle. Three major objectives of land management are: (1) invigoration of land markets—increasing the number of parcels that have registered title in order to increase the productivity of and investment in land; (2) elimination of poverty through equitable access to land and provision of security of tenure—allowing poor households “to transform their land assets into sustainable livelihoods”; (3) and environmental protection through land use planning and environmental regulation (daCosta 2008). Other goals of land management include getting in order the nation’s assets (economic, ecological); eliminating “corruption” (state patronage); aiding planning (for ecological as well as development needs); and increasing the accuracy of land information systems, that is, shoring up land information systems to be a reliable reflection of reality (Sutherland 1995).

When the director of the Squatter Management Unit talks of a national policy outlook on public lands, the work of statecraft he is pointing to lies precisely at this juncture: on the one hand, there
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is the work to build land information systems that would undergird an efficient land market—a project that is advancing steadily—and on the other, the work to dismantle the former social contract\textsuperscript{118} as it exists, sedimented in a landscape of Jamaicans who are in possession of land but not property. Through the changing work of lands office field officers who used to collect lease payments from PLL lessees, and railway property managers who used to support the functioning of a rail system that wound its way through the hills, now occupied with the task of divestiture of public land, we get a picture of incremental change towards a future where there is less of an abundance of idle public land.

\textsuperscript{118} “The result of this transformation [the demise of Keynesianism] at the international level meant that the old import substitution model which both Jamaican political parties had pursued was dead. The requirement of low inflation meant that deficit financing of significant social benefits—health, education and housing—was also dead. Likewise large state budgets with huge numbers of government employees. Thus the state and the political parties were forced to break the historic social contract with the Jamaican people which had been the very basis for their initial formation and continued existence” (Robotham 2009, 229, emphasis added).
In 2001, security forces descended without notice on residents of a settlement at Steer Town, St. Ann, in the middle of the night, kicking down doors, removing residents bodily, and demolishing about thirty homes. The following day hundreds of people, more than the residents, demonstrated in the street, blocking the road for several hours—a route between the airport and the resort at Ocho Rios. Police cleared the demonstration with tear gas, arresting tens of demonstrators (G. Davis 2001). The prime minister’s statement suggests the events were an embarrassment, prompting recognition of the need for “strict and clear guidelines that will ensure in the future that whatever has to be done is not only done in a humane way, but that nobody is caught by
surprise and that all agencies are properly alerted and equipped to ensure that the removal and the relocation are as orderly as possible” (G. Davis 2001).

The SMU, established five years later, is charged with overseeing the work to draft these clear guidelines and to educate landowning and enforcement agencies of the state how to implement them. As part of its involvement in “coordinating a national outlook,” the SMU “promotes the planned and sustainable development of land resources” by acting as a watchdog and advisory body. According to their webpage, the unit “expects to achieve its mandates through: policy formulation and implementation [and] [c]ollaboration with Stakeholders in the implementation of existing guidelines regarding informal settlements” (SMU 2017).119 While guidelines have been developed in wait of a finalized policy (GoJ n.d.), Sheere Brooks found in her 2008 study of a settlement nearby to Steer Town that for those in the “tourism space” (the object of her study) “policy objectives [are] manipulated and applied on an ad hoc basis” (2009, iv).

A national squatting policy has yet to be completed. The various reports referred to in this chapter have been undertaken as the necessary foundation on which to draft such a policy. Interim guidelines (GoJ n.d.) are structured around three possible approaches for each settlement: regularization (preferred); relocation; and, as a last resort, eviction. According to the head of a land administration department of a ministry, the criteria for consideration of regularization are:

1. Is the settlement laid out in an organized manner?

119 The website summarizes a threefold policy regarding existing settlements: “Ongoing assessment of squatting in Jamaica to advise on the relocation, eviction or regularisation of squatter settlements; Containment of settlements to prevent expansion; and Sourcing of local and international assistance/funding to improve the low income housing stock” (SMU 2017).
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

2. Does the settlement have a negative environmental impact?\textsuperscript{120}

3. Can government recover the funds it expends in regularization?\textsuperscript{121}

A social and economic assessment is also considered a necessary prerequisite; and this determination will continue to be on a case-by-case basis, taking all these factors into account. Throughout the 2004 Survey the need for more research is oft-repeated. Attempts to conduct that research have been forestalled by a lack of funding: the 2008 Rapid Assessment for example was done without any budget allocation; the second of three proposed World Bank/Cities Alliance reports was stalled over a dispute between the GoJ and the Bank. According to the head of a Land Administration department, eventually, when the draft policy is complete, the process will be governed by nationally consistent parameters.

In the meantime, day-to-day realization of containing the incidence of squatting is not only uneven, it is also marked by contradictions between agency mandates (as they are enacted), which may diverge from how they are formally understood. One example I found was the conflict over the definition of development between the SMU, a central government policy-oriented agency, and the parish council, a local governing body. In essence, the SMU holds that the parish council is responsible for containing squatting on public land. I thought this meant that the SMU holds the PC responsible for acting as the agent of all public landowning agencies in maintaining possession. However, when asked, the SMU director explained that the PC is responsible by virtue of its statutory role in enforcing planning controls on development, defined as any structure above, on or below grade. The local body understands itself as ensuring that

\textsuperscript{120} The National Environment and Planning Agency is the implementer of the National Resource Conservation Act. This act “binds the Crown,” thereby superseding the powers of local parish councils and the Housing Act. This means that the GoJ legally must correct its own environmental violations even when correction puts them in violation of another act.

\textsuperscript{121} Cost recovery is a refrain of the neoliberal state.
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

construction complies with approved plans, which must comply with extant planning controls. Monitoring possession of public land therefore gets lost in translation. I will explore this in more detail in chapter 4 as it relates to how the internal contradictions of the postcolonial state are made material.

Regularization, Relocation, or Eviction: Who is a Squatter?

What Tulloch residents did achieve through their negotiations with various state agents is recognition that their claims to land are significant enough that they could not be summarily evicted. This distinguishes them from those who participated in a land rush years before the notices. Apparently responding to a rumor that the government was going to “cut up”\(^{122}\) the land, people who lived elsewhere had come to Tulloch and erected barbed wire fences, hoping to benefit from the regularization. According to Mr. W, a policeman who had come to serve notice at that time had accosted him: “you pen up land over here too?” Mr. W had replied, no. The policeman’s next question was how long had Mr. W lived there. To which he responded that it had been over twenty-five years. The policeman then said, “these notices are not for you” and went on with affixing notices to the fences of people who did not live there, but had merely marked off a lot with a fence.

According to the law, the fence layers were in violation of the Trespass Act (1851), which makes criminal the unauthorized occupation of land for the first year. Between twelve months and the limit of term, landowners would have to file a civil case to eject someone who had established possession on their property.

\(^{122}\) The refrain “cut up” the land is frequently heard from informal residents exhorting the state to subdivide large parcels into lots small enough to be accessible for purchase. It points to the fact that land scarcity is structured by the persistence of an abundance of plots too large for purchase, many of which are mostly surplus land.
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Tulloch also achieved the opportunity to consider options for relocation. None of the locations proposed were acceptable however. Miss Jameson in my many visits with her would often take news headlines of violence and murder as an illustration of why a proposed site was rejected by the community. Despite this, she and another CBO leader, Stacey, sometimes lamented that the community could not come to a consensus to move. Stacey in particular found not knowing what would be the eventual outcome so stressful that she would have preferred to be permanently settled in the proposed relocation site which is a notorious “hot spot” area, which I will discuss further in chapter 4.

Conclusion

After the 2006 election, the new administration made the decision to move the SMU to the ministry with responsibility for housing, a decision that was implemented in 2008. The explanation for moving the SMU from a ministry concerned with land to one concerned with housing is that the National Squatter Survey found that the majority land use of squatting on the island was residential\(^\text{123}\) (GoJ 2004). Additionally, since a lack of affordable housing is cited as a prime cause, squatting is seen as an issue of housing by virtue of both land use and the recommended policy solution. This makes a lot of common sense. However, I argue this move is also one marker of the shifting relationship between social reproduction and the state. I locate the SMU’s move from the ministry with responsibility for land to one with responsibility for housing in the trajectory of the state formation from developmentalist (1940s) to neoliberal (2000s), as I

\(^{123}\) Other land uses in the survey include agricultural and commercial, but these are cited as inconsequential in numbers. Additionally, Mr. Forsythe said these in practice fell under the purview of other state agencies by virtue of where they tend to occur, and the relationship to existing laws, for example, agriculture on forestry lands.
have discussed in this chapter, because it signals a retreat from a more general concern with social reproduction in favor of a narrow focus on housing.

My point is not to advocate that an agricultural definition of *working a plot* continue to be inscribed in land policy. Rather I am underlining the ways that land access as it is reimagined from above—as housing, and as means of access to credit (the end game of “security of tenure”) but not as means of production and subsistence—is divorced from the realities of daily life.

The ideological shift over time from land reform (which is by definition redistributive) as a means of improving livelihood and towards land provision as a means of individualizing the construction of social housing (for example), is not only a reflection of the shrinking importance of agriculture in Jamaica’s economy and of farming in Jamaican lives. This shift also marks a recalibration amongst the sources through which social reproduction is secured: “Social reproduction is secured through a shifting constellation of sources encompassed within the broad categories of the state, the household, capital, and civil society. The balance among these varies historically, geographically, and across class” (Katz 2001b, 711). The commitments made throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s greatly improved literacy, agricultural services to small farmers, minimum wage and other labor protections, access to education and healthcare, housing quality, and women’s access to the wage (through legislation regarding equal pay and paid maternity leave), as well as reducing income inequality (Stone 1989; Mullings 2009). However, beginning in the 1980s and accelerating in Manley’s second administration there was a shift in responsibility for social welfare: user fees for public health services are instituted in 1984, while government spending on healthcare fell 35 percent between 1975 and 1985; government spending on education fell 40 percent between 1981 and 1985; and currency devaluations resulted in drastic rates of inflation, as high as 51 percent in 1991 (Anderson 2001).
CHAPTER 3: Putting the Idle to Work

The persistence of roles like lands office field officers, Social Development Commission community development officers, railway property managers, as well as public health inspectors, and parish council enforcement officers (as we will see in chapter 4) suggests that these offices operate in much the same way they always have. But as these officers operate under changed mandates, some of them contested, the things they make material add up to a different vision for how to put to use that which has been made idle.
4 Capture and Abandon: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

“They are quite self-sufficient.”

~ The former minister of water and housing, regarding squatters

Introduction

Miss S “buys and sells.” In Jamaican parlance she is a higgler, an occupation with a long history. She chose this work because she does not like anyone to “facety”125 with her. I asked her if it is a good work and she said:

*It’s the best.* Mi nuh work fi nobody. Like some people go out go work fi somebody and some of the people what them work for them handle them some kind of way. Mi work for myself. From mi born mi nuh work fi nobody.

Her mother had been a domestic worker, cooking and washing in the home of the family who owned the estate. She had died before her children were grown and Miss S grew up with her grandmother on the estate. I sat on the verandah and listened as she ironed. It had been hard to find her at home: Miss S spends Wednesday through Sunday selling at the market in Montego Bay. Mary had been trying for weeks to introduce me, waiting for a day when Miss S would be at home, even suggesting New Year’s Day, because Miss S would have the day off.

124 See Quijano (2000) for a reframing of marginality as the constitutive insides of capital, rather than as external (dualist) to capital.

125 Facety means to be disrespectful, impertinent.
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

The iron looked to me like a relic—it was a heavy cast iron box with a flip top under the handle and a chamber that was filled with lit charcoal. Miss S used to have electricity service connected to her house daisy-chained from her neighbor but she discontinued it when she came to find out from the utility that the neighbor had been overcharging her. The iron was giving her trouble; she kept having to stop to open it and blow on the embers. This made ironing very tedious, or at least that’s what I thought. Playing back the recording I hear the pauses, her blowing, clucking her tongue. I was particularly struck by this process as she ironed the white suit her brother came by to drop off. How did blown soot not go airborne, and settle on the clean fabric? And yet she said she preferred this device to an electric iron. It looked to me like the afternoon would be dominated by this battle with the ironing fire.

I wish to draw attention to the sentiment of Miss S’s preferences, leaving aside the nonequivalence of the neighbor’s skimming with the insult and exploitation by a white planter family who owns thousands of acres of land. I could frame her attachment—to the not-electrical iron and the not-working-for-others—by pointing to the horizon of possibilities that structure her preference, but there is something in that which doubts her. Instead, I wish to take seriously the pleasure she and others take in semi-autonomy, the pleasure people take in living at Tulloch. I refer back to Katherine McKittrick’s call—in conversation with Sylvia Wynter’s (1971) “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation”—to attend to Black life. “Wynter’s essay asks that we seek out secretive histories that are not invested in rehearsing lifelessness, the violated black body, and practices of resistance rooted in authenticity […] If black geographies are conceptualized as mutually constitutive of broader geographic processes, how does Wynter’s framework allow us to grapple with historically present practices of racial exclusion without condemning the most marginalized to spaces of absolute otherness?” (McKittrick 2013, 11).
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Showing the organized abandonment of Tulloch falls short of the task at hand. It is true that Tulloch residents in 2013 felt more vulnerable to dispossession than they had before the notices were served several years earlier. That outcome has been chalked up—by the neoliberalizing state as well as by some of the residents themselves—to their own failure. As Miss Lucille anxiously said in critique of the lapsed CBO formation, “We have to form. Government not doing anything. The community want development.” The failure of Tulloch appears as the failure to “form” themselves into a community that could utilize the available mechanisms to transcend ownershipless-ness and deliver its own development.

On the other hand, in the immediate situation of the eviction what residents at Tulloch accomplished is to trouble their definition by the landowning agency as illegitimate, and enter into a process of negotiation with the state. Their collective wager (though internally fractured) is to refuse to be relocated to any of a series of bad places offered them. On a longer timescale, what they also accomplished is to situate themselves in a good place. Even before the eviction notices raised the question of negotiated elsewheres, they were enacting a vision for themselves removed from “facety” employers, from dependence on abusive partners and family members, from households to which they were “given away” as children, from overcrowded or contested family land, from other people’s “kingdoms,” from the juncture between the regularity of bills and the irregularity of income, from the low returns to labor of the local farmer’s life, from “bush,” from places even more forgotten than Tulloch Estate such as the hillside plots on the far side of the river, and so on.

