Virgin Capital

In the fall of 2008, the financial sector of the United States' economy was starting to show signs of the deep economic crisis that would soon envelop the country. As a result of the failure of several major investment banks, a possible rescue package (or 'bailout') of Wall Street by the federal government became a topic of much discussion. This collapse of the global economy was frequently linked to a number of images: beggared Wall Street bankers; shuttered windows where formerly thriving businesses once stood; foreclosure signs stretching along blocks of manicured lawns. What the downturn did not immediately bring to mind for most participant-observers were visions of the sandy shores of the US Virgin Islands (USVI) — yet the US financial crisis had particular resonance in this US territory, especially on the island of St. Croix as a result of the 2001 establishment of the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The EDC, a development initiative that closely linked the economic fate of this tiny island to developments on Wall Street, made this US territory an important node in this global financial moment.

As a result of the EDC, a program launched in the USVI through an agreement between local politicians and the US federal government and designed to stimulate the economy of these US-owned islands by offering companies staggering tax cuts, St. Croix has played host to a number of financial firms and their managers. While funds in the Caribbean have long been viewed as suspicious (an assessment based on the assumption that such investments are intended to evade US tax requirements), the EDC program represents an attempt by the local government of the US Virgin Islands at legitimate banking and financial management in the Caribbean. Arriving from the US mainland and

sometimes employing the requisite number of Virgin Islands residents, the managers of many of these companies have, since the beginning of the program, been ambivalently positioned on the island. While the pay at EDC companies is generally much higher than that offered in other sectors on St. Croix, these companies are also seen by local residents as unstable and suspicious—a reputation earned as a result of a number of federal investigations at various EDC companies and further solidified by charges of investment fraud brought against the largest such company on the island, Stanford Financial. Operating five growing offices across the island and quickly buying up large swaths of real estate, this company's CEO was heralded by advocates of the program as the billionaire-savior of St. Croix's long-struggling economy, but vilified by many Crucians priced out of the real estate market as a result of his seemingly-endless dollars. This company and its CEO served as the embodiment of the ambivalence with which Crucians view the EDC program.

In light of the enormous impact that Stanford Financial had on St. Croix, as well as the CEO's avowed commitment to good corporate citizenship (at a 2007 economic forum on St. Croix he described the order of the day as "getting rid of the pirates *in* the Caribbean"), I interned with this company, as well as several other EDC entities, as part of the research on which this text is based. Having returned to the US mainland after fieldwork, I heard from friends quickly when the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filed charges against Stanford, dealing a stunning blow to the already-beleaguered economy of St. Croix. What is more, the checkered history of the program, combined with the unfolding of this particular story—including the arrest of the Chief Investment Officer as well as the CEO himself—make it difficult for Crucians to take seriously the

prospect of employment with this company or any of its kind on the island. For many former Stanford employees who left the island to attend college in the United States, landing a job within the EDC sector and earning a salary comparable to that earned by financial workers on the US mainland represented a viable opportunity to spend at least part of their working lives back on St. Croix.

The tone in the local media concerning Stanford seemed to be one of muted surprise: Given all the excitement surrounding the company's move to the island and the vocal endorsement of the local government, many on St. Croix were stunned it when Stanford Financial was revealed to be a pyramid scheme. Still, Crucians had experienced this upheaval—and from within this sector—before. The ongoing criminal cases against several EDC companies had already established the fallibility of this sector. None is this is this unique to St. Croix. All across the Caribbean this is a familiar story as factories and export-processing zone (EPZ) industries decide the relocate and lock out workers without warning.

Having held a grand spectacle of a groundbreaking ceremony for its megacomplex-headquarters on St. Croix in 2007, replete with the requisite dignitaries and, for added measure, the Antiguan cricket team in uniform (Stanford's long-term financial presence in Antigua includes ownership of that island's national stadium), the revelation of Stanford's actual state of affairs marked a stunning reversal for the EDC program at large. While Stanford's implosion lends itself to an easy recasting as a Madoff-style scheme (a reference to the December 2008 arrest in the United States of businessman Bernie Madoff, charged with what is currently the biggest investor fraud ever perpetrated by a single individual, and resulting in his imprisonment for 150 years),

it is important to note the context: until its indictment, employment at Stanford, and the conferral of its coveted company Stanford logo pin, was a defining status marker on the island. More deeply than that, however, working at this company—and to a lesser degree any EDC—represented the possibility of mobility and a new identity for Crucians long overlooked by the standard economic stimulus of Caribbean islands: tourist dollars. The slow demise of the EDC program in general and the fiery crash of Stanford in particular draw attention to the long history of economic stagnation on St. Croix and the complicated outcomes of its recent insertion into global financial circulations through the EDC program.

In some ways, it is strange to begin this book with the downfall of the EDC program, its end. In many ways, however, this is the only way to tell this tale of wealth, greed, class, dreams of mobility, empire, and racialized history. This particular beginning, this starting with the ending, would not have been my choice. I would have preferred a linear tale, one that began with setting off into an uncharted anthropological fieldsite and concluded with a few hard-won conclusions. However, this analysis—my analysis—of the EDC program did not unfold in that way. Instead, my engagement with the field was complicated by having been raised in the place that would become my fieldsite, placing my work in the long history of African-American anthropology produced by native anthropologists, beginning with scholars such as John Gwaltney and Zora Neale Hurston. My analysis of the program as an instance of neoliberal development was complicated by my informants' insistence that this program was simply slavery—or, at best, colonialism—reincarnate. Their insistence that this model of economic development, despite the sooth-saying of program supporters, was a renewed

way for wealthy, white capitalists to increase their wealth by circuiting through the Caribbean complicated *any* attempt to position the EDC as simply an innocuous instance of the current model of neoliberal development practice. While the EDC certainly is demonstrative of contemporary capital accumulation, it also reveals the problematic assumptions and histories of domination in which this model is rooted. The long and painful histories of slavery and colonialism in the Caribbean in general and the US Virgin Islands in particular have resulted in great trepidation—articulated as racialized anxieties—around the EDC model of development.