This chapter again focuses on state and economic restructuring signaled by enacted policy regarding squatting, but this time from the perspective of social reproduction at Tulloch. In order to understand the role of informal tenure in the shifting constellation of the state, household, civil
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

In this chapter, I will examine the life's work (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003) of several residents and the straddling of working a plot and working a plantation. I then look at the political ecology of social reproduction as it is manifest in the provision or absence of running water, storm drainage, electricity, and sewage infrastructure. These infrastructures traverse the interface between state, capital, civil society, and the household, and involvement of each of these broad categories in social reproduction (Katz 2001b). As such infrastructure offers a way in to thinking about the relationship between states and the ownershipless, between make live and let die (Li 2009). I then turn to examining the roles through which residents understand and represent themselves as legitimate possessors of the land. These roles reference political economic presents and histories and participate in the differentiation of legitimacy amongst the ownershipless. Finally, I look at how traditions that hail Black life as something other than unauthorized possessors of land show up in the postcolonial state alongside palimpsests of historical violence. But first I will explain how Tulloch residents collectively define good and bad places to show what is at stake in the struggle to select or reselect a place to “make life for a time”¹²⁶ (Brown 2008).

Places, Good and Bad

The most routinely volatile places in this region of Jamaica now are reportedly caught in the crosshairs of a crime wave associated with gang-affiliated lotto scammers. “Scamming” involves the use of stolen marketing lead lists to contact overseas residents by phone, conning them into wiring money so that they may retrieve lottery winnings that do not actually exist. In terms of the spatiality of violence, in addition to the pattern of murders associated with the scheme, these

¹²⁶ See chapter 3, end of section 1 for the full quote.
places have become heavily policed “hot spots,” frequently raided in hopes of detaining scammers, some of whom are the subject of extradition requests from the United States. Hot spot neighborhoods are thus part of a transnational carceral geography, which Jamaicans who can, avoid. When I attended the meetings of a successfully formed CBO, it was in a neighborhood bordering Montego Bay known as Granville, which is cited as the original focal point of scamming. Per its reputation several people warned me that I would not be safe there at night. Indeed, CBO members spoke about the reluctance of some Granville residents to venture out at night as they planned a (grant-funded) nighttime event to compete with a regularly held event with a mission less savory than the celebration of community history and individual success stories that they were envisioning. When Tulloch residents talk about the places they were offered as relocation sites but rejected, they describe places like these, marked by routine police incursions and a kind of violence that is shocking to the Jamaican public. While the rate of violent crime has been disturbingly high for decades, there is a quality of spectacle in the last several years such as murders of whole families including children, beheadings, mutilations of already dead bodies, and so on (see Thomas 2011). There were other places, good enough places, that Tulloch residents had suggested as relocation sites, but these suggestions received no response from the state agency with which they were negotiating.

This is not to set up Tulloch as the innocent, good poor; rather I’m saying that the residents came to a collective decision to reject being relocated to areas they knew to be marked by violence. For the people who live there, Tulloch stands in contrast to places like Granville; it is a good place. People feel safe there. It affords some of the capaciousness necessary to a life without much money: room to grow food (plants and animals) to eat or to sell; to expand one’s possession as generations grow, which in turn allows for intergenerational sharing of the work of
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

reproduction; and to set up a roadside shop; as well as “wild” fruit trees from which to reap food to eat or to sell and, for some residents, buildings that had been mostly sound but unoccupied. Tulloch also allows for recreation and enjoyment. Close to the sea, one can walk to one beach that remains publicly accessible after the construction of two nearby tourism enclaves—for a seabath, or as an entry point for resident fishermen. Space also to play a game of football, to gather at a neighbor’s yard, to dream about additions that might better house one’s family in the future. In a hot climate, it is also a place where one can be cooled by the diurnal breezes between land and sea.

As Miss Grange said regarding the relocation sites:

Because this is what they [the government] are doing. Them a give you one place wh ... alright, like how the house here so set. And them square it off out there so to the bathroom so you have one hall, bathroom and you get two room at the end of the day.127 Mi have six goat. Mi six goat can't go on the scheme go live you understand what mi a say? […] You cyan just come take mi out of mi livelihood and put mi a one wilderness.128 Nuthing nuh grow pon concrete. Mi sister live up a [C—Courts] a which part them make them scheme. A four house on one. Mi cyan129 go live there so. Number one you can't plant one soursop tree. You can't plant one peas tree much less one, two okra. So wha mi a go there so go live fa? The place out here so [is] so big them say them a go make housing scheme. Them go up there so them jam on how much house pon it mi dear.

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127 She is describing the layout of a lot in a housing scheme, which in the 1980s was a low-income housing strategy with schemes developed by the National Housing Trust. These days NHT schemes are no longer accessible to lower income levels and primarily offer housing to middle income.

128 By wilderness she’s referencing a metaphor, “concrete jungle,” from earlier in the interview.

129 I can’t
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

And you see when they take way the livelihood of people everyone a go tun gunman [...] and that’s the time now, the country can’t come back. Cause what a man grow pon you know a it him going try live off of.
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

Image 6: Home, the former bookkeeper’s house

Image 7: Home, a woman’s room of her own
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

**Image 8:** Home, one of the larger houseyards

Photo by author
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**KEY**

- **I** Intermittent
- **S** Seasonal
- **C** P/Maternity
- **D** Dislocated
- **FT** Fulltime
- **PT** Parttime

**Chart 1 Working a Plot, Working a Plantation**
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

Life’s Work and Good Places

As a corrective to theories that reify a binary distinction between production and reproduction, “life’s work” (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003) instead foregrounds the unity of work across its many spheres, including the work of reproducing capitalist social relations and, in the case of Jamaica, those relations through which intermittently surplus labor is durably tethered to capital.

At Tulloch, life’s work includes also the struggle over the possession of land and over the qualities of the land possessed, such as its proximity to the “front page,” or the provision or maintenance of infrastructure. Also, as becomes evident in the negotiations prompted by the threat of eviction, it is a lot of work to bring structures and “commonsense understandings” into being—such as CBOs and the associated conduct required of residents to become legitimate possessors of land; work that is, as Mitchell, Marston, and Katz point out, “an important part of the work of social reproduction” (2003, 418). Through the vignettes that follow I offer a glimpse into these aspects of life’s work at Tulloch.

In chapter 1, I wrote about the historical palimpsest of straddling working a plot and working a plantation. In chart 1 above, I present some data about that relation in the present at Tulloch by showing, for the twenty-eight respondents, two of their significant areas of work, the activities in which their households are engaged on the land they possess, and how they come to be in possession of land at Tulloch. Although the “primary” and “secondary” categories are an oversimplification of the fluid suturing together of livelihood strategies practiced by those who live both/and lives, I include it as a way of showing the relative importance of activities at the time of research.

While only fifteen respondents out of twenty-eight are shown as working a plot and ten respondents did not have an area of secondary work, these are both conservative, resulting from
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

an underrepresentation of working a plot activities that are not land-based. Land-based work was fairly visible; it was less easy to see people’s non-land-based informal activities, and also harder to discuss, in part because other activities tend to be thought of as less respectable than farming, animal rearing, and shopkeeping or roadside vending. Regarding land-based livelihood activities, only six of the twenty-eight used the land just for housing, with animal rearing—most often chickens, followed by goats, with a few people keeping pigs—being practiced by twenty respondents. Also evident is the scarcity of people who have fulltime waged work, and those three who do are all in their twenties, whereas all of the people for whom working a plot was their primary work were forty and older.

Other than the movement between plot and plantation, a few other things are immediately apparent. I have argued that informal tenure has been imbricated in the production of a labor force that is casual and yet ready at hand, whose subsistence is accomplished via self-sufficiency, and that this tenure was often customary, connected with working a plantation. Even still, I was surprised to find that in 2014 the tenure of so many people with whom I spoke, at Tulloch and elsewhere, was via their relationship with employer-landowners, some of whom were long gone. Almost all of the twenty-eight respondents at Tulloch either themselves had worked for the estate, or their parents or grandparents had. These relationships precede the estate’s nationalization. If the deal at the Pebble Cove resort to “give” the ground under that informal settlement to the state goes through, it will join Tulloch amongst the 76 percent of informal settlements that are on government-owned land (GoJ 2008). That the nationalization of sugar estates is not unique to Tulloch, and the Pebble Cove deal is brokered under a program of the Ministry of Housing, suggests a broader pattern of transfers from capital to the state and the possible roots of that statistic. A member of the board of directors of the resort scoffed at the
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figure, citing the state’s failure to master the political present of land capture; indeed, the state’s “encouragement” of capture (see Eyre 1997) is cited as a barrier to capital. Though not wholly untrue, this discourse tends to obfuscate the entwinement of informal land tenure with historical geographies of work and the exploitation of labor below its cost (de Janvry 1975). The “barrier” to capital is capital’s own surplus labor. The state as the owner of squatted land is one “restless outcome” (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003) of the agency of the bearers of capital and of those who, though poor, nevertheless have “social power” (Gray 2004) as voters, as political party adherents, as potential blockers of main roads, as labor whose use of land subsidizes the cost to capital of their social reproduction and is also simultaneously embedded in a cultural tradition of refusal. That outcome is in part the state ownership of a majority of land possessed by the ownershipless.

Chart 1 represents a snapshot of work arrangements visible to me at the time of research. A longitudinal understanding of people’s lives would be more enlightening, but was difficult to accomplish in the duration of the field research. As such, this view tends to underemphasize events that occur or vary over the arc of the lifespan: the intermittent contributions of absent parents or migrant work; life events such as serious illnesses, or accidents, or trauma; the cycling between periods of intensive work and those of relative inactivity—intermittently or over the lifespan—and the challenge posed by that fluidity; the mobility between rural and urban space, or property and not-property, pulled by work, or relationships, or the social production of space; and so on. Some of that will however show up in the household-based vignettes that follow.

Chart 2 shows for four “households” how the work of individuals combine to support the reproduction of a group. I place quotes around household because it is an oversimplification: the object of the discussion below and the chart is the accomplishment of life’s work whether or not
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

they cohabitate. Frequently that group is fluid. Chart 2 shows a snapshot at the time of research. For example, several women respondents had baby fathers but the pair were not living together. In Edie’s case, her eldest child lived with his father because that made travel to school easier and cheaper. When the son moved schools however, daily care for him changed households; he came to live with Edie and her current partner and their children. When his father lost his job, his financial contributions to the son’s schooling stopped, and the life’s work of the son’s rearing at least temporarily was no longer shared between households. In chart 2, Miss Grange’s “household” straddles two homes: when Miss Grange, who did live-in domestic work, was away from home for days and weeks at a time, her baby father, also a Tulloch resident, received her three sons into his household, not all of whom were his children. In Mr. M’s case discussed below, his care for his grandchildren enabled his daughter, who lived separately at Tulloch, to work long days; in turn, her wages contributed to the living expenses for him and his youngest daughter who was still in high school.

Image 9: Working a plot, seedlings

Photo by author
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

Image 10: Working a plot, bananas and pineapples with a view

Photo by author
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

**Image 11:** Working a plot, cabbage and the former canefield

**Image 12:** Working a plot, protecting crops from grazing animals

**Image 13:** Working a plot, the main community shop

All photos by author
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

Image 14: Working a plot, pig pen made from reclaimed wood pallets

Image 15: Working a plot, the young farmer looks to his crops
# Miss Jameson: Unit comprised of One Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Dependents</th>
<th>Provider's Industry</th>
<th>Primary work</th>
<th>Temporality of primary work</th>
<th>Primary, Industry</th>
<th>Secondary work</th>
<th>Temporality of secondary work</th>
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<th>Landbased (Household)</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Source of tenure</th>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Born customary inherited</td>
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<td>plot</td>
<td>I inactive</td>
<td>Y Y</td>
<td>Y Y</td>
<td>Y Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Partner customary partner partner's parent</td>
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<td>m</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>hospitality</td>
<td>job</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>house</td>
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<td>fishing</td>
<td>plot</td>
<td>PT ongoing</td>
<td>animals</td>
<td>Y Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Born customary inherited</td>
<td>self, parent, grand</td>
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<td>m</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>transport</td>
<td>job</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Born customary inherited</td>
<td>grand</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Miss Grange: Unit comprised of Two Households

| 25 | 41  | f      | self       | unemployed    | domestic     | job          | manufacture   | Y            |                             |                   | Y Y Partner capture partner's parent |
| G  | 20s | m      | child      | unemployed    | domestic     | plot         | farming       | Y            |                             |                   | Y Y                   | Y       | Y       | Born customary inherited | grand                                      |
| H  | 12  | m      | child      | unemployed    | domestic     | FT school    | Y            |                             |                   |                      | Y Y                   | Y       | Y       | Born customary inherited | grand                                      |
| I  | 60s | m      | ex, baby father | unemployed    | farming      | plot         | fishing       | Y            |                             |                   | Y Y                   | Y       | Y       | Born customary inherited | parent,grand                          |

# Mr. M: Unit comprised of Two Households

| 15 | 61  | m      | self       | daughter      | tourism      | dependent D  | job          | D agriculture | Y Y Belmont capture here | self, parent, grand |
| 21 | 23  | f      | daughter   |             | tourism      | job          | FT ongoing   | tourism       | Y Y Belmont capture here | self, parent, grand |
| J  | ?   | m      | son-in-law |             | no information |             |              |              | Y Y                   |                          |
| J  | 16  | f      | daughter   |             |              |              |              |              | Y Y                   |                          |
| K  | 2   | m      | grand      |              |              |              |              |              | Y Y                   |                          |
| L  | 5   | f      | grand      |              |              |              |              |              | Y Y                   |                          |

# Mr. W: Unit comprised of One Household

| 10 | 67  | m      | self       | partner      | shop         | plot         | FT ongoing   | shop          | plot         | FT ongoing   | farming     | Y Y Y       | Outsider capture employer self |
| N  | 60s | m      | grand      |              | partner      | farming      | plot         | FT ongoing   | shop          | D manufacture | Y Y       | Y Y       | Y Y Born capture parent parent |
| O  | grand|         | parent+    | school       | FT ongoing   | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y Born capture parent grand  |
| P  | grand|         | parent+    | school       | FT ongoing   | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y Born capture parent grand  |
| Q  | grand|         | parent+    | school       | FT ongoing   | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y         | Y Y Born capture parent grand  |

**KEY**

- I: Intermittent
- S: Seasonal
- P: Maternity
- D: Dislocated
- FT: Fulltime
- PT: Partime

Chart 2: Life's Work of Four Households
Miss Jameson lives in a two-bedroom house at Tulloch Yard with her boyfriend, her brother, three children, and her mother. Compared to Shiloah, Tulloch Yard is smaller and more close-knit. A cluster of houses has been there for generations, near to a great house, now fallen apart, where Jacob, who was in his sixties, remembered a white planter family had lived. Miss Jameson’s family had lived within a few yards of her current house for generations, and within the expanded “here” of the estate environs for as long as anyone could remember. Her household was one of a few that showed the accumulation of several people’s work over time: a spring that fed a catchment pool, a rainwater collection tank, a water distribution system to crops and household, a modest concrete house with an addition under construction, fruit trees, a garden of rotating crops, a pig pen that held several pigs, pens for goats and chickens, a driveway paved little by little out of the daily leftovers of mixer trucks during a nearby construction project. They also had a tiled concrete bathroom with a flush toilet, shower, and sink—rare at Tulloch.