I have taken seriously the concerns of my many Crucian informants that the EDC program is an attempt to return to what they've termed 'slave days' and placed it in productive tension with the position of its advocates, that it is an attempt to move the USVI—and specifically St. Croix—forward, to reinsert it into transnational capital flows. It is the argument of this book that this program, and those like it, are not fully captured by either of these renderings, but contain elements of both. That is, neoliberal initiatives that advocate the freeing of markets and purport to mark the way toward greater global integration build upon—and often lead to the entrenchment of—existing processes of racialized and gendered inequality. In many formerly peripheral spaces, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean, this relationship to neoliberalism is conditioned by long and complex histories of slavery and colonialism, which make the ostensibly novel circulations of European and American capital—and the racialized hierarchies they engender—hauntingly familiar.

I attempt to capture the 'haunting' of these programs, the palpable fear of past wrongs reemerging in the present with the phrase 'spectral time,[1] This term points to the haunting, including the fear and anticipation of violence—here anticipated as an economic and structural, rather than physical, threat.

My use of 'spectral' is also intended to call to mind the continuities between contemporary capital accumulation and the region's history of quasi-regulated accumulation through piracy. This earlier model in which pirates/privateers plundered their way across the region, sometimes under the protection of a European flag, and sometimes not, is echoed in contemporary neoliberal development. Then, as now, context is everything in this system that wavers between licit and illicit. My concept of spectral time is an attempt to capture this persistent yet elusive element of capital.

For the Caribbean, these initiatives are neither wholly new nor perfect replicas of the past. Rather, the current operations of capital alternately build upon, reanimate, and complicate mutually constituting hierarchies of class, status, race, gender, and generation— hierarchies that are long standing, but nevertheless dynamic. The Caribbean is a particularly rich context through which to investigate these issues of capital, dependency, and risk given the region's centrality to modern capitalism and the transatlantic slave trade, plantation development, circuitous systems of finance and insurance to keep plantation slavery afloat, and the massive debt burden on these small economies that remain in the shadow of the United States. It is also a space that has borne the full weight of capital's free-wheeling jaunt through the region. The general distrust of the novelty of this particular iteration of capital accumulation I capture in the book's title.

[1] Lima 2001 (*positions: east asia cultures critique* 9.2 (2001) 287-329) employs this phrase in a discussion of ghost films as historical allegory.

Virgin Capital evokes both the ostensible 'newness' of contemporary circuits of capital, and points to the long history of the islands now known as the US Virgin Islands (formerly the Danish West Indies). That these islands have served as a colony for seven European powers and today remain possessions of the United States is important context for *Virgin Capital* and the project of making clear the links between empire, capital, and neoliberalism. However, for the moment it is time for the beginning, a proper introduction to the EDC program.

Virgin Capital addresses the effects of a tax exemption program operating in the US Virgin Islands and engages primarily with the operation of this program on the poorest and largest of these islands, St. Croix. The initiative, the EDC program, encourages financial services companies to relocate to the American-owned islands and marks the emergence of the USVI as a node in global financial circuits. In exchange for generous tax holiday policies, including an exemption from 90% of US federal income taxes, these companies are expected to stimulate the local economy by hiring local workers and donating to charitable causes in the territory. The inception of this program in the early 2000s, and the attendant arrival of a number of primarily American financial firms and their Anglo managers, brought unexpected racial tension and deepening social and economic stratification to this US territory. On St. Croix, there has long been much suspicion of the EDC program, stemming from an understanding that the emergent EDC community, comprised of these recently-arrived financial managers and their families, is at best snobbish, and at worst racist. This interpretation comes largely as a result of their limited and selective engagements with the local community, including hiring preferences that favor upper middle-class Crucian women in their 20s and 30s, deepening

existing divisions of class and color in ways that are uncomfortably reminiscent of the race and color hierarchies of slavery and colonialism, while upending assumptions about generation and earning potential. The racialized history of wealth accumulation in the Caribbean, combined with the unevenness of contemporary neoliberalism and the piecemeal community participation of EDC beneficiaries, has resulted in the EDC program and its representatives being interpellated into the pre-existing social slot of wealthy, white, and racist. These representatives are so closely linked with the program that they are known in the Crucian community as "EDC people."

On St. Croix, 'EDC people' are regarded with ambivalence, with locals viewing them as both potential sources of generous income and as social pariahs intent on re-colonizing the island in the model of plantation slavery. This connection was so clear to my informants that a common response I received to questions about the EDC program and 'EDC people' was "slave days over!" This assessment of an economic program as an attempt to return to 'slave days' on St. Croix points to the ways in which these financial transfers, and the grounded, local practices that make them possible are racialized—against discourses of globalization and development that herald the overcoming of specificity, including nation, place, and race. Moreover, the effects of this development program are not entirely new for many Virgin Islanders, as this equation of the EDC with "slave days" points to the continuities between this program and historical processes in the region. While advocates of the EDC program herald its singularity, Crucians remain haunted by all that has come before. Describing his 1982 visit to St. Croix, Danish scholar and diver Leif Svalensen (2001) writes, "on a bus stop alongside the Fort I read: 'Free the Black People from the Chain.' This is not a battle cry from the nineteenth

century. It has been freshly painted! It appears as if the dissatisfaction among the black population of St. Croix is a never-ending problem" (Svalesen 2000: 207-208). Ongoing racial dissatisfaction on St. Croix in particular may well be the case, but in recent years many scholars have begun pointing to both the racialization of global processes, and continued—and increasing—racial tensions that mark the current moment (for instance, see Clarke and Thomas 2006).

Crucians provide an alternate theorization of capital vis-à-vis time. Rather than engaging with capitalist processes as discrete moments (e.g. plantation economy, colonialism, foreign direct investment), Crucians engage with these as a single process of racialized capital accumulation. This approach is at odds with the notion that Crucians who object to the EDC program and the larger project of neoliberalism simply do not understand their benefits, a position encapsulated in a 2004 editorial in the newspaper, the St. Croix Avis: "The EDC program is one of the greatest economic stimulus plans to ever grace the shores of the Virgin Islands. Our ability to understand and engage the opportunity will determine the future of the people of the Virgin Islands" (Difede 2004).