Miss Jameson’s modest concrete house stands alongside older sugar board concrete houses and newer wooden houses—about ten in total—on a gentle incline around a single, mostly unpaved, driveway that makes a small loop around an open area. Tracks lead up the hillside to a few other houses, and the hillside land lease plots beyond. Most of these houses are occupied by Miss Jameson’s family members: uncles, an aunt, and their children and grandchildren. Behind the houses are plots where some residents grow short- and medium-term crops such as bananas, plantains, cabbage, calaloo, etc. As is common in Jamaica, the trees around the houses are fruit trees: ackee, june plum, mango, breadfruit, etc. Goats graze the land between the houses and the highway where the cane had been up until the mid-90s, and chickens wander around the houses somehow coexisting with the cats and the mother’s dog. At some point Miss Jameson boasted

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130 See chart 2.
that, given all the produce from the land, the only food they have to buy is oil, salt, and flour. However, when I accompanied her food shopping in the nearby town, the reality appeared different from that self-image. Some part of the diet of chickens, goats, and pigs are store-bought; some kinds of produce are bought from higglers at the open-air market in a nearby town; and grocery store items fill out the less labor-intensive meals of the day.

Over the months I visited with Miss Jameson, the only times I saw her exhausted was whenever I asked her about trying to form the CBO, and after the weekend she spent in and out of the emergency room with her mother. Her mother had a notoriously painful chronic condition for which she was awaiting an operation in the public healthcare system. The following Monday I sat with Miss Jameson in the bathroom as she washed her family’s clothes by hand. From my field notes:

She was seated on the curb of the shower washing clothes in a basin. She had a new hair style—cornrowed up to the crown of her head. She told me to bring a chair, so I fetched one of the plastic hotel chairs from the veranda and navigated it through the house. When I got back to the bathroom she said to open a door which led outside; I would get a nice strong breeze she said—it was half open then—I could swing it open fully and put a wash tub in front of it. She said this side of the house is always cool, smiling. I don’t know if pride is the right word for it; maybe contentment and yes, a kind of pride.

[Later on,] I asked about the construction of the bathroom. She said they had used sea sand and that was why the rebar was rusting and its concrete cover spalling off—because of the salt. I said I was curious because of the texture of the underside of the ceiling. She told me they had laid bamboo as formwork (the ceiling was ridged) and then the mason had flashed mortar on the inside after the formwork was removed. She referred to a finish that some people had on their ceilings with the textured finish and a sparkle to it. At the time, she was standing at the door to the outside and I was looking up at her in the breeze. She was smiling, thinking about the vision for the bathroom, and
seemed a bit wistful as well, as oftentimes dreams are when compared with the outcome. But there was also the sense that it could be like that when she had time, or money, or both, to finish the job. So many things to be done.

Coming home to this place, without sufficient power to run the washing machine she yearned for, still offered respite on a day when she was spent by hours of tending to a sick parent, made triply draining by the challenges of Jamaica’s beleaguered public healthcare system. In partial illustration: in order to receive an operation, family members are required to donate blood. Both Miss Jameson and her brother had spent the better part of a day travelling to Montego Bay and waiting several hours in line to donate, only to find out that since they both were sick at the time they would have to do it again when they recovered. The work of caring for the sick whilst managing the work of accessing public healthcare can easily overwhelm household resources of time.

Her mother’s illness and my research happened to coincide with a period of relative inactivity in Miss Jameson’s work life. Though there have been periods when she has worked incredibly intensively, she is intermittently on leave (due to lack of work) from her fulltime job in construction. Before working in construction, she had been a garment factory worker, another period of intensive work. This industry in Jamaica is long gone—it peaked in the early 1990s. She had worked in a factory with a highly incentivized labor regime: as one of the fastest seamstresses in the factory, she was able to not only take home bonus pay for the amount by which she exceeded the daily quotas, she also worked extra shifts to further add to her income.

During her relative inactivity, her participation in the life’s work of the household entailed cooking; washing; childrearing; watering, weeding, reaping, and planting her crops; feeding the livestock (chickens, goats, and pigs); shopping for household and farm needs; caring for her sick
mother; planning and gathering favors of labor and materials for an addition to relieve the overcrowded bedrooms; and maintaining the spring from which household water was drawn. Occasionally she secured payment to do some tasks in waste management for the nearby hotel.

There were others involved in the work of the household. Miss Jameson’s live-in partner of several years, Chris, had a skill set to expand the infrastructure of the household: for example, plumbing that distributed grey water outside for watering crops and the pig pen, and for washing clothes in a small fallow field. He also works fulltime at a restaurant twenty miles away, and owns a car that he drives to work. Miss Jameson has two sons: a teenager who goes to school fulltime and, when sufficiently harassed by his mother, feeds and waters the animals. The older son is an adult and has a fulltime job at the nearby hotel, one of the few people at Tulloch who do. Miss Jameson’s brother, whose teenage son also lives in the house, works as a bus operator and owns his minibus. This was how their mother was transported back and forth three times to the hospital that weekend. There were also a few daily visitors to the house: Fine, a friend who participated in some of the informal work activities of the household, including the hotel’s waste management, and also cooking and cleaning; and cousin Pat. Pat seemed to visit mostly because she was stressed about the tension of her living situation: her estranged mother had usurped Pat’s possession of her grandparents’ informal tenure when they died. Pat lived in fear that her mother would follow through on the eviction notice she had served Pat after the mother managed to formalize ownership: the adjacent community, Jamestown, had secured regularization under the Operation PRIDE program.

Unlike when I asked Miss Jameson about the negotiations regarding the land, she was enthusiastic and energized when she talked about a period when she was working almost around the clock. When the hotel was under construction she took the opportunity of the influx of people
CHAPTER 4: Social Reproduction at the Margins of Capital

working nearby (some of whom lived temporarily at Tulloch, and most of whom have left) to run a cook shop. She said she became known as the source of a hot breakfast and midday meal that would not only taste good but also digest well. In appreciation, construction workers brought her the concrete mixer’s daily dregs to, over time, make her a paved driveway. This also helped keep their and other customers’ feet free from mud when they queued following a rain. Miss Jameson’s relationship with her boyfriend began during this time: Chris worked on the hotel construction and wooed her with his skilled assistance with her tasks. Their partnership, and later on Edie’s participation, made it possible to run a cook shop whilst they worked fulltime, and sometimes double shifts, in construction.

Miss Jameson:  
[Chris] would come and help me do anything I was doing (a smile in her voice) and true seh mi live alone and that’s how him capture mi heart.

RG: Nice! Good job [Chris]! (both laughing) But him look like him really have a lot of skills.

J: Yeah him have a lot of skills fi true. Yeah, him have a lot of skills. One thing him have a lot of skill. There is nothing [Chris] cannot do. That time him used to drive a truck fi him uncle so him know a lot about vehicle because him used to do mechanic. There is nothing that him don’t know about. Him can do everything. Every likkle thing you take [Chris] on, [Chris] know it. Just that with him, him just know it. A so him stay. And every likkle thing…catch things fast.

[...]

RG: One of the things you said because anything you had he would always come and help you because you were living alone so that’s one of the things you learn about first was all the things he could do.
J: Yeah. Because at that time, I wasn’t working at the [hotel construction] site yet. I was cooking and selling. And then me alone and then [Trevion, her son] was small. [Ken, her other son] was big. [Ken] was working over by the site too […]

So I would get up in the morning, cook and everything and they [construction workers] would get them breakfast and them pay me for it and then come for their lunch and then pay me for it and then sometime in the evening [Chris] would come home and mi go [Port—] and go shopping and then buy drinks to put in the fridge and season up [meat] and then him would come and seh if mi want help and mi seh “yeah, man,” and him will help mi season meat and…

RG: So him can cook too!

J: Yeah! and so like sometime because me go bed so late true mi have to do so much something. And a mi one because at the time Mama was never deh here. Mi madda … where mi madda when deh dem time? So if … she we’en deh here some of the time and some of the time she we’en come over. But Mama wouldn’t help do anything. And my brother wasn’t there [he joined the household later] so you know I would have to get up early in the morning, by three o’clock, four o’clock. And then I start fry chicken cook peas and so forth to cook rice and peas and so fi lunch and meanwhile mi have a pot on the fire cooking and dumpling for breakfast [to sell] and so forth.

So he [Chris] would come over and help me and I would say ok. And sometime me cooking the breakfast and him frying the chicken same time […] that by the end of the day now we can just have it up and lunch ready and so forth.

[…] Then mi start work over the site then. Start work right in a the evening, because in a the evening them did have evening shift and morning shift. So I would go on the evening shift and carry mi igloo with mi drinks and mi phone card [to sell] and everything and it sell through the night man. When drinks done again I come back again and up and … for them time them have one likkle something so
them call it a Kencat—that's a likkle something with a grader? And then the guy
them would drive it come carry mi over here come get drinks and liquor and mi
gone again man! So, it was nice and it was fun. Yeah. So.

J: And then [Chris] would work in the day now and then mi would come over in
the evening and go a [Port—] and get what mi fi get like the meat and fish if a
meat me a cook tomorrow and whatsoever and prepare now and then in a the
night mi gone back a work and then [Chris] start night work now too. So the two
of wi deh a night work and then when we get up in the morning we have to cook
again and look after breakfast [to sell] and him gone a work and then mi gone a
work inna the evening again.

RG: What time in the evening shift start?

J: Like six o’clock.

J: Fine! When we used to go a factory a night what time we used to start, no six
o’clock?

Fine: Yeah six o’clock in a evening.

J: Yeah we would go in six o’clock in a the evening and we stop work twelve, one
o’clock.

Fine: And come off two o’clock [a.m.].

RG: And then you start cook at four in the morning?!

J: Yeah and as mi come mi start cook. [Chris] would get some sleep and
meanwhile mi cooking.

RG: So when you sleep?

J: And then in the twelve o’clock [lunchtime] now after I share everything then mi
go go sleep. And then mi haffi sleep then go, go by six o’clock mi get up again
and mi gone a work!
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RG: But [Trevion] was young! So who was taking care of him?

J: Mi madda, because mi madda was here so mama would take care of [Trevion] and everybody would come around and help me so mi never have no problem with [Trevion]. And then that time meet [John]. And [Edie] and [John, Edie’s partner] did live in the house too so ... like [Edie] wouldn’t do night shift. Because true she work in the day. And she seh she cyaan manage it fa she no good like wi. 131 So in the evening now when [Edie] come home we would left work five o’clock so when [Edie] come home now mi would write the [shopping] list with whatever mi want and [Edie] go inna [Port—] and pick it up fa mi and come back and [Edie] would pack them in the fridge, [Edie] would cut up the meat and season it fi mi meanwhile mi gone to work so a [Edie] and then when fortnight come and we collect now I would give [Edie] a money.

J: So ... that’s how we used to work now and when I collect the money and so mi give [Edie] a likkle money out of it and that’s how we work. It was nice, it was fun. We would have a lot of fun. A lot of fun.

RG: So in comparison now is quiet.

J: Yeah.

RG: So yuh enjoying the rest or you restless to be busy like that again.

J: No, restless. I want to busy like that again.

As Miss Jameson took the opportunity to work double shifts, her partner, mother, and friend all aided in making use of the simultaneous opportunity to temporarily expand the plot work of the household, whilst still attending to the always necessary reproductive labor of caring for children, the home, and the daily needs of its householders. The participation of willing strangers—for example, to bring her home from work to restock the mobile “igloo” shop she

131 “[Edie] said she can’t manage it [working day and night shift] because she’s not as good as we are.” Good here refers to stamina.
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brought with her to her job—points to the socialization beyond the home of the labor of side-gigs. This strategy—working very intensively when one is able, facilitated by the work of others—is one of the ways that low rates of return to labor and the intermittent nature of working a plantation is managed. Working double and triple shifts joins working a plot in enabling the ownershipless (and other Jamaicans) to be available when needed and not die (or at least not die all at once) when not.

It was during this time that the notices were served. Miss Jameson’s work along with other residents to negotiate an outcome other than dispossession, and her leadership in the attempt to form the CBO, overlapped the period in which she worked triple shifts. While she describes the period as “fun,” the work elicited by the eviction stands in contrast. Regarding that work, she is left feeling frustrated and exhausted. I will return to the life’s work of trying to bring into being new community structures and the associated conduct required of residents in the section below entitled “Teleological Time and the Erasure of Violence.”

Similar to the way that the work of others made Miss Jameson’s triple shift possible, Mr. M’s care of his grandchildren (see chart 2) enabled his daughter Tiffany—one of the three respondents at Tulloch who had fulltime jobs—to travel thirty miles to work second shift in a hotel kitchen, which meant she was away from home for twelve hours a day, six days a week.

Mr. M: So when time she go work now I’m response for the children them. I sure response for the children. Yes. She leave out … she leave one o’clock in the day and come back twelve, one or so in the night.

RG: Oh wow. Ok. So her children are in school now [at the time of the interview]?

Mr. M: Yeah.

RG: So when they come from school that’s when the grandpa duty starts.
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Mr. M: Yeah, my duty that time!

RG: Ok (laughing)! But you smiling so ... you like it.

Mr. M: I love it (laughing). I love it. A night time? Me and them ... up to last night the three of us just go up. I like it man. And them love me too.

RG: How old are they?

Mr. M: One is five, and one is two.

Mr. M had been dislocated first from his work as a driver in agriculture, then in construction, and later on from his job as a groundskeeper at the nearby hotel. He had also been a fisherman but his boat had been stolen. I asked him to tell me about his livelihood.

Mr. M: Livelihood now? Like living here?

RG: Yeah, how you live? Like you have some fishing or farming or you do some selling or you get something from your children, or from government, or what?

Mr. M: Well right now how I living now. Right now my living is one way here now cause remember I did have my boat and them take it away. My children now will give me whatsoever she have. Give we help, yeah. That’s how I’m living now. Cause I’m not getting anything from the government right now. One of them time in last month I went down by ... the NIS [National Insurance Scheme] office and when I was talking to a lady she tell me that I could be on one program because I was fifty so ... is my daughter now to carry some papers go down there.

RG: What program is that?

Mr. M: Ahm ... what you get some benefits from the government every other month. Say like one [JA] $3,000 them way they.

RG: And that’s like for a sugar worker, or over a certain age or...?
Mr. M: Yeah over a certain age. He also withdrew his NHT contributions periodically to supplement his cash income.\(^{132}\) When the children were at school, Mr. M was sometimes able to collect fruit from trees in the hillside plots and sell it at the roadside shop, sometimes in cooperation with Miss Y, who was at her roadside shop selling fruits, drinks, and alcohol on a daily basis. He lamented that he used to go fishing, but his boat had been stolen. When I saw him briefly in 2016, he had been able to obtain a replacement canoe, which he rowed out to sea on a daily basis.

Mr. M had played a similar role in his family as a teen, missing out on school to become the caretaker for his younger siblings while his grandmother and mother worked for the estate.

RG: So from what age did you do work on the property?

Mr. M: Fifteen. From fifteen. 

RG: So before that you were in school?

Mr. M: Yeah I was in school but not all the while ca’ is plenty of we mi mother did have you know? And mi was the first one so really ah mi just have to tek care of them meanwhile them down there in a di cane piece and do hard work and thing.

RG: Ok, so you were looking out for the younger brothers and sisters.

Mr. M: Yeah, bathe them send them a school, meet them to come in, give them food so ’til the old lady come in from work and ting, you know?

RG: And so she was working on the estates?

Mr. M: Yeah, yeah. Cut cane, throw down cane, do every kind of work.

\(^{132}\) For those who are priced out of the subsidized housing market, their NHT contributions act only as deferred wages they can collect on a rolling basis, eight years after they were deposited. So every year, one can withdraw the contributions for a year eight years prior.
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I spoke to Tiffany on her day off as she prepared dinner for her family. Standing outside to chop callaloo, every now and then she would dip into a small enclosure behind her house to tend to the pots on the fire. At age eight, while her mother was doing live-in domestic work, Tiffany went to live in another parish with her mother’s family, but returned to Tulloch at age sixteen. She had earned four subjects in the external examinations that, in addition to a diploma, are the terminal certifications of Jamaican high school. These achievements meant she did not have to take an entrance exam when she applied to a HEART program. A HEART certificate (earned in particular vocational areas) is now a universal prerequisite for employment in the mass tourism industry. The job in the hotel kitchen was her first, at twenty-three years old; she started working after having her two children.

Tiffany was critical of the terms of her employment: though she has been there for two years, she was still considered a temporary worker. She has an eight-month contract; after eight months, she is given two weeks off with pay, during which time she has to enquire whether she will be rehired. She is not worried that she won’t be rehired—she is a “good employee”—but bristles at the injustice, which she says is common in the industry. “It’s not fair, but everybody is doing it so you just have to…” This is how hotels evade the local labor laws that require the payment of redundancy to staff. Contract workers are not considered staff, but temporary employees. Legally, the two-week “vacation” acts to terminate employment.

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133 When she went inside, her niece and nephew (who lived next door) took the opportunity to draw in the book in which I was taking notes, and ask me questions. The boy asked me if I spoke Spanish. He was about eleven. I said no. He looked quizzically at me. I asked him why he thought I did. He explained, because I am white (he perceived me to be). I was as confused as he was. Eventually I chalked his association up to the fact that the nearby hotel is a Spanish chain. When I occasioned the weekly interdepartmental soccer matches to watch Miss Jameson’s elder son and Edie’s partner play, it appeared as if all of the menial staff were Black Jamaicans, while the majority of white-collar workers were white Spanish-speaking foreigners. It seems that this transnationalization of the tourism industry is noticed by the young.
Tiffany was the only person among three interrelated households—her father’s, aunt’s, and her own—who was currently employed. The three households totaled six children ranging in ages from one to seventeen years old.

In addition to these household strategies, the lack of infrastructure—the topic to which we next turn—renders life’s work at the field site more or less efficient. Additionally, to the extent that flooding (the absence of storm water management), immobility (the absence of passable roads and bridges), inadequate delivery of electricity, and absence of toilets and running water, all fall short of what is considered socially necessary infrastructure, these absences also produce group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death (Gilmore 2007a, 28).

**Water, Power, and Shit: So Close…**

One of those early science lessons in school is the water cycle—diagrammed on a slice of the globe, showing water as it cycles through evaporation and condensation cycles, consumption and renewal, atmosphere and soil. In terms of ecology, Tulloch’s primary lack seems to be an infrastructure that contains these cycles: delivery of water for household use, separation of sewage from potable water, and containment of surface runoff. Water is all around, and yet largely unavailable. This is truer at Shiloah; Tulloch Yard has a spring maintained by Miss Jameson’s family for generations.

To get to Shiloah from Tulloch Yard, you can either walk about a mile down the coastal highway or you can walk through the “bush,” tall grasses interrupted by stands of trees at a depression, hardly a creek, that is wet during rains. From the highway at Shiloah, one then walks

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134 See map 2.
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a quarter mile along a dirt track, drivable when dry, across a flat where cane used to grow. On
the far side, this track is crossed by another. From this point, both tracks are lined with houses,
beginning with the two that had housed the estate managers. As the track from the road continues
inland, lined on the one side by a dry river bed, and on the other by houses, the land starts to
slope up. One passes the sugar board houses on a hillock, continues on to cross a makeshift
bridge—made when a newer resident earned acceptance into the community by using his
employer’s tractor to place a hunk of concrete across a narrow point of the river bed—before the
houses end, and what is now called a road, though still dirt, winds its way up the hill to Belmont.
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Image 16: Power, the serendipitous transformer

Photo by author
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**Image 17:** Power, meters clustered at the roadside  
*Photo by author*

**Image 18:** Water, the contaminated well  
*Photo by author*
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**Image 19:** A household’s water-gathering and -distributing infrastructure  
Photo by author
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**Image 20:** A household’s water-gathering and -distributing infrastructure   Photo by author

**Image 21:** A household’s water-gathering and -distributing infrastructure   Photo by author
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Image 22: A household’s water-gathering and -distributing infrastructure  
Photo by author
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**Image 23:** A household’s water-gathering and -distributing infrastructure  
Photo by author
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Water, Power: Power for Water

In addition to its not-urban attributes, Tulloch also has attributes of the not-rural. Miss Grange was sent to live with family members who had informal tenure in an area, which, like Tulloch, also afforded access to better schooling. Miss Grange said of her time spent living there that it gave her the chance to be more “ladylike” than in the rural farming community where her parents lived.

Miss Grange: So grade 4 I was in [Port —] primary school so you know the behavior dress code changing everything, you know. Now it becomes a lady, a little ladylike. Alright, livity—you have you proper bathroom … now you nah bathe in a no pan so again.

RG: [Almond Pen] was bathe in pan\textsuperscript{135}?

Miss G: Right, you go to the river and all that at [Almond Pen] so ... now you have you shower. Your hair can comb properly so, you nah get no big foot you get to go … you can wear shoes now and socks go school. Uniform iron. When you deh a [Almond Pen] you never get iron, just wash and, you know…

A water main flanks the adjacent highway, and like the asphalt road, zips by on its way to hotels and those whose land titles enable them to be individual subscribers without state advocacy or welfare. Within a year before my research began, a branch line had been built \textit{through} Shiloah up the hill to the Belmont village, but lay empty pending an electricity branch line that will enable the water to be pumped to villages up the hill. Whether or not this branch will be tapped at Tulloch for a community standpipe—the typical way that the state supplies water to the self-built housing of the poor—is as of yet controversial and undetermined: some residents think that

\textsuperscript{135} Without piped water, people bathe using water in containers.
other residents’ contention over where the amenity should be located deterred public officials from further engagement.

Despite its presence, residents fear that the branch water line may remain inaccessible—there, but not there. I should say some residents fear, because others remain confident that the barrier was the practical matter of delayed power infrastructure.

Miss S: Yah man them put in pipeline. from here to [Spring Mount]. I’ run from yah so already go [Belmont]. It done to [Belmont] already. And them fix the road go … no vehicle couldn’t drive pon i’ and now vehicle can drive pon i’ go a Bethlehem and go back go [Spring Mount] way.

RG: Well actually I knew about the pipe line but when you seh they … came and look to see where they going to drop the post…

Miss S: Yes. for them seh a not next month. What we ina January? Ina February or ina March … a supposed to March them tell them seh them a go drop the post.

RG: Ok! So if they do that then you supposed to be able to get light\textsuperscript{136} over here then.

Miss S: Yes.

RG: Ok, alright. Ahm … so … and what about water?

Miss S: We will get water man! For them seh when them done with the pipe we supposed to get water. We buy wi line and get water in our yard.

RG: Ok.

Miss S: Mi nuh know what them a do yet. For the time … we haffi wait and see what them a do.

\textsuperscript{136} electricity
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I am pointing to the variation in anxiety/explanation because of what it shows about the daily life of informal tenure, how vulnerability to dispossession structures the accumulation of labor in the landscape (or its absence) and the complexity in state and resident relations/structures of feeling.

If each household *buys a line* then they will get water.

In Philadelphia, the pipe connecting the rowhouse where I live to the municipal water line under the street outside is the responsibility of the property owner: if it breaks they have to dig up the sidewalk and the road, repair the pipe, and repair the public way. In Philadelphia, I have always lived on a street that ran on top of the socially necessary utilities: water and sewer, electricity, natural gas, telephone, and now internet. In Jamaica, although one municipal engineer told me that it is illegal to provide service to someone who does not hold a title, the practice I observed at Tulloch is that if you can pay for the connection, you will be able to obtain formal utility service. Shiloah happens to be adjacent to a former temporary manufacturing plant that paid to have a “pan,” a transformer, installed on the passing electrical wires. The transformer allows for a branch connection to be made. But this is still a quarter mile from where most houses are located—a distance across which the quality of power degrades, as the blowout of Joan’s fridge attests. This means that each resident who has power has paid to run an individual line at least a quarter of a mile from the road to their house (or daisy-chained off of a neighbor); a cluster of meters hang on several poles converging at the transformer.

Public discourse has it that informal residents are by definition thieves of utilities, and that they are to blame in large part for Jamaica’s painfully high utility prices, of electricity in particular.  

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137 Yes, settlements do make illegal connections. I attended a regularly scheduled police-led youth group meeting in one informal settlement after the utility company had come through to disconnect the illegal branch line. As the generators of more fortunate residents hummed, the meeting start was delayed while we all—police, youth, and
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From an interview with a senior engineer at the power company I learned that per state regulation of the utility, the cost to extend the infrastructure cannot be automatically rolled into a generalized rate hike; these capital outlays, governed by the imperative of cost recovery, are extended based on density—judged to be sufficient potential revenue in a target area to offset cost. In areas where there is not judged to be sufficient potential revenue, potential subscribers can pay for longer distances to the connection point, or, as in the case of Shiloah, wait for development targeted at someone else to serendipitously bring the branch to them. In some areas, the state will pay the cost of this extensions through a program called the Rural Electrification Program, which the engineer informed me is highly partisan; both parties provide power to areas dominated by their adherents. Shiloah hasn’t garnered the attention of either the utility or the party. But the water branch line and its pump house did cause the Water Commission to “drop poles,” or install electrical poles, bringing the amenity within budget of some residents. So, the provision of branch lines in Tulloch is significant. Some residents have power; others do not. Water may also someday soon be within reach—feet measured in one’s ability to pay—of the residents, thanks to the routing of the line to serve several communities up the hill.

Another potential water source is ground water. The homes sit on a high water table—which easily feeds a spring if tapped by shallow wells, a fact that resident farmers put to use in self-built irrigation systems. Rainwater is also used, although—in a tropical climate where households of all classes often have rainwater catchment tanks at least for backup in case of problems with public outages (which do occur from time to time, often as a result of heavy rains that overwhelm treatment facilities or damage supply systems)—at Tulloch only a few houses

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I stood in semidarkness waiting for light to be reconnected, illegally. Yet, public discourse is divorced from the reality that some “squatters” do have formal utility connections.
had tanks. It is incongruous that when rain falls these waterless houses are adjacent to flood water as it percolates into the ground on the large flat area that used to grow cane.

And so daily life at Tulloch involves transporting potable water from a standpipe over a mile down the highway, or catching water from a nearby contaminated spring for use as grey water, or for treatment with household bleach—an inexact science relying on smell and visual cues. This hole—dug to allow water to rise to the surface, the soil retained with a large diameter concrete pipe (work done by a temporary manufacturing plant)—is called a spring by some and a well by others in the quotes that follow. Miss S describes:

Miss S: Them put one pipe up a [Quayside] deh so and the pickney dem\textsuperscript{138} will walk with pan go full drinking water but wi have one spring deh so what we take up the washing water like fi wash plate, gi the goat them and wash clothes. But wi carry drinking water or wi pay car go fi the drinking water up so and full up the pan.