My assertion of spectral time allows for a positioning of the EDC program as but an instance in a longer process of racialized capital accumulation and makes clear that Crucians who are critical of this program do not simply misapprehend its benefits, but are instead providing an alternate framework and temporal orientation. Rather than the linear narrative of progress in which development initiatives such as the EDC are rooted, this competing analysis offers an engagement grounded in spectral time, a recognition of the ways in which elements of the past are (menacingly) present in contemporary operations of capital. The contribution of this ethnography is an engagement of the ways in which

such neoliberal initiatives—and the project of neoliberalism more broadly—produce novel outcomes (including the emergent subject-position of the 'EDC girl' that is the focus of this chapter) while drawing on both histories and contemporary relations of power. An engagement with spectral time provides space for a recognition of continuities as well as emergent spaces of agency present in the neoliberal project. Far from being either historically-determined or simply being a direct outgrowth of market forces, I argue that the operations of capital in the neoliberal moment allow for the *creation* of new spaces of possibility.

The use of spectral time is a way to not only make sense of race-based claims (e.g. the EDC as the re-emergence of 'slave days'), but also to position this moment in the long history of wealth and power consolidation that has been particularly evident in the Caribbean. It is through this lens that I contextualize Crucians' expectations concerning the spending and behavior of local women at work in the EDC sector. If the EDC exists as yet another instance of racialized capital accumulation in a long line of such projects, the novel figure of the EDC girl who 'belongs' both to the EDC program and the local community represents a space where community members are able to intervene in these centuries-long processes. That is, Crucians' insistence that EDC girls spend their paychecks in ways that benefit the wider community marks an attempt to dismantle the larger financial architecture that has long wrought havoc across the region and their lives. That is not to say that this attempt at intervention is without its problems: for instance, that these concerns about the implications of neoliberalism are played out through the bodies—and paychecks—of Crucian women echoes concerns long expressed by feminist scholars, many of whom have noted the multiple ways women and their

bodies are used to stand in for 'the nation' and its concerns (for instance, see Alexander and Mohanty 1997).

This chapter explores the complex position of Crucians—most of whom are women—who find employment in the EDC sector. The contractual obligation that EDC companies hire local workers has resulted in both the deepening of existing hierarchies and the emergence of a new subject-position—the 'EDC girl'—a middle to upper-middle class Crucian woman, who has most often attended a private high school on St. Croix and received a college education the US mainland. Taken together, these hiring practices are seen by many Crucians as deepening existing divisions of wealth and opportunity in ways that are uncomfortably reminiscent of social hierarchies established in the Caribbean during slavery and colonial rule. These workers are often recruited for either summer internships or, after graduation, full-time jobs by alumni of their private high schools[2]. Crucians from less privileged backgrounds frequently lament their inability to penetrate these networks, as news of internships is often spread by word-of-mouth and informal recommendations. This exclusion from employment opportunities in the EDC sector has significant financial implications, as the average salary in the US Virgin Islands hovers near $30,000, while EDC companies pay their employees an average of $66,000. This disparity is particularly stark in a context where 32% of the population exists below the poverty line.[3] While taking seriously the implications of this widened income gap, it remains vital to separate the economically-competitive salaries paid in the EDC sector

[2] These schools, St. Croix Country Day School and Good Hope School, merged in 2014 creating the largest private (non-parochial) school on the island.

[3] The per capita personal income in the US Virgin Islands in 2003 was $31,000—"significantly lower than in any U.S. state" ("Economic Impact of H.R. 4520 on U.S. Virgin Islands." *PricewaterhouseCoopers* 2004: 6). In order to contextualize the financial demands often placed on EDC workers, it is important to note the stark economic situation of the US Virgin Islands: "A high portion of the population of the Virgin Islands lives in poverty. In 1999, the latest year for which data is available, 32.5 percent of USVI residents had incomes below the poverty line, compared to just 12.4 percent of U.S. residents. Fully 29 percent of families in the USVI live in poverty, compared to just 16 percent in Mississippi, the state with the highest poverty rate. The USVI poverty rate is triple that U.S. poverty rate of 9 percent. For USVI families with children under 5 years of age, the poverty rate is 41 percent" ("Economic Impact of H.R. 4520 on U.S. Virgin Islands." *PricewaterhouseCoopers* 2004: 2).

from the vast wealth of EDC employers themselves. On St. Croix, there is widespread speculation of fantastic sums presumably paid to local EDC employees, notions that rarely correspond to the reality of entry-level positions, while nevertheless marking these employees with the social stigma of being affiliated with the program and burdening them with familial and societal responsibilities they often resent as unfair. These responsibilities are primarily financial; for instance, EDC workers frequently receive requests for loans or gifts of money and are often encouraged by local vendors to "spend up the EDC money." EDC girls are expected by much of the Crucian community to consume and behave in particular ways, as well as dispose of their generous salaries conspicuously on items such as clothing, cars, and vacations—spending expectations that often frustrate and overextend them and while at the same time pushing against the neoliberal emphasis on the individual broadly and personal consumption choices in particular. Nevertheless, the lived reality for most of the EDC girls with whom I worked and spoke was that they had pre-existing financial responsibilities, including schooling, transportation, and family expenses. For 'EDC girls,' then, the money they earn is not simply disposable 'EDC money,' but necessary income—despite the expectations of their fellow Crucians. Despite these financial realities, these salaries have simultaneously placed these women in a unique category of affluence and made them subject to additional financial expectations on the island. The status category of 'EDC girl' has come into being through these women's employment and the salaries they earn in the EDC sector, developments brought about by the introduction of St. Croix into global financial circulations. Additionally, however, the label of 'EDC girl' also indicates a new development category, as these women's identities are rooted to a significant degree in

their roles as *consumers* of various commodities. For 'EDC girls,' this spending is expected to benefit their networks on the island, positioning these young women in a new role of provider. The expectation that EDC girls will spend their relative wealth around the island is one widely shared by their families, friends—and often mere acquaintances. Rather than their subject-position being determined by their relationship to the means of production, the position of the 'EDC girl' is created through these women's access to capital and their ability to consume, a dramatic shift.