RG: What about bathing water, which one you use?

Miss S: Bathe, we can use that one bathe [indicates the spring...] but wi still use bleach in a it. All when a spring but when you put the bleach in a it, it turn, like it would a look brownish but nothing nuh do it still. Water in a this river—you go further up you can bathe in a it same way.

RG: Ok, mi nev ... yeah actually somebody did tell mi seh them go up there and wash clothes and so …

Miss S: Yes you can go up there go wash, go up there same place. River water well pretty\textsuperscript{139} same way ... go further up.

\textsuperscript{138} the children
\textsuperscript{139} very pretty
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It used to be that water was delivered to the site for industries that are no longer active: a large lessor who grew cane after the estate was nationalized and a temporary manufacturing plant. Traces of these land uses persist: the plant had dug the spring that is now contaminated and the estate used to maintain site drainage channels that now contain storm water only as far as the base of the hill. So the lack is not simply that development is yet to come; like the hillside plots formerly occupied and supplied with piped water as discussed in chapter 2, the present in Tulloch is an ellipsis, a moment between things that have abandoned the site and the promise of new and improved roads, new water branch lines, and new resorts.

*Shit*

One day when I arrived there was some anxiety—a Public Health Services field officer had come, visiting houses to see who had toilet facilities. The local public health office used to assist the poor in building a pit latrine. However, the program has been defunded, either because of a general contraction in social welfare spending or because this was now an outlawed sewage disposal method. Did the field visit signal some impending enforcement? Miss Jameson was chastising her friend Edie, a newer resident, for not “building a toilet.” Edie was visibly anxious but, as Miss Jameson critiqued, she was not a person who responded to fear with decisive action. It can be hard to be Miss Jameson’s friend: she is tireless, cheerful, confident, and charming; able to organize modest resources to visible outcomes; and at times impatient with others who are less able to do the same. That Miss Jameson’s family had been in the same place for so long is probably not the only explanation for their accumulation of fixed labor in the landscape, but it helps. Their household toilet was connected to a soak away pit, an underground catchment (i.e., not open to the air) that allows liquid waste to be absorbed into the surrounding earth. This
sewage disposal method is one of those that environmental regulations have outlawed, but it is a relative luxury at Tulloch.

Insecurity about the eviction structures, in part, residents’ willingness to fix their own labor in the land. The most financially accessible infrastructural fixes—pit latrines and springs (fed by digging a shallow well)—are mutually exclusive because pit latrines allow the passage of raw sewage into the ground water. In practice however, public health officers encourage the construction of latrines. Mr. Jackson had begun to dig out a pit in his yard when the notices were served, but stopped. He pointed to a piece of corrugated zinc that covered the hole. By this point he had given up waiting to see what would happen and was resolved to finish the uncompleted task.

Sewage is one of the prime reasons why informal settlements are thought of as a threat to the environment. Sewage disposal is the subject of a law that “binds the Crown,” meaning the state is required to act to protect the environment from contamination so, regardless of any other factor, improper sewage disposal can trigger state action against informal settlements as it did at the Pebble Cove hotel. This is not just about preventing “kiting,” that is, disposal of human feces in far flung plastic bags, or the practice another resident called “bike,” after the position taken by the rider of a crotch rocket motorcycle,\textsuperscript{140} used to “shit a bush.” Pit latrines and soak-away pits are \textit{also} in violation of laws to protect the government, a fact that the director of the Squatter Management Unit says makes it even more difficult to do the work of regularizing informal settlements: the systems that do meet regulations are prohibitively expensive (or resources piteously scarce). A civil servant at NEPA,\textsuperscript{141} the agency with responsibility for realizing the

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\textsuperscript{140} A slang term for racing motorcycles whose riders must lean far forward in a bent-legged crouching position.

\textsuperscript{141} National Environment and Planning Agency
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terms of the National Resource Conservation Authority Act (1991), said the ground water under
Kingston was contaminated due to the thousands of “soak-away pits” in homes of all classes.
Homeowners in Kingston are now required to establish connections to the municipal sewage
system as it is extended through the city at significant expense to each homeowner.

Like the deferral of engagement over where to locate the future standpipe, the handicap for many
amenities—the contamination of the spring and the removal of a roadside standpipe—are blamed
by some residents on others’ lack of civility. The contamination of the spring is attributed to the
practice of washing clothes and bathing immediately adjacent. As Mr. M put it:

Mr. M: Well, really … water is here, water is here. Is only we is the problem with it,
don’t treat it good. Yeah cause water over there you know. We had them dig a
well over there […] what water could a drink. But the people abuse it man, mess
it up, mess it up. Right yah now not even my mouth I would take it and wash.
That … water in a that hole over there … yeah but younger generation them
mess it up … some will tek and but mi nah tek it and wash mi mout.

And regarding the roadside standpipe—public bathing at a nearby roadside standpipe is blamed
for the water utility removing it, lest passers-by on the highway find the sight of naked Black
bodies performing ablutions in the open to be too unsettling to the panorama of the highway—at
its groundbreaking, the highway had been heralded by the then prime minister as a beautiful
thing, not to be marred by squatters.142 The presence of feces in the riverbed, which one must
cross to travel from one to another side of Shiloah, is blamed for the parish council not
conducting river training (which would alleviate flooding) and for the end of engagement with
civil society advocates. The association between less morally appropriate residents and the acts

142 This occasion is the first mention I found of a “zero-tolerance” policy towards squatting.

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by agents of the state, utility companies, or members of civil society is unsubstantiated. Life at Tulloch is rife with such intrasettlement explanations for daily disappointments over how long things remain in a state of “so close, and yet so far.” Nevertheless, the fact that similar causes are cited by residents for the persistence of their insecurity at least sheds some light on the structures of feeling that appear in internal community dynamics. I will return to this.

Who Is a Squatter?

Gary’s verandah was one of a few gathering points in Tulloch. Men, many of them not very far beyond high school, hung out there, played dominoes, often with the TV on in the background. When I would come to visit, Gary—a man in his fifties—would entertain the young domino players by “lyricsing” me. In addition to offering to “give” me a baby, a Maroon baby, he wanted me to know that in this, the man yard, only men live here, and all cooking and washing was done by men. He also wanted me to know that while it was true that they were gambling, the bids were low. These are the kinds of things that the kind of Jamaican man Gary appears to be—something to do with Black virility—says to the kind of Jamaican woman I appear to be—a “nice brown lady,” approachable, with resources, not quite able to leave respectability behind, though might be coaxed into temporarily skirting it, may be prone to judgement of “juggling”143 because respectability, but may also be sympathetic. Probably cannot cook, wash, or clean very well … or do any juggling. Both of these gendered subject positions have everything to do with race, color, and class, and the skills one gains in life.

143 All the ways in which people manage, stretch, and mobilize meager resources; the term doesn’t have the association with illegality that “hustling” connotes.
Gary had come to Tulloch because “ants follow fat,” that is, to be with a woman. His baby mother now lives overseas, and their teenaged son lives with Gary. Like many Jamaicans, several of the Tulloch residents I interviewed have a family member overseas, some had been in guest worker programs in the United States, and remittances figure in the livelihood of the place.

Fracturing via “Rights”

Something Gary was less eager for me to know about him is that he had lived on family land before coming to Tulloch. When I asked why he thought I wanted to know whether the place he had moved from was family land, he responded that I probably would think it meant he had land so he could move, go somewhere else. In addition to a glimpse into Gary’s thoughts about me, his response points to a complex legal and moral terrain anticipated by residents that produce certain lacunae in the narrations of their life histories. Other interviews had similar moments of hesitation in which the speaker navigated facts of their life that would undermine access to one or another basis on which they are or might be recognized as legitimate. The facts through which the ownershipless are recognized as legitimate subjects of various paths to regularization or relocation are often mutually exclusive. For instance, in order to be a beneficiary of the Operation PRIDE program, one had to be “landless.” Various bits of land to which people may have access are thought to threaten eligibility, particularly ironic if one has been dispossessed by the decay of public infrastructure (for which there doesn’t appear to be much recourse).

Family land is a common form of tenure in the Caribbean that does not appear in the legal code. It has been much written about and discussed, particularly in the anthropological literature. Jean Besson (1984a) has labored to valorize the practice, describing it as an inalienable, jointly held tenure formed when a forbear bequeathed land to all his/her descendants through will or oral
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tradition. For Besson, it is definitional that the field is unlimited cognatic descendants who hold the land undivided and in common; I don’t care to rehearse that debate here (but see Crichlow 1994; Maurer 1997). I refer to this practice because it demonstrates the embeddedness of subjectivity in land. As Edith Clarke wrote, land after slavery was “both the symbol and reality of freedom” (1999, 22). Besson says, “these tiny plots of land ... are imbued with an unlimited capacity for sustaining ever-increasing generations of descendants...” (1987, 14). In other words, there may be many more people with claims to a plot than might actually use it. Besson argues that in a condition of land scarcity,\textsuperscript{144} family land maximizes the availability of a sense of personhood—rooted in the land—for all kin. The kinship group’s eternal stake in the plot, its symbolic availability, conflicts with its use as a short-term economic asset. Besson’s take is more nostalgic (and her version of nostalgia is respectable) than popular feeling in Jamaica. Family land has served an economic purpose (as safety net or housing) and a symbolic one.

On the other hand, underemphasized by Besson’s treatment is that family land becomes overcrowded, and disputes over partial possession and the fruits of the land are common. Regarding a house spot on family land offered to her by a family member, Janet said:

Janet: Mi uncle we’en gi wi one house spot. But too much ... everybody wan’ bundle up one place. It nuh look good. It nuh look good. You understand me? \textit{It don’t look good.}

RG: Not sure I understand you, what you mean it don’t look good?

Janet: The whole family bundle up, mother and daughter and granny and pickney, old pickney all of them bangle up ina one house.

\textsuperscript{144} Scarcity of land available in small parcels; there is no shortage of underutilized large parcels.
Contest over family land is also evidenced by Janet’s experience. Janet was offered a house spot on another parcel of family land by a cousin who asked her to look after the graves of family members there. Janet says the house she built was set on fire by another cousin who was also living on the land. From there she embarked on a series of attempts to find somewhere to live including: attempts to access state patronage, and to set her name down for house in a nearby National Housing Trust scheme; and participation in land rushes, similar to the events at Tulloch in which people not from there had “penned up land,” and were quickly evicted (see chapter 2). In Janet’s case the parcel was “owned”—possibly captured—by a prominent developer who was able to secure the assistance of police in evicting those involved in the land invasion. She arrived at Tulloch by making her case—a single mother of four who lost everything in the house fire—to the office of the local minister of parliament, where she was told that she should try to settle at Tulloch, because it was government-owned. Turns out the PNP delegate who lives there is also her family member; he said it is in this role that he had the authority to override other residents’ resistance to her establishing a new house spot, while she lived in a house at Tulloch abandoned by someone else. There are many at Tulloch who would like to establish new households, to spread out on the land, but feel constrained by the threat of eviction.\footnote{Residents have been told not to spread out, not to encroach on the flat land.}

In distinction to the emphasis of Besson and the emphasis on Black Jamaicans’ desire for property in a tradition of literature on Jamaican land tenure (e.g., Clarke 1999), it is important to note that informal tenure has similarly served as a safety net, sometimes from family land and sometimes (surprisingly) from property that due to shifts in the geographies of work and infrastructure, no longer “makes sense” for daily life, as in Miss S’s case where, due to the decay...
of infrastructure, her mother’s land was left without running water, but subject to isolation by riverbeds rendered unfordable during the rains discussed in chapter 2.

Another avenue to legitimate possession, to ownership, is *adverse possession*. In order to obtain a possessory title, one has to have been in *continuous* open possession of the land, without molestation (being asked to leave) by the paper titleholder for a period of twelve years on private land or sixty years on government land. Significantly, it is only the duration of the first year that one is committing a criminal act: trespass, an act passed in 1851, thirteen years after emancipation, and during the era when the struggle over land sought to establish who owned the labor power of Black people. And so when people say they are from “here,” they were *born* “here,” in addition to the stretched spatiality of belonging discussed in chapter 2, “here” also accomplishes the implication that their presence on the land has been continuous. The very livelihood mobility (occupational multiplicity, straddling figurative *plots* and *plantations*) in which ownershipless-ness is sedimented undermines the capacity to maintain adverse possession, throwing one continually back into criminal trespass as life cycle events rack up.

To those who are *lessees of Project Land Lease*, the not-yet-extinguished lease terms appear as another possible entrée into recognized legitimacy. As such, the land reform program abandoned decades ago maintains a significance for residents in that they hope it is a way to distinguish themselves from the term “unauthorized occupants.” As lessees, Tulloch residents tap into a moral economy, because there is little legal significance: the leased plots are mostly unoccupied, and inaccessible having reverted to “bush,” a process spurred by infrastructural decay, as we saw in chapter 2. However, a lessee has rights that are circumscribed by the contract they entered; while obtaining a lease formalizes tenure, it also makes eviction more straightforward. This fact is put to use by the Jamaica Railway Corporation in its efforts at managing its land holdings so
that they may be sold unencumbered, smoothing the path to a hoped for future divestiture. The
JRC approaches those who have exercised possession of JRC land beyond one year (after
capturers cease being criminal trespassers) and offers to lease the land, which means that terms
for sale can be set in the lease that will be attractive to any investors the JRC is able to attract to
its mostly defunct railway. It is my impression from the conversations I had with residents of
three settlements (on Crown, JRC, and privately owned land) that it is not commonly understood
that entry into a contract with the paper titleholder may extinguish rights held by an adverse
possessor because entering into an agreement with the paper owner acknowledges their
possession. In fact, everyone thought that the term limit (the twelve or sixty years) only gained
them *first preference to buy*, which in a situation of scarcity of land available for purchase in
small parcels, is a valuable asset in itself.

During the negotiations, the CBO leaders were asked to collect names of all those who lived at
Tulloch and send the list to the landowning agency. Residents were told at that point they were
responsible to keep others from establishing tenure. Mr. W says incredulously regarding this
demand, a sentiment shared by others, how am I to tell someone not to move on government land
and it’s government land I’m living on? Regardless of whether residents act on this exhortation,
the list will presumably structure who is eligible for any future relocation or regularization
agreement.