I want to take seriously these expectations that (1) the money these women earn is 'EDC money,' that is indelibly linked to the program, and (2) that they should spend this money freely and, importantly, in ways that benefit the local community.

Easy Money

The general assumption regarding work in the EDC sector is that it pays well and requires little labor—making these salaries, in effect, 'easy money.' As an example, during 2008 legal proceedings against an EDC business charged with tax evasion, the federal government charged, "the business of [this company] was not the sale of business services, but the sale of tax evasion…The government can find no evidence of any substantial business services performed by anyone. Specifically, we can find *no* evidence of *any* work performed…"[4]

This assessment that local employees are hired in support positions, and then not expected to perform much labor, was echoed by the CEO of one EDC company with whom I spoke, who stressed that his office had a difficult time hiring local employees as "the candidates all came in with a wink and a nod," expecting to be paid handsomely for

[4] *United States of America and the People of the Virgin Islands vs. James A. Auffenberg, Jr*, Appendix to Government's Response (2008)

very little labor. This money, then, is seen as if not ill-, then certainly questionably-gotten, and combined with the hiring preferences that favor lighter-skinned, relatively privileged young women, results in the sentiment on St. Croix that this money is easily-earned and that 'EDC girls' who receive this capital should spend it easily—and conspicuously—such that it benefits the Crucians without access to EDC capital.

Beyond reorganizing the ways opportunities are gendered, the presence of the EDC program has created an environment in which social, cultural, and economic capital—not to mention the human capital so prized by the neoliberal project—are being renegotiated. EDC girls occupy an ambivalent position in relation to both their community and their employers.

This ambivalence exists both within and outside the EDC sector. During the period I spent time at Stanford Financial, I also interned at a small EDC hedge fund. One day, near the end of this internship, I mentioned to my officemates that I would be leaving the office early, as I was expected at a Stanford employee appreciation mixer. On my way out, I was surprised when a woman who had rarely spoken to me before stopped me near the door. Eyeing the silk dress and blazer I had changed into for the event, she said to me "You know, *I* was invited to interview at Stanford, but I said no." While I was never able to get her explain this statement—or her reasons for declining the Stanford interview—the implication seemed to be that while she worked at an EDC company, employment at Stanford was a line she simply would not cross. Her reading of me, then, as an 'employee' at Stanford Financial, a company at the very epicenter of local debate about the legality and value of the EDC program, seemed to be that I had somehow been co-opted by the corporation and betrayed the local community.

Given the intense interrelationship in the Caribbean between class, race and color, both historically and at present, the educational backgrounds favored by EDC companies often translate into local workers being drawn from the middle to upper middle class and having lighter complexions. Here, the long-standing hierarchies of race and color in the Caribbean merge with the neoliberal project of becoming an entrepreneur of the self to produce the figure of EDC girl. These ambivalently-positioned actors embody the 'flexibility' described by Aihwa Ong (1999), while remaining invested in—and therefore subject to the demands of—their local community. This liminal position requires EDC girls to be nimble, ever-aware of their interlocutors. This state of hyper-awareness is necessary for EDC girls, given their relationship to global capital and Crucians' attempts to intervene in racialized wealth accumulation through their paychecks and consumption patterns. The investment of EDC girls in the social networks of St. Croix remain vital to this intervention—particularly in light of the instability of global capital in general and the EDC program in particular (for instance, the economic and social vacuum created by the too-numerous EDC companies that continue to leave the island quickly is much the same as that created when 'runaway shops' (Safa 1981) or tourist markets move elsewhere). As just one grim example of the precarity of the hierarchies emerging from this project, consider that the freezing of Allan Stanford's assets after his indictment left many Crucian employees unable to collect either outstanding paychecks or unemployment benefits:

> The newly unemployed run the gamut from information-technology professionals to investment analysts to electricians. What they all share is a sudden employment crises and financial uncertainty. "I sold my house and moved here with my family to take this job," said [one attendee], an IT professional who join[ed] Stanford a

> year and a half ago. "Now my family is here, my house is here. I've been looking off-island for work. I will probably have to leave my family here and let my kids finish school while I look for work. It's been a struggle. ." [A Department of Labor official] had good and bad news for the workers. The amount of unemployment benefits depends on both the employee and employer contributions to unemployment insurance." For you to get the employer share of the contributions, the employer would have to have deposited their contribution," he said. But not all Stanford's employer contributions had been made, and with all the assets frozen by the receiver for now, it is not clear when or if those employer contributions will be made" (St. Croix Source, Kossler 2009).

It is not coincidence that the workers understood to be the custodians of maximum human capital on St. Croix are female, an imbalance tied to the feminization of labor that emerged from the relocation of industrialization to areas like the Caribbean and one that continues in the current moment of development. Given that these workers are generally in their 20s and early 30s, it is of note that they are identified as EDC "girls," as scholars have marked neoliberalism's preoccupation with not just femininity, but particularly with 'girls' as the agents most capable of neoliberalism's processes of self-transformation (for instance, see Murphy 2013, Hayhurst 2013, Scharff 2012). Beyond their classification as 'girls,' Crucian women employed in the EDC sector are further positioned for inclusion in this neoliberal project by their middle and upper-middle class backgrounds, the aspiration for the neoliberal, consuming subject (Ringrose and Wakerdine 2008).

My engagement here is with the position of these workers—local women employed in the EDC sector, and the raced/color/class/gender histories and expectations that shape their experiences. I want to take seriously the implications of *expectation* as well as the possibilities–both liberatory and oppressive—they create. In a different context, James Ferguson (1999) has written about expectation, examining modernity and

the dashed hopes on the part of those in the Global South who had come to believe they might find a place in the ostensibly-global march toward 'progress.' Not only is that narrative flawed, Ferguson argues, it remains exclusionary—with the neoliberal "future" often excluding the abject category of blackness just as did the colonial past. Given these failures, Crucians root their hopes for an improved economic future in EDC girls privileging their community above their individual mobility and consumption patterns.