The above discussion refers to family land, Project Land Lease, and adverse possession in
service of thinking through how mutually exclusive legal rights split residents into roles, making
it difficult to tell a story about oneself that anticipates a means through which one can secure
legitimacy. But how can any one of these roles that might be rewarded with property be adequate
to all of the ways in which ownership has been produced to avoid them?
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Teleological Time and the Erasure of Violence

Another parsing of rights is evident in Mr. M’s response to my asking whether he thought he had a right to land at Tulloch. Relevant to his response is the fact that he, his mother, and his grandmother had all worked for the estate. He said that while they would have rights relative to the planter family, since the GoJ now owns the land, the residents have little standing from which to make a claim:

Mr. M: Yes I would have that deh feeling, say well we have a right to live, yes cause everyone have a right to live but the right who we would have to live here now is the person who we used to slave for who’s control the property same way. You know, I woulda more deep down say well we have a right to live cause them rob wi, wi foreparents, you know? But like this here now I couldn’t say we have a right to live here for is we eyebrow we cotch on. **We eyebrow we cotch on right now—as you quint so we would drop off right now.** And that I’m looking on right now living here.

Because Jacob had told me about the offer to his father of land, or a tractor at the time when the planter family sold the estate (in chapter 2), I asked Mr. M about his experience with redundancy (a lump sum paid to workers at the end of service—retirement, or lay-off). He relayed the words of estate management:

Mr. M: [T]his property I can tell you they never redundance no workers. Just one man was the problem, just a head man, one head man who was working with [the family]? When [the planter family] truck up he was … how mi hear was supposed to redundance wi cause mi was working here and I get to find out say a head man tell them that no give them no redundance. They have plenty a

146 Now that the land is owned by the state.
147 Closed down the operation
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banana, coconut, and whatsoever on the property fi go pick and eat and whatsoever and there is no redundancy.

RG: Oh so they feel say instead of the money … you must just eat coconut,

Mr. M: Yeah, just a head man was the problem \textsuperscript{148} so … no redundancy never get.

It is significant that Mr. M felt that the same thing would not be allowed to happen today. Though I expected him to give evidence for his confidence by referencing the contemporary operation of formalized redundancy, he instead named a government office where he periodically retrieved one part of his deferred wages, the National Housing Trust (NHT) contribution, which includes payments made by both employees and employers. With an absence of low-income housing, NHT payments now function as a periodic income boost: funds are withdrawn for cash spending rather than accrued towards the purchase of subsidized housing.

Regarding that earlier time to which he compared today: in the midst of the interview he and a younger friend reminisced about their mutual poverty; they talked about it as slavery days, before \textit{independence}, a time when people used to use truppence. When the friend said Mr. M’s mother had been “like a slave” at Tulloch, Mr. M added, “All mi too.” This collapse of emancipation (1834) with independence (1962), between slavery and colonialism, is akin to the kinds of temporalities that Deborah Thomas unpacks in a recent article, “Time and the Otherwise: Plantations, Garrisons and Being Human in the Caribbean.”

Interrogating the relationships among modern configurations of value, labor, and exchange, therefore, requires a rethinking not only of the linear, universal time of both liberal humanism and progressive Marxism, what Benjamin would have called “homogenous empty time” (2003: 394), but also, ultimately, a privileging of the prior-

\textsuperscript{148} Mr. M is saying that the nonpayment of redundancy was a result of this head man’s disregard for the workers.
ness of the racialized category of blackness—and therefore black people—in the elaboration of both modern capitalist transnationalism, and modern notions of sovereignty, in this case generated in and through the processes of colonization and imperialism. [...] In this case, what it means to be “prior” has had to do with how labor is manipulated and the extent of its relationship to land use. (2016, 180)

Prior-ness in the Caribbean is thus grounded in the materiality and sociality of the modern plantation. And this prior-ness ideologically requires an adherence to hierarchies of personhood and subjectivity that are based on an appropriate temporal orientation to, and participation in, modernity. But this appropriate orientation and participation necessitates the erasure of their foundational violences, an erasure that is generated, in large part, through a constant insistence upon the supremacy of a concept of time rooted in linearity, progressive teleology, and a tendency toward perpetual improvement. This erasure also becomes the tool through which inequalities are reproduced and made to seem inevitable in the contemporary period, which in turn leads to the simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility of those who do not or cannot operate according to the criteria of teleological time, and of the social conditions that have generated this inability. While for some, and in reality, increasingly few, the experience of modern time approximates the ideology of an evolutionary advance toward perpetual social mobility, for others, time seems to stand still. (2016, 182, emphasis added)

Engaging scholars who have thought through traumatic experiences of Blackness in the Atlantic using quantum physics, Thomas describes a temporality that learns from the theory of entanglement, that events “having been initially entangled, will affect each other even when far apart in space and time. It suggests that instantaneous communication across distance is possible” (2016, 185). Referring to the Tivoli incursion she says:

Envisioning reconfigurations of time through the quantum is useful because when people are speaking about the constancy of violence inflicted by representatives of the state, they are also evoking the broader entanglements of forms of rule, trade, and labor
that make these “incursions” possible. That is, their experiences of simultaneity with respect to state violence also suggest a more general sense of continuity between the past and the present, between the slavery and post-emancipation periods, between colonial and independent governance. (2016, 186)

The events Thomas analyzes are the escalating militarization of Jamaican carcerality. As such what is understandably not the point of her argument is the complexity of the state formation. When Mr. M, who is in his sixties, says he is “strictly socialist!” that he loves PJ, loves this lady (Portia Simpson, the prime minister at the time of research), that now it would have been different—they would have gotten their redundancy, now it is no longer slavery—there is an intimacy that exceeds patronage. In part, this intimacy is about the Blackness of the Jamaican state (Robotham 2000), the “structure of feeling” (R. Williams 1977) around independence, and race and empire—what Manley referenced when he said “In our own house there will be no other masters but ourselves” (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 150). This intimacy is important to remember, especially because its transcript is sometimes hidden. Sometimes what eclipses aspects of the state that are counter to the “constancy of violence” is people’s expectations of what the state should do. In other words, the hollowed armature of the developmentalist state—for example, the inefficacy of “countless” field officers—is not measured against its total absence (before, say, 1938), but against its former presence, which was productive of something, whether that something was mere affect or material improvement in people’s lives (cf. Pratt and Rosner 2006). In Mr. M’s case, his love for the PNP is rooted in a house his mother was assisted in building at Belmont, decades earlier.
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Image 24: Hypervisible, “they should never have been there in the first place”  Photo by author
Returning to Thomas’s (2016) point about how hierarchies of subjectivity based on an appropriate participation in modernity render invisible/hypervisible those who do not operate according to the criteria of teleological time, consider this explanation for withdrawal of support for a titling program. As the country head of a multilateral development bank lamented regarding a woefully underperforming (loan-funded) program that aimed to assist the ownershipless in obtaining titles:

GJ: … it used to be until you see in Jamaica what we found is that many people are not interested in using their land as collateral.

RG: Ok.

GJ: So whether you give them title or not, you will not unlock … dead capital,\(^{149}\) unless cultural attitudes change towards debt.

RG: Ok … uhm …

GJ: (quickly) but in many cases it could, it could uhm … turn into ahm increased financial ahm access to financial services because people have collateral. But there’s, as I said, a huge reticence to using, one’s house … to borrow money … cause you might lose it.

I argue that another example of this invisibility/hypervisibility is the concern regarding residents’ conduct as well as explanations of the failure to form the CBO. As I have mentioned above, some residents feel that among the explanations for their fate is the resistance of some residents to assimilation into the subjectivity required by the water company, the community-based organization structure, the public health inspector, advocates in civil society, and the social

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\(^{149}\) In other words since (Black) Jamaicans are unwilling to use their property as collateral, titling does not achieve the amendment to the land market—the financialization of property-in-land, and the entrepreneurialism of the poor (cf. Davis 2006, 79)—that is the imagined outcome of such programs.
welfare arm of the state, etc. Beyond Tulloch there are others who view the settlement as having failed to behave like the kinds of subjects required to achieve regularization. As Mr. Riley, the former SDC community development officer, said:

… we tried at the time to get them to form what was called a benevolent society in which they would be contributing money so that they would be in a legal position to be able to purchase either, either portions of the land when it became available or would be able to purchase other land on behalf of this group of residents in the area so there was that other process that was going on… So we were working from different fronts, different angles ahm to be able to take them to the desired goal of land tenure. You were talking about the [Jamestown] situation which worked a little bit different because the [Jamestown] area had organized themselves into a providential society, a body … that … was regi … recognized and through whom residents were making contributions, financial contributions, so that when that land area became available they would have been able, ah, to purchase. The [Tulloch] area residents did not do that. And because of that the [Jamestown] area was able to move further ahead. But this entire area is part and parcel of the same [planter family] uhm property.

150 Providential and benevolent societies are two types of CBOs described by the Friendly Societies Act, mentioned above (chapter 3).
He described several of the community leaders and then went on:

and these other persons were involved in, in, in the leadership and they would have set meetings in the community where they would discuss the issues, they would invite the various stakeholders to meet with them. There were times when they were even invited to meetings in Kingston with government and bec … so they were … taking control … of, of the th … so wh … what we intended was, was working. And then they were moved to say well now they need to be formed into a providential society and I know they were working on that, they were having the meetings but … you know … Somewhere along the line when…. People are more … willing to push forward a process when they think that the outcome … when they think that the end is tomorrow
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In other words, that the residents fell short is not blamed on geographical anomalies (why was one estate separated from another for formation of the CBO?), or political economic differences such as the appearance of Tulloch as “prime real estate,” or the infeasibility of drafting individuals as parastate actors—uncompensated—to accomplish the fiscal duties of a subdivision, or to the inadequacies of an educational system that leaves adults with literacy inadequate to letter writing campaigns. Their “failure” also renders invisible the history through which they and so many others come to be ownershipless. Repeating Thomas:

This erasure also becomes the tool through which inequalities are reproduced and made to seem inevitable in the contemporary period, which in turn leads to the simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility of those who do not or cannot operate according to the criteria of teleological time, and of the social conditions that have generated this inability. (2016, 182)

Visiting the site very briefly in 2016, it appears that the kind of moral judgements residents had of each other may in fact be made material. Approaching Tulloch Yard, I saw a new sign with the insignia of the landowning agency that said “PRIVATE PROPERTY. NO TRESPASSING,” with a boom gate extending across the driveway. A resident of Tulloch Yard says this indicates that the agency is going forward with regularization of Tulloch Yard. Asked about Shiloah, the other section of the Tulloch estate, she said the residents there opted not to engage in the state agency’s plan because they feel that government must give them the land for free. She said (indignantly), “You can’t get free land. Government can’t afford to do that anymore.” She had been told that the minimum anyone has to pay for land in “this type of situation” is JM $80,000 (roughly US $800). She also cited the construction by one of the Shiloah residents of a structure that violated the orderly disposition of buildings on the site.
I don’t know if she is correct in her understanding of the apparently diverging paths of Shiloah and Tulloch Yard or the reasons for same. However, when I visited Shiloah, though they had the same sign, the people I asked did not know about any step forward in the regularization process. The estate was advertised for sale in 2014 by a state agency as prime land for resort development but there has been no word on a buyer.

In her research regarding informal settlements in Mumbai, Doshi (2012) finds that mass slum clearances for redevelopment have resulted not in uniform displacement but rather in a process of what she calls “accumulation by differentiated displacement.” This process is mediated by the political subjectivities of slum residents and results in a social production of land markets. “Redevelopment is experienced through changing class, gender, and ethnic relations and ideologies to constitute the ‘fatal couplings of power and difference’ (Gilmore 2002) that shape dispossession as well the political practices of countering it” (Doshi 2012, 18). In addition to the establishment of a cut-off date to distinguish between settlers who were eligible for relocation and those who were not—based on the imagined threat posed by an influx of “dangerous Muslims” into the city—gendered practices of NGO-brokered “participatory development and non-confrontational negotiation” (Doshi 2012, 9) produced uneven patterns of dispossession. “Processes of differentiation in the moment of dispossession and displacement have fractured and rearticulated the socio-spatial category of slum dweller through notions of legitimacy and belonging shaping residents’ access to urban space and claims-making practices” (Doshi 2012, 8).

In the NGO-brokered resettlement, the participatory processes called forth a subject through which non-confrontational resettlement could be achieved. Meetings regarding the promised qualities of the relocation site, yet to be built, interpellated women as ideal subjects to represent
the community in the negotiations: “In the [NGO’s] discursive framing, women were ideal stewards and beneficiaries of resettlement due to their knowledge of the home, water provision duties, and special sanitation needs” (Doshi 2012, 12). In addition, meetings attended primarily by women were told they were the objects of development at the relocation site, given their peculiar sanitation needs: a built environment that would—unlike the informal settlement—accommodate a modesty-saving privacy—a narrative that equated a particular kind of femininity with social mobility that resettlement would bring into being. Femininity was not the only decency project afoot: life in the slum was portrayed as theft, as lacking hygiene and hazardous.

Tulloch has witnessed the successful transition of a neighboring community, Jamestown, from “squatters” to title holders via the successful formation of a community organization that met the criteria of neoliberal land reform. That process required the residents to “form,” as Miss B put it, to become a certain type of actor engaged in civic engagement, a politics different from those among the traditions which people had ready at hand, and, given the exhausting labor required by the community leaders who emerged, the process of subsuming various strands of oppositional politics into a body that could interact with the state as a unitary figure.

The work of “forming” was the work of overcoming—formally even if not actually—the grain of diverse critiques, residents’ diverse habits associated with each of those critiques, and the integuments between residents and aspects of the state that those critiques had developed over time. What do I mean by that? I offer an example: one version of a relationship between individuals and their representatives.

As they exist today, the social relations of the social democratic state, which had taken up the Black radical tradition of asserting and negotiating informal and customary land tenures in a
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condition of the socially produced scarcity of property-in-land, suggest certain kinds of actions on the part of residents. For Joan, this pathway seemed the most likely one to pursue towards relocation or regularization. She remained confident, despite the passage of years, that the PNP minister of parliament would come through for his constituents, and finally find a location acceptable to residents to which they could be relocated.