In addition to examining the expectations that inform and shape the experiences of these workers, I also take up the way they engage with and frustrate these expectations. For instance, these women owe their employment, at least in part, to their presumed *difference* from 'other' Crucians—that is, their pre-existing position of relative privilege, including access to private education and the (lack of) a local accent. However, it is through their *sameness* as fellow Crucians that members of the local community make their claims on these women. This, then, is the ambivalent positioning of female EDC employees: afforded singular opportunities and possibilities as a result of their affiliation with the program, yet also part of and—in the view of many of their fellow Crucians—financially responsible to and for the broader community on St. Croix. While these workers' employment at EDC firms is facilitated by their 'localness' (as businesses receiving EDC benefits are legally required to hire a certain number of local employees), I argue that these workers become seen as something else—something like 'local, with a difference' as a result of their relationship to the EDC program as well capital broadly.

In the extensive history of research on gender and labor in the Caribbean, scholars have long noted the feminization of labor during industrialization. Yet, while women were preferred employees in factories, their labor was devalued, as women were

not considered serious members of the workforce. Rather, they were presumed to be supported by their fathers, working only to earn 'pin money' for themselves (Enloe 1989). With the shift toward information and financial management, young women have remained desirable employees, although the logic for this preference has changed: In the current moment, women are understood as 'stable' employees, workers who will report for duty without fail as a result of familial and financial obligations. What is more, the neoliberal project is particularly invested in 'girls' as agents of self- and community-transformation, as evidenced for instance in the Nike Foundation's focus on 'the girl' as point of entry for ending global poverty (Murphy 2013). I argue that while they are performing a different kind of labor from that of women who work at in factories or in the tourism industry, 'EDC girls' can be understood as a part of this trajectory.

My focus here is on EDC "girls," yet their almost-always white mainland bosses are equally important to my analysis, as they are responsible for local hiring. Much like the EDC girls they hire who are alternately bombarded with requests for employment assistance and maligned for deigning to work in this questionable sector, these managers are ambivalently positioned on the island: while Crucians recognize their economic power, these mainland Americans are viewed as being unconcerned with St. Croix beyond an economic initiative. That is, they are understood as being inadequately socially invested in—not caring about—the island beyond the financial benefits afforded by the EDC program.

Given the inadequate social investment on the part of EDC beneficiaries, many Crucians expect EDC girls to patronize local vendors, spreading their relative and newfound wealth more widely than would otherwise occur. These community

expectations vis-à-vis the consumption patterns of EDC girls came into relief one Saturday on St. Croix when I was window-shopping with a friend who had recently begun working at an EDC company. As we stood outside, the salesman at one locally-owned clothing store (also a longtime friend who had heard the news of her recent hire) encouraged us to come in, goading her that she ought to "spend up that EDC money." In response, the newly-minted EDC girl laughed awkwardly, shrugging off his attempts to lure her into the store. This exchange is telling both because he targeted her specifically as a potentially-valuable customer, and because of the way he framed her capital as 'EDC money' that should be spent as easily as it was presumably earned.

In this instance, neoliberal expectations of privatization (of property, of identity, of spending decisions) clash with community demands for solidarity and more equitable dispersal of EDC capital, as these workers are expected to right the perceived wrongs of the EDC program. This is, as the EDC program and 'EDC people' themselves are understood to be engaged with the Crucian community in limited and problematic ways, EDC girls are expected to broaden the circuits of this capital to include local vendors. Here again, Crucians are articulating a critique of neoliberal logic by both naming its unevenness (by, for instance, positioning the program as an attempt to return to 'slave days'), and demanding restitution. At the same time, the expectation that these women both meet the demands of their employers and resolve the contradictions of larger economic systems on behalf of their communities create layers of complexity for living this critique.

Davies and Bansel (2007) and Harvey (2007) argue that increased global economic disparities and the simultaneous obfuscation of this end product with phrases

like ‘freedom,’ ‘individuality,’ and ‘market logic’ are central to the neoliberal project. Picking apart the notion of neoliberalism’s inevitability, the persistent “habit of treating the very idea that [increased inequality] is a mere and in some instances even unfortunate byproduct of neoliberalization,” Harvey insists that this consolidation of class power is at the core of the neoliberal project (2007: 119). Crucians’ expectations vis-à-vis the spending of EDC girls belie this notion that deepened inequality is an unintended effect of neoliberalism and instead name its intent and insist upon intervening in this cycle of racialized wealth accumulation. The notion of neoliberalism’s inevitability masks the historical and continuing structural inequalities that facilitate this program and countless others like it. Inherent in this rendering is the idea of ‘luck’ and being the fortunate recipient of a prize for which all are equally eligible (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, and Piot 2010). On this point, I spoke with Jasmine, a Stanford employee who I had met early on during my fieldwork. When asked if the EDC program was beneficial to the USVI as a whole, she responded:

> **Jasmine:** [The program] definitely brings something we didn’t have before because for me personally, I was working at another job where I wasn’t very happy, I wasn’t making as much money as I do now, and so, once I got hired here, it was just a better opportunity, more money. [But] I think people, you know, resent me. Like, for example, I went out last week and I was hanging out with some waitresses and waiters and I used to…be a hostess at that restaurant, and it was so weird, because I felt like there was a division, like we were very different and that they looked at me different because ‘oh, I work for [an EDC]’ and ‘oh

she must be making a lot of money and think that she's better than us.' And I [thought], 'I used to work [at this restaurant!]' It's just, I guess I got lucky! And I feel I did, I did get lucky! And…that does make me feel [badly] because this job doesn't define who I am. I mean, I'm grateful for it, because I'm able to do things that I wasn't able to do before.