Therefore, when leaders of the community organization were enacting the practices required by the formation of the CBO—collecting dues, paying to travel to central government offices to make their case, etc.—Joan felt excluded and suspicious of the passage of vital information, and a share of her meagre resources, to a representative who was not her elected official. When I arrived at Tulloch initially, she encouraged me to “hold a meeting.” I wasn’t sure what she meant. I shied away from the image of me, standing on a rise such as at the foot of the stand of bamboo or her shop veranda at the crossroads of the Shiloah’s two paths, addressing a crowd gathered to hear me. Over time, as I heard her disenchantment with the community organization, and her alternative vision for what should have happened, I understood better that “holding a meeting” signaled a tradition of interactions between visitors with a stake in community development—be they field officers or elected officials—and community members. From her experience with a farming community elsewhere, the field officer of Jamaicans for Justice gave some insight into the reinforcement of this relationship:

When the minister had a meeting with the community and invited me to be a part of it the whole community came out and … his first thing to the community was, “How is it

151 A photo comes to mind from the cover of a book, Working Together for Development, that tells the history of community development work in Jamaica between 1939 and 1968. In it two brown men—one in khaki pants and shirt, his shirt pockets filled with his necessaries, the other in a white dress shirt and tie—stand in the doorway of a wooden shop raised a few inches off the ground, while men, women, and children, all Black, gather around. On another day, one of these brown men might well have been my grand uncle who was involved in this agency.
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that you’re having JFJ speak for you? I am your MP and I’m Junior Minister of Agriculture. I am supposed to be the one to” … so I could sense that he was not very thrilled that we had … and generally the PNP is not […] 152

Joan, and others over whom she has influence, remain critical and suspicious of the procedures of civic engagement as an alternative to the developmentalist state. This is not to portray the community as divided amongst consolidated factions; many people had multiple simultaneous theories of change and alignments with agents within and beyond Tulloch.

The point here is not to rehearse narratives of the inadequacy to revolution of rural (or rural adjacent) people’s consciousness. Rather it is to point to the devolution to community leaders of the work of producing coherent narratives153 out of contradictory structures of feeling, the fractured political and legal terrain that structures legitimacy, and diverse critiques sedimented in oppositional traditions. These narratives would then need to be enacted in letters and meetings with agencies corresponding to each narrative. In Doshi’s tale, that work was undertaken by an NGO, part of the “shadow state” (Doshi 2012; Gilmore 2007b), which cleared some of the friction that hindered the movement of land onto the market. However, at Tulloch, negotiating resettlement called for residents to be the organic source of such transformative leadership in order to realize the work of social welfare formerly realized by the institutions of the state.

152 JFJ is perceived to be partisan, affiliated with the Jamaica Labour Party, because one of its founders is a vocal supporter of the JLP. Given that Joan is a PNP supporter who feels that the MP is the relevant course of complaint, party politics may play a role in her mistrust of a process in which a JFJ representative was involved (the community meetings).

153 As Sarah Nicolazzo (2014) observes about seventeenth-century British vagrancy law, the ability to give an account of oneself is made necessary by laws that operate via discretionary police power.
“There Aren’t Any Squatters Over There”

Gary was from the settlement adjacent to Pebble Cove and had worked security for the resort for many years. He had moved to Tulloch to be with a woman—it was not uncommon that residents of this and another settlement whom I interviewed had had customary or informal tenure elsewhere at other points in their lives. On the one hand, there is a pattern of circulation between sites of informal tenure; on the other hand, relationships with a particular location can persist for generations, even through changes of land use. Now in his fifties, Gary had lived at Pebble Cove on his grandfather’s five-acre plot, which had become “family land”—descendants of the grandfather each had rights to the plot. Gary describes his exit as a move to “start his own kingdom,” free from the entanglements of sharing land with an increasing number of people. The parcel was in a section of the settlement where the land had been “cut up,” or formally subdivided and sold to employees. On those lots he described that the new owners of land were building concrete houses, but there were still many others who lived there in “board,” that is, wooden, houses. The duration of tenure suggests that his family’s connection to the site preceded the estate being sold for resort development in the mid-twentieth century.

This division of construction materials has to do with the security of tenure. Leases of land generally allow for the construction of wooden houses only, in acknowledgement of the temporary term of tenure. A former field officer of a state social welfare agency described reading the landscape for security of tenure by the type of building material:

Meaning you own the land somebody wants to put up a house, […] you lease them the land or you rent them the land, so they can’t put up concrete ahm homes … so that is why you’ll notice there’s a lot of board houses in that area so that ah they can be moved … if the tenure is not renewed. And I’ll give you an example that …
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Poor,154 for example, that provides homes for … the needy, will construct a home, a house on a piece of land if the person does not have legal tenure as ownership but if they have a lease agreement, but nothing less than ten years lease agreement, then Food for the Poor will, after examining all other things, might construct a house on it for them.

In addition to those who are bound by the terms of their leases, people whose tenure is insecure because it is informal or customary often build in wood, which is considered moveable. There is an argument to be made about how the historical geography of casualized labour is sedimented in the regulation of construction differentiated by materials.155 For my purposes here, I wish to simply point to this unevenness as a present-day iteration of the mutual entwinement of at-will employment with at-will tenure: that a practice of building houses that are tethered, rather than fixed in the ground, continues to be imposed on those whose relation to the land is durable, yet insecure even as the location of the plot has been freed from the location of the plantation they work. The state as the regulator mediates how this fragility is made material.

In addition to the terms of formal lease agreements, the landscape of concrete vs. wood construction is also structured by the regulation of construction by the local government: as I learned from the local enforcement officer, concrete houses must obtain building permits, but wooden houses (in practice) are unregulated. At Tulloch, building in wood has therefore facilitated the inattention of extant mechanisms of enforcement. Though there exist some concrete structures built by the estate and a former manufacturing plant, few residents of Tulloch

154 An interdenominational Christian charity operating in Jamaica and other Caribbean and Latin American countries. In Jamaica, providing housing is one of their activities.
155 See Besson (1999) for moveable wood houses in Jamaican informal settlements, and Handler and Bergman (2009, 21) for historical prevalence in the Caribbean of moveable worker housing on estates, called chattel houses. “Chattel” is a term unpacked in the literature on the anthropology of property that denotes moveable or personal property, as opposed to immovable or real property.
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have dared to build in concrete, though all say they would prefer it: it is cheaper, more durable—requiring less frequent repair—and free of the stigma of poverty. Given that insecurity about the eviction makes people reluctant to sink resources of labor and money into life at Tulloch, the maintenance requirements of wood pose a dilemma. From Miss S:

Right now see the whole of mi house deh rotten down and mi wah repair mi house and mi don’t know what fi do. Mi nuh know what fi do fa see it deh ... big, big Christmas¹⁵⁶ come me deh go repair i’, them tell mi seh, them bwoy¹⁵⁷ tell mi seh nuh fi repair i’ because mi nuh know what them deh do for we nuh get nothing from them. Wi nah hear no, nothing at all from them to know what them up to from what them nuh up to.

Non-enforcement regarding wood construction is however a point of contention between local and central government. Speaking with civil servants at the local parish council, I said it seemed there was a gap between the central government and local; I was investigating the mandate of various branches of government in relation to policy regarding informal settlements. I also was enquiring about reports I had read in the newspaper about an influx of squatters related to the construction of new resorts due to a lack of housing. An engineer formerly of this PC had told me he didn’t know what those reports were talking about; in his experience there had been no influx. I clarified that I was asking about Tulloch. The enforcement officer thought for a moment and then said, “there aren’t any squatters over there…”

I wasn’t sure what to make of this: the community appears on every GoJ list of squatter settlements. Though these reports sometimes refer to communities as informal settlements, they are explicit in their use of the term “squatter,” so this is not a miscommunication resulting from

¹⁵⁶ Christmas is a time when people traditionally refresh their living spaces: making repairs as well as putting up new curtains and other decorations.
¹⁵⁷ Her adult sons who also live at Tulloch.
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nomenclature. I discussed this conversation with the SMU, which is a central government agency within the ministry with responsibility for housing. According to the SMU, it is the local parish council that is responsible for monitoring all development, defined as any structure above, on, or below ground, as per the Local Improvement Act and the Parish Council Act. Here is the slippage: these acts regard construction, not possession of land. Some state landowning agencies employ rangers to monitor the possession of their land holdings; land belonging to those agencies that don’t monitor their own lands would, according to the SMU, fall under the parish council’s remit. In other words, acts that require the PC to monitor construction on any landowner’s land are taken by the SMU as compelling the PC to act as the agent of monitoring possession of publicly owned land.

This tension is in part a question of attempts to establish at the central government a universal policy towards informal tenure, and divergence from that in practice, disagreements about the purpose say of the role of building inspection in maintaining possession of Crown land. It also reveals contradiction in the sentiment regarding informal tenure: that “who is a squatter?” is not agreed upon. This has something to do with how legitimacy is understood, structures of feeling around the respectable (enough) poor and the long history of dispossession and inequity in land distribution.

Conclusion

As I wrote in chapter 1, in Jamaica beginning in the seventeenth century, slaves provided for their reproduction by growing foodstuff—provisions—on their rest day. In other words, slaves did not receive their sustenance in exchange for their work on the estates, but supplemented with additional work on the grounds. This self-sufficiency in its many forms that deepens the
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extraction of surplus value is what I called working a plot. Chapter 1 argued that rather than antagonistic, working a plot and the informal tenure on which these activities often relied was complementary to working a plantation, though this was disavowed in the post-emancipation era.

The historical literature provides insufficient evidence that the reliance of the estate on Black labor on the provision grounds was dissolved following emancipation. Although a racist imaginary conceptualized the threat to the colony as Black laziness, the threat to which British West Indian (BWI) capital was inadequate was the superior spatial-technical conditions in other territories with which BWI colonies were forced to compete after the passage of free trade legislation. In order to save BWI sugar, attempts were made to cheapen labor by making ex-slaves ever more responsible for their reproduction, but still tethered to the failing estates and available when their labor was needed. Ideologically, this took the form of a demand for ex-slaves’ “continuous labor.” This novelty conceived of a free labor force that was continually ready at hand but employed at the whim of the estate, with subsistence accomplished via self-sufficiency. Completely effaced was the work ex-slaves did on and off of the estates to reproduce their labor and the reliance of the estates on that work.

While working a plot began in relation to estates, I understand the contemporary condition as a range of activities through which social reproduction is accomplished, in whole or in part, outside of the formal sector. This argument is supported by research that suggests this is the “modal condition” of work in the postcolony, as is the case for surplus labor elsewhere (Gidwani 2015; Gilmore 2007a; L. Harris 2016).
Chapter 1 further showed that in the post-emancipation era, the fear of Black autonomy, conceived of as a threat to the colonial enterprise, became the ideological scaffolding for a transformation of the state that would fix labor to the estates by constraining Black Jamaicans’ access to land even as estates were being rapidly abandoned. This transformation of the state included resecuring property-in-land as the ground for new capitalist industries. In subsequent political economic moments, the constraint on access to land was reproduced as a feature of production. The availability of surplus land in Jamaica appeared as the potential of Black not-work. As I have shown, maintaining the complementarity between plots and plantations depended on limiting the land access of Black Jamaicans.

The effacement of the work of social reproduction by Black Jamaicans, and the role of the state in reproducing that relation, is not new. I argue that it is now strategically necessary to elucidate the ways in which the unhinging of production from social reproduction (Katz 2001b) for Black Jamaicans is not novel, not a product of twenty-first century neoliberalism.

Having set up this context in the longue durée for the ethnographic work, chapter 2 went on to examine the changing social production of space of the field site. I first showed the historical geography of sugar production and worker subsistence as experienced at Tulloch by many of its current residents. Even though I have argued that informal tenure has been imbricated in the production of a labor force that is casual and yet ready at hand, whose subsistence was often accomplished via land connected with one’s work, I was still surprised to find in 2014 so many whose tenure was connected to employer-landowners. When Tulloch was a functioning sugar estate, the growing of provisions on near and distant plots, the informal use of the fruits of the estate land, and the informal tenure on the estate itself, in addition to Black property-in-land at the village, were all embedded in the reproduction of estate labor. Village and estate were
tethered together in this historical geography into the “here” of the district encompassing both plot and plantation work. Statements like “I am from here,” “I was born here,” and “my birth certificate says [Tulloch]” tell of one role through which residents understand themselves as legitimate occupants of the land in connection with this history.

With the profound changes to “here” since the organized abandonment of agriculture at Tulloch in the 1970s, both labor and land now sit at the tidal edge of capital, a “forgotten place” (Gilmore 2008) where the wage is more often than not inadequate to need and desire. The daily accomplishment of social reproduction has expanded beyond the “here” of the site, involving longer journeys to work, longer journeys to retrieve water for household use, and labor migration within and beyond Jamaican shores. Also, now located beyond the intimacy of the everyday are the agents to whom residents must represent themselves as legitimate occupants in order to maintain possession of the land and its fruits; headmen, landowners, and local parish council agents have been replaced by state agents in central government agencies.

Meanwhile, the recently wide, fast, smooth highway has brought to the field site the kind of development that Jamaica appears to be becoming. Just across this highway sits the luxury of new resorts, part of a changing spatiality of tourism. These two experiences (of an expanded field of social reproduction and the awareness of “what is to be had”—a greater gradient between one’s life and other lives nearby) are together what Cindi Katz (2001a) has called time-space expansion, a corollary of time-space compression in modern capitalism.

The reality of this uneven development is that tens of thousands of acres of surplus agricultural land are still not turned to other uses, despite the expansion of tourism, middle-class housing, and business process outsourcing. Uneven investment in infrastructure exacerbates time-space
expansion, as infrastructural decay just off of the highway has rendered land across the Black Man Line impassible. Alongside the land and labor idled by organized abandonment, the shifting spatialities of road, drainage, and tourism development also create time-space expansion. These are the realities effaced by policy, policy that seems to suggest a limit to the horizon for the ability to use land outside of the market: that Jamaicans continue to reproduce their own labor in subsidy to capital.