Neoliberalism's logic of self-transformation and maximizing human capital are in tension with Jasmine's assertion that her fortunate employment in the EDC sector does not define who she is. As the expectation surrounding Crucian women's employment at EDC companies is that their salaries should be spent in visible ways, 'EDC girls' take frequent trips to the US mainland and beyond, buy expensive cars and clothes, and dine out regularly. Jasmine's encounter with her former restaurant co-workers during one such evening out and her insistence that "the job doesn't define" who she is indicative of the fact that for many on St. Croix, employment at an EDC company *does*, in fact, affect one's identity on the island. In this way of thinking, the new self—that is, the neoliberal subject—she is becoming is a consuming, market-driven improvement on her previous self. This emphasis on consumption is not unique to this program and is a central element of the privileging of market forces in all areas of life—in this instance, identity. Rather than being rooted in one's relationship to production, identity is now linked to consumption—and the neoliberal self must consume (see Davies and Bansel 2007).

These competing expectations—the right of an employee to be the sole arbiter of how her paycheck is spent versus a community demand for financial inclusion—index the degree to which neoliberal logic has failed to convince the vast majority of Crucians. This internalization of the logic of neoliberalism, what has been termed the 'mentality'

aspect of Foucault's theory of governmentality, has not occurred among Crucians who view their exclusion as part of a long trajectory of racialized capitalism. Through the financial pressure they exert on EDC girls, Crucians emphasize the significance of social solidarities against the individualism privileged by neoliberalism. The former is a worldview shored up by the manifold failures, implosions, and cruelties of capital in the region and in their very lives over time. Once again, the program is haunted by all that has come before.

Crucians who, like many people of color, have continued to find themselves at the bottom of the global economic pile in the wake of neoliberal policies and programs have expectations regarding the ameliorative potential of the spending of EDC girls. At the same time, EDC employers also have expectations regarding the behavior of these women, who are to be the local face of the program. There is something interesting at work here in the gendered nature of expectation, as the disappointments felt by Crucians vis-à-vis financial-services-as-development are expected to be addressed through the position of EDC girls. That is, as they recognize the ways they are *structurally* disempowered in global financial circuits, Crucians seek to exert increased authority and societal pressure on these local women. These expectations are only more strongly felt by EDC girls given that they come from, on the one hand their bosses, and on the other their parents, cousins, friends, and neighbors. This bind in which EDC girls find themselves reveals something interesting about *expectation*—particularly as these groups with competing agendas feel equally at ease mapping their structural concerns and interests out through the behavior and spending patterns of these local women.

In this awkward positioning, 'EDC girls' are subject to new expectations based on their employment within this sector, yet they remain subject to long-standing local gendered and generational expectations in the wider community. Despite this shift in their positioning because of their relationship to global capital and the neoliberal project, I wish to complicate an understanding of EDC girls as simply the victims of this global moment, dupes who are paid well by EDC firms to ensure the continued existence of the program, as I understand these women as drawing on both their background (their sameness) and their current status as EDC employees (their difference)—a combination that results in this new subject-position. Through their decisions about spending and choices about when and how to reveal their affiliation with the EDC program, these women not only inhabit, but play a role in crafting, their new subject-position.

Spaces of Consumption

Employment in the EDC sector often allows for the possibility of travel, both individually and with their companies. I was able to participate in one such instance of EDC travel during an office-wide weekend getaway to Las Vegas provided by an EDC employer.

Having traveled overnight from St. Croix, several 'EDC girls' and I met for breakfast in the lobby of our hotel on the Las Vegas strip and discussed our options for the day above the sounds of clicking cameras and dinging slot machines. What was significant about this scene was the fact of the trip at all: the reality that the EDC program has created opportunities such as this weekend escape. For supporters of the initiative, trips like this demonstrate the success of the program: all of the employees on this weekend were local Crucians—all had lived on St. Croix since at least high school, and

the vast majority were born and raised on the island. Pointing to this employment—and improved economic situation—of these Crucians, proponents of the EDC claim success for the program. Critics, however, point to selective hiring preferences as leading only to the repositioning of some Crucians through this program. When I asked one of the women on the Last Vegas trip what her friends back on St. Croix thought of her weekend off-island at her boss' expense, she responded: "Oh, they were excited, I guess. But I didn't tell everyone. You know, you can't tell everyone everything because they might either take it the wrong way or expect me to hook them up with a job." This, then, is the ambivalent positioning of female EDC employees—afforded spectacular opportunities and possibilities as a result of their affiliation with the program, yet also part of—and—in the view of some—responsible to the broader community on St. Croix.

For their part, EDC people generally shop in the island's tony downtown area, Christiansted (or simply, 'town'). This section of the island and points east ("East End") are synonymous with wealth and feature an independent bookstore, a growing number of cafes, and an emerging crop of high-end women's clothing boutiques—subsidiary industries that have developed to cater to those in possession of 'EDC money.' In her research on female workers in Barbados, Carla Freeman (2000) argues that women working in the island's 'informatics' sector are able to 'fashion' new identities, influencing transformations in notions of style and fashion in Barbados. For 'EDC girls,' clothing purchases are equally significant as they balance the expectations of their community against those of their employers. While many EDC offices are casual in a way that is unfamiliar to most Crucians—with EDC employees adopting a surfer-chic approach to office wear, including shorts, T-shirts, and flip flops—some EDC offices,

such as Stanford Financial, adhere to the opposite extreme, requiring a level of formality in dress uncommon on St. Croix. These differences in office norms as demonstrated through dress tie into what are seen as larger 'cultural' divisions between Crucians and 'EDC people.' While the relatively relaxed dress codes in many EDC offices mean that local women employed in this sector may be appropriately dressed for work in jeans and modest tops, it matters very much *where* these articles of clothing are purchased. As local residents, these women traverse the island (unlike 'EDC people' who generally remain in the exclusive neighborhoods in which they live and work), yet their regular presence in Christiansted—for either dining or shopping—rather than in other shopping districts that feature mass market chain stores is significant to their position. Despite their individual financial situations, EDC girls are expected to shop in the area, patronizing smaller boutiques over mass-market retail stores. Curious about the impact of consumption patterns of 'EDC girls' beyond clothing, I interviewed John Partner, the manager of a large car dealership on the island. John, a white man in his 50s from the US mainland who had moved to St. Croix in the mid-1990s, was the manager of one of island's more successful car dealerships. When we met at a local fast-food restaurant, I asked about the impact of the EDC program on his business—specifically if the kind of car he sold most had changed. In response, he told me that "the level of opulence has increased and the income level seems to be up on the island." When I asked what he meant by 'opulence,' he said that his customers on St. Croix had gone from wanting to purchase a vehicle, for instance, the Ford F150, and now shopped for "the next level," the Ford F250, a pricier model with leather seats and pricier amenities. When I asked John how much of this change he attributed to the EDC community, including local employees, he said that