My research revealed that the capturers of land are continually positioning themselves in relation to this interface, sometimes by leaving property. This shows that capture has a deeper critique of property than in earlier ethnographies of Black Jamaicans (which pose a respectable aspiration to property).

Through secondary literature, chapter 3 explored ongoing transformations of state practice regarding informal tenure and positioned these changes in what I argue is a longer-term recalibration of the use of state capacity to secure social reproduction. Through the topography (Katz 2001a) at Tulloch, as well as interviews with public officials, I examined the ongoing repurposing of state capacity away from land reform and towards projects that it is hoped will reinvigorate the marketability of land. Surplus state capacity as method aims to explain how transformations of the state are not fixes to the problems they appear to fix, for example, that the moral character of Black Jamaicans falls short of the virtue of continuous labor, but are instead outcomes (not foregone conclusions but, nevertheless, outcomes) of the restlessness of capitalist crises.

As I showed in chapter 1, recalibration in the nineteenth century involved transforming the state so as to liberalize the land market and curtail land access so as to control Black labor. In the
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twentieth-century recalibration, widespread rebellions throughout the BWI in the 1930s spurred
the state to assuage unrest by expanding colonial state capacity aimed at social welfare.
Following national independence there was continued investment in social development until the
economic crisis of the 1970s, which undermined state legitimacy and began the movement to
surplus these capacities. At the same time, social democratic and more radical political factions
in the 1970s, for the first time, posed an alignment between the state and a popular radical
tradition of land capture.

I continued this examination in chapter 3, demonstrating that regarding land reform, the social
democratic policies of the 1970s, such as Project Land Lease, appeared to inscribe Black
autonomy in a project of Third World nonalignment, by positioning the produce of Black small
farmers as central to national economic independence. However, echoing the outcome of earlier
land settlement programs, because so many lessees received rights to only one acre or less, PLL
reproduced the tethering of Black lives to both *plots* and *plantations*, transforming neither
livelihoods nor the relations of production (Crichlow 1988).

At Tulloch, the current recalibration has thus far resulted in an increased sense of vulnerability to
dispossession. The most recent land reform program, Operation PRIDE, devolved to nonstate
actors work that was formerly the responsibility of the institutions of the state: the provision of
infrastructure and housing for the poor, and the work to represent\textsuperscript{158} constituents to the agencies
of the state that own or regulate land, and the work to redress inequity. Replacing land reform,

\textsuperscript{158} Here I intend represent as in both “to speak for,” as an elected official might be expected to do on behalf of a
constituent, and “to speak of or describe,” meaning to tell a narrative of oneself that, in this case, identifies the
basis on which one exercises a legitimate claim to land (Goffe and Wolfson 2013, 129).
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land management as a project of the Jamaican state emerged to rationalize the land market so that Jamaica can be seen as a good place to do business and attract foreign capital.

However, as I have shown, aspects of the state that are not entirely hostile to the ownershipless persist. For example, while central government has collapsed the definition of “possession” with “development,” and as such sees the local authority as responsible for the maintenance of possession of all land owned by the government by virtue of its statutory responsibility to monitor development, this expectation remains in tension with local government. As such, only the occupation at Tulloch that appeared to be new was subject to summary eviction by the local government, such as the “penning up” of land at Tulloch by strangers to the district.

Additionally, the persistence of “countless” field officers suggests that these social welfare agencies operate in much the same way they always have since the emergence of the social welfare capacities of the state. However, since many of these officers operate under changed mandates, what they make material adds up to a different vision for how to put to use that which has been made idle. These and other tensions illustrate the ways in which informal tenure offers a good lens for observing contradictions within the postcolonial state.

Finally, in this chapter I examined the role of informal tenure at Tulloch in the life’s work of its residents, and what is involved in establishing and maintaining tenure. I also detailed the provision of infrastructure, through which we can observe the state’s involvement beyond mere acquiescence to possession, to the production of capture as a place where the life is made to live or let die (Li 2009).

What is at stake in infrastructure? By definition, infrastructure renders work more efficient. Through the uneven development of infrastructure—roads, water supply, storm drainage,
electricity, and sewage—the life’s work of residents has been made less efficient, whilst other land has become more so. Households deepen the subsidy provided to capital when they compensate for the abandonment of infrastructure by increasing the intensity of their work. Daily life at Tulloch involves transporting potable water from a standpipe over a mile down the highway, or catching water from a nearby contaminated spring for use as grey water or for treatment with household bleach. Daily life at Tulloch also involves the use of purchased but poor quality electrical service, due to the nonprovision of branch lines. These realities reveal that while the state’s involvement in capture does allow for “self-sufficiency,” it also produces vulnerability to premature death (Gilmore 2007a). In other sites of land capture such as Mud Town where residents became hypervisible—in landslide and death—as occupants of land where they “should never have been in the first place,” this vulnerability is urgently palpable every hurricane season. This is a disavowal of the usefulness of capture as a solution to social abandonment, as a de facto social housing program that, for the state, acts to defer the question of the crisis in social reproduction faced by many Jamaicans.

As we can see in the deferral of engagement with Tulloch residents over where to locate the standpipe that will soon-come or the removal of the standpipe that had resulted in their naked Black bodies marring the beauty of the highway, the slowness of abandonment makes its violence available for erasure in a way that is differently modulated from the emphatic disavowal of state/capital culpability in death by landslide. At Tulloch, residents were themselves blamed, and many feel they are collectively at fault, for the contaminated spring and the removed...

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159 As said by the prime minister regarding the massive landslide that occurred when the Hope River breached its banks in tropical storm Gustav in 2008, killing four people.

160 A colloquialism that means something will come soon, but it also means promises that are never realized.
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standpipe, for the failure to achieve regularization, for the failure to provide their own
development (although they do provide for their own development in many ways). They have
“failed” to form an organization adequate to the fiscal duties required by the recent land reform
program. They “failed” to recognize that the road they have always known is no longer the kind
of Jamaican place where one can bathe naked in public. They “failed” to hide that Jamaica from
view. They are blamed for being Jamaicans who, as Deborah Thomas (2016, 182) has put it,
“cannot operate according to the criteria of teleological time.”

This erasure [of foundational violences] also becomes the tool through which
inequalities are reproduced and made to seem inevitable in the contemporary period,
which in turn leads to the simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility of those who do
not or cannot operate according to the criteria of teleological time, and of the social
conditions that have generated this inability. While for some, and in reality, increasingly
few, the experience of modern time approximates the ideology of an evolutionary
advance toward perpetual social mobility, for others, time seems to stand still. (Thomas
2016, 182)

Attributing failure is one such instance of the erasure of violence: the violence of the annihilation
of the property rooted in their labor (Marx 1976, 940)—the violence also of the devolution to
nonstate state actors the work of representation, resubjectivation, and the provision of
infrastructure, projects which depoliticize the potential threat that capture poses to the social
order.

And yet, that Jamaica is not yet so far removed from avowed tradition that it will be summarily
excised from the nation at the whim of capital or that of nearby resort developers. As we saw
there are traditions within the state that resist the erasure of the legitimate claims to land of
residents of “informal settlements.”
There is (to me) a surprising resiliency of sentiment about autonomy. Though spending the majority of the week sleeping away from home, or a scarce day at home nursing an arcane tool, Miss S stated a preference for the more autonomous path—and not in spite of its entailments. I put this into relation with Mr. M saying that if they were ultimately evicted he would be the first one to go “back up in the hills”; he would be “well comfortable” because he was “used to it.” And yet he also described that time when he had lived in the hills, while working for the estate, as a time when he had been “like a slave.” Related to my observation, “live up in the hills”\(^\text{161}\) connotes a contradictory Jamaican historical geography of Blackness—sometimes of Marronage, of Rastafari, of free villages and other forms of (more or less radical) refusal, but also on the other hand the consignment to rural poverty.

Here I turn to Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s (2012) engagement with Raymond Williams’s (1977) “structures of feeling,” out of which emerges her concept “infrastructures of feeling.” Williams’s (1977, 131) term describes “[a] particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or a period.” Gilmore (2012) expounds:

Starting from the premise that ages have multiple structures of feeling rather than unitary ones—though the multiple necessarily are related, dialectically—we can pursue Williams’s analysis further. He argues that traditions are the accumulation of structures of feeling, and that that accumulation is not either happenstance or natural but rather what he terms “the selection and reselection of ancestors.” Beautifully here Williams disavows the biological (a necessary underpinning of racial and ethnic hierarchy) instead proposing, in the mode of Patricia Hill Collins, that kin are made no less than (it would seem) they’re born.

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\(^{161}\) Burning Spear’s (1976) *Man in the Hills* memorializes the sentiment of living off the land in the hills.
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The move from “structure” to “infrastructure” allows us to think through the friction or ease that competing traditions pose for transforming the ground for social reproduction.

In the material world, infrastructure underlies productivity—it speeds up some processes and slows down others. The infrastructure of feeling, while truth be told material too—in the sense that ideology becomes material as do the actions that feelings enable or constrain—the infrastructure of feeling underlies our capacity to do this work of selection, of choosing and accumulating historical lineages. (Gilmore 2012)

In this “ethnography of a process,” I found that contradictory traditions speed and slow the movement of land onto the market, sometimes in surprising ways. The figure of Thomas Carlyle’s Negro, whose pumpkins grew and were consumed without anything resembling work, was recuperated as the figure of the peasant. The sanitized version imagines that the liberal imperialist British state allowed that both a free laborer and a yeomanry would emerge in the colonies. By extending the monopoly through the liberalization of the land market, enabling ruinate to be resecured as landed property, the state actually “guaranteed that settlers would remain forever painfully yoked to other forms of income generating activities” (Crichlow 2005, 135). Revisiting the figure of the peasant, we find that the triumph of Jamaican historiography is realized through a beleaguered but respectable peasant. In actual fact, the movement between plot and plantation is in part the tethering of the small farmer to the estate, and the rebellion of the laborer from dependence on the wage: less triumphant and less respectable. What I am arguing for is not a continued romanticization of the peasant, but a recognition of the tethering of Black lives to the margins of capital originating in the plantation: in the constrained access to a means of subsistence that appears to be outside of capital (and in conflict with it) but has in fact facilitated the exploitation of Black labor, self-sufficient and yet ready at hand.
A state that honors a once marginalized and feared subject or citizen is simultaneously acknowledging that, in hindsight, a prior regime or series of regimes might have erred in the fundamental exclusion and marginalization of a particular figure or event in the national past. In rehabilitating marginalized and excluded figures and events, states are not rehabilitating the past but, instead, the past’s representation in national state narrative. (Hanchard quoted in Thomas 2011, 178)

Thomas (2011) says that while states sometimes align with Black memory in the recuperation of a feared Black figure, Black memory has an agenda that is lost in the sanitizing uptake: to make clear a claim regarding the relationship between present inequalities and past injustices. “In other words,” Thomas (2011, 179) says, “the alternative archives of black memory ultimately can be mobilized to serve the cause of reparations.”

“The state” in the quote above also enfolds a layer of the resistant tradition. For instance, let us consider the local enforcement officer who says “there are no squatters over there,” despite the appearance of “there” on a central government squatter census. The social relations of local government allow the question “Who is a squatter?” to be answered differently in practice than appears from reading policy documents or the speeches of politicians. Stated policy is to make case-by-case assessments of each settlement for regularization, relocation, or eviction based on facts: socioeconomic surveys, land surveys, environmental impact, and the capacity to recover costs if development is pursued. However, all indications point to the continuation of “accumulation by differentiated displacement” (Doshi 2012) structured by factors that are not typically acknowledged. What remains occluded by the attribution of failure to residents themselves is the erasure of the past, as well as the role played by national economic development-as-capitalist development (Gidwani and Wainwright 2014) in the process of evaluation. I asked the head of the Land Administration Department in the ministry with
responsibility for lands how the decision is made whether to “regularize, relocate, or evict”; how the value of land as a national asset is balanced with the policy preference for regularization; and ultimately who gets to decide? I had asked this question of over a dozen officials before, and I was beginning to feel that I would never have a clear answer. But she stated simply, “the owners.”

Confused, I asked, “Yes, but I mean for government land.” And she reiterated, “Yes. We are the owners. We get to decide.” She did not mean “we” as in the Jamaican people, but “we” as in we the agents of the state. This is not the “we” of the 1970s Manley speech:

The Government on behalf of the people will not accept anybody anywhere in the world telling us what we are to do in our own house and in our own house there will be no other masters but ourselves. Above all we are not for sale.... (Stephens and Stephens 1986, 150, emphasis added)

Like Beverly Mullings’s (2009) observations that a general crisis in social reproduction, individualized and managed through the transnationalization of Jamaican livelihood strategies (migration and remittances), has approached the “limits to labor,” emerging squatter policy may signal a gradually approaching horizon for livelihood strategies that mobilize nonmarket access to plots alongside poorly paid and intermittent work. Hazardous conditions at other settlements in Jamaica do some of the work of displacement, as at Mud Town where four people died in 2008 when heavy rains and decaying drainage infrastructure collapsed the bank of the Hope River, leaving a shockingly tall cliff visible from across the river in Kingston’s uptown open-air market (Image 24).

How we got here is eclipsed from view through programs that attribute failure to individual Jamaicans. “This erasure also becomes the tool through which inequalities are reproduced and...
made to seem inevitable in the contemporary period, which in turn leads to the simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility of those who do not or cannot operate according to the criteria of teleological time, and of the social conditions that have generated this inability” (Thomas 2016, 182).

In the immediate situation of the eviction, residents at Tulloch were able to—through their own activity, amended by the remains of the social democratic state—trouble their definition by the landowning agency as illegitimate, and enter into a process of negotiation with the state to select a site in which to remake their lives. For now, with no willing buyer for the land at Tulloch and qualities of the land that make it an expensive site to develop, the tradition that sees them as not-squatters is the one that frames their continued presence in a forgotten place at the edge of the front page, but “cotched on their eyebrow.”

At the intersection of these contradictory traditions, the reproduction of inequality, founded on the capacity to operate according to teleological time, the differential dispossession of those who are now called squatters appears as the inevitable outcome of acts in the present. We are in a moment when the reselection of ancestors is up for grabs. The cultural tradition that saw capturers as a justified threat to a violent social order offers an alternate palimpsest—of the imaginary for other futures.
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