about 10-15% of his business came from EDC people, and that he thought they had contributed significantly to this increased 'opulence' on the island. None of the 'EDC girls' with whom I spoke or was familiar drove the model of vehicle described by Partner—yet his observation about the 'opulence' of this group immediately rang true. For instance, Xio, a 26-year old Crucian woman who worked as an EDC office manager was so proud of her newly-purchased SUV that she often volunteered to run office errands as an excuse to drive around the island. At the time of my fieldwork, her co-worker Beth, too, had recently purchased a new SUV, while a third woman working in the office bought a sedan with leather interior—all costly investments they made willingly. Whether out of pride or sympathy, these women always insisted on picking me up when we were to spend time together, lest they be seen in the battered sedan that I drove around the island. It is impossible to discern with any certainty how much of this spending came as a result of these women's desire for more 'opulent' transportation and how much arose as a result of expectations of what a 'respectable' EDC employee should drive. Nevertheless, it is of note that these workers all purchased new, more luxurious transportation, once they began their EDC employment. Certainly, this could be an instance of their new salary filling a long-standing need, but members of the local community viewed these as necessary, almost-predetermined, purchases. The 'easy money' to which EDC girls now have access should, the logic goes, be spent quickly and conspicuously on the island. Again, this insistence on intervening in the centuries-long process of racialized wealth accumulation is rooted in a competing engagement with capital and time. Viewed through the lens of 'spectral time,' these spending expectations placed on ambivalently-positioned EDC girls mark a singular opportunity to rupture this

cycle—while placing these workers in the often-untenable positions of attempting to meet competing expectations.

Respectability Politics

As a result of the competing expectations to which they are subject, EDC girls are expected to both freely dispose of their newfound money and conduct themselves in an 'appropriate' (or 'ladylike') manner at all times. I experienced the policing of this behavior by EDC employees with whom I worked during the island's 2008 Carnival season. As an early-morning street party that is part of the island's annual celebration wound its way through town, it passed an EDC office where I saw three workers standing outside, taking in the scene. When I went over to say hello, surprise—and disapproval—clearly registered on their faces, with one woman saying to me: "Is that you? What are YOU doing in the J'ouvert?" For these women, my decision to participate in early-morning drinking and dancing in the street to calypso music along with hundreds of scantily-clad revelers was a serious miscalculation of the limits of behavior for ambivalently-positioned EDC girls, a transgression of feminine ideals of respectability and 'appropriate' behavior.

The expectations of EDC girls put forth by their employers are governed the behavior of EDC girls are governed in large part by gender, particularly notions of respectability,[5] a discourse which outlines 'appropriate' behavior as determined by race, color, class, and gender. This notion of respectability that is rooted in ideals of white femininity (and its approximation by women of color), in large part governs the behavioral expectations of EDC girls as they are to be the 'respectable' local face of the

[5] For more on the gendered, classed, and colored discourses of respectability and reputation, see Besson 1993; Douglass 1992; Wilson 1964, 1973

EDC program, behaving in friendly and nonthreatening ways always. If capital and its handlers desire safe harbor, these women are expected to be the physical embodiment of St. Croix's friendly business climate. As the representation of the island's openness to capital, EDC girls are expected to not only act 'respectably,' but also present a business-friendly aesthetic—more often than not, this aesthetic is one that privileges whiteness (or its approximation), while denigrating blackness. For instance, a few weeks into my time at Stanford, a recently-hired woman, Larissa, pulled me aside. Larissa, a darker-skinned Crucian woman in her early 20s, was one of the very few women of color working at Stanford who did not relax her hair. She'd wanted to talk to me, she said, about her hair and began to ask for my advice as to whether or not she should get the curls in her hair loosened by getting a chemical treatment called a texturizer. When I asked her why she was concerned about this, she said that it was just something she had been thinking about, and that she was wanted to have "nicer"—that is, looser—curls. Certainly, Larissa's decisions concerning hairstyle and texture are matters of personal choice. However, given her recent employment at this high-profile organization, a company foremost in a sector widely-suspected of having unspoken hiring preferences that favor lighter-skinned local young women, it is reasonable to posit a connection between Larissa's new workplace and her sudden concern with looking 'appropriate.' Further, the literature on black women's hair and notions of beauty and respectability, including Banks (2000), Candelario (2007), and Jacobs-Huey (2006), points to the significance of hairstyles beyond aesthetics.[6] That EDC employers expect Crucian employees to present

[6] In her work on Jamaica, Ulysse (2007) writes, "for dark skinned females of the middle class, color is mediated through observance of the culture of femininity and dress. One of the ultimate symbols of ladyhood is her well-groomed hair. At the time my hair was permed or 'colonized'—a term I used much to the shock of the females I encountered. [Shortly after cutting] my hair to a low Afro, a female hairdresser asked me if was going to 'texturize' the new 'fro, that is soften it with more chemicals. Yet I had cut off the hair precisely to get rid of all the chemicals" (Ulysse 2007: 117).

themselves in ways that privilege whiteness is noteworthy, considering the revisiting of these racialized hierarchies vis-à-vis beauty that has occurred elsewhere in the region of late—for instance, Deborah Thomas (2004) has documented the emergence of 'blackness' as an increasingly-valued category in Jamaica. This engagement with race and respectability politics on the part of EDC employers is also interesting given that many are largely unfamiliar with the long and complicated hierarchies of race and color in the Caribbean. Rather than explicitly seeking 'brown' women to work in this sector, these employers achieve the same result by privileging 'well-spoken' or 'appropriate' job candidates. The experience of Ellen demonstrates this point. Ellen was a darker-skinned woman in her late-40's who had not earned a college degree, but had taken a number of courses at the local university. After being employed in the EDC sector for four years, she was excited by the arrival of Stanford Financial and quickly applied to work for the company. When she was hired as an administrative assistant for a manager at Stanford, she quickly set her sights on a promotion to the position of 'concierge,' a front-desk position that would allow her to interact more frequently with clients. Ultimately, Ellen was passed over for this role, receiving the feedback that she was not "what [the company] want[s] for the front desk," as she did not have the "right kind of voice," presumably an allusion to the trace of her Crucian accent. That Ellen was placed in a less visible position points to the company's willingness to fulfill its requirement of hiring local employees, as long as such hires do not tarnish the company's projected image.

The Space of EDC Girls

While EDC girls face multiple—and competing—expectations, these women are simultaneously (and newly) expected to serve as breadwinners—both within their family

units and across the local community. The category of EDC girl represents a new subject position, informed by gender and one's relationship to the new kinds of social and economic capital that have been generated by the EDC program. This emergent identity is central, as it demonstrates the complicated relationships between gender, capital, and processes of subject-formation in the current moment of neoliberalism in general and the EDC program in particular. Neoliberalism has been described as an "enterprise society" (**Foucault citation**) and the neoliberal subject as an entrepreneur of [her] self" (**Scharff citation**). Pushing beyond this, EDC girls are expected to transform both themselves *and* their community—maximizing both their sameness (as Crucians) and difference (as the relatively-privileged entry points for capital) to alter the outcome of this instance of capital circuiting through the Caribbean. While the white male managers of EDCs represent a new kind of development initiative for St. Croix, one that is in line with other trends within neoliberal capitalist processes, the kind of "development" performed by women is also different as they stimulate the local economy in complicated ways. While much recent scholarship on female workers engages with women performing affective labor—particularly in the Caribbean where the service sector jobs of the tourism industry are often the most attractive options provided to island residents—my focus on EDC girls is an exploration of *middle class* Caribbean women and their complex relationship to neoliberalism. Rather than simply being pawns in global supply chains, EDC girls perform a fraught and vital mediating role between processes of neoliberal globalization, development initiatives, and their communities. What is more, it is central that these women face expectations concerning their spending, behavior, and allegiance from both the local community and their employers in the EDC sector, as I argue that these women

nimbly navigate these expectations and actively participate in the crafting of new social and economic realities.

Perhaps because employment at Stanford Financial was understood to be particularly lucrative or perhaps because of the suspicion surrounding the company since its arrival on St. Croix, it was here that I most clearly and immediately witnessed EDC girls navigating their ambivalent positioning. During our conversations at work, many female employees at Stanford expressed concern about the fact that employment at this company carried it with both behavioral expectations and assumptions about one's financial position and decision-making ability within the company. For example, a frequent complaint had to do with the fact that they often received unsolicited résumés and requests for money from friends, family, and in many cases, strangers on the street. In an attempt to negotiate this new social role, one determined by employment at this particular firm, many women at Stanford adopted strategies such as removing a company-specific identification before leaving the office and responding with vague descriptions when asked about their line of work (e.g. 'I work at a financial company' or, if pressed, 'an EDC company'—rather than at Stanford Financial, the company that was seen as the most exploitative of the EDCs). Regarding the former, this lapel pin was a much commented-upon golden eagle that employees received shortly after beginning their employment. Much to my chagrin, I received a keycard granting me access to the building in which I worked, but was never awarded this status marker, although a woman who began at the company on the same day as I did was invited to dinner with several managers a few weeks into her employment and presented with her golden brooch. This lapel pin, an embossed gold rendering of the company's trademark eagle, was often

noticed and cited by island residents as a shorthand for identifying Stanford employees. While having lunch with friends near the Stanford offices in Christiansted, I often noticed the ways in which the staff at various restaurants catered and were particularly attentive to Stanford workers, a group that was marked apart from other patrons and even other 'EDC girls' in the area by this pin—leading many of these women to remove their pin before leaving the Stanford Financial office. This negotiation of their ambivalent positioning points to the ways in which EDC girls are active participants in crafting their new position.

New Identities Through Consumption

The relationship between state, market, and nation has often been summarized by the assumption that the market has superseded that state, rendering it empty, useless (as in the many panics around 'failed states'). However, the argument of this text is that one has not replaced the other, but that these relationships are dynamic (Appadurai 1996; Hansen 2006; Hardt and Negri 2000; Kelly and Shah 2006; Ong 1999, 2006; Sassen 2003; Shah 2006; Singer 2003; Slocum 2006). For instance, St. Croix and its neighboring islands pit themselves against one another, slashing labor costs and legislating precarity for their residents in order to attract capital to their shores. In these ways, the market triumphs over the state's ability (and presumed willingness) to concern itself with the economic well-being of its people. Alternately, however, the EDC program exists and largely rests upon St. Croix's geopolitical positioning as a possession of the United States, a reality that forces a reconsideration of the notion that state power has been done away with entirely. As politically liminal spaces like St. Croix demonstrate, neoliberalism

has eroded the power of many states to ensure economic protections but it has simultaneously furthered the project of consolidating American supremacy in the form of political and economic power.

Despite my insistence on the complexity of interaction between states and markets, it is clear that engaging with the market through consumption has become the primary vehicle through which one inhabits and performs one's subject-position. As the neoliberal self is expected to be an agent of self-transformation—the CEO of one's own life—the primary method of this transformation is through consumption (see Davies and Bansel 2007; Ringrose and Wakerdine 2008). The subject-position of the 'EDC girl' comes into being through the relationship between labor and identity, as these employees become understood as more than mere representations of the program, but the *embodiment* of St. Croix's interpolation into the global financial market, as well as the centrality of consumption. Through their consumption, neoliberal subjects are able to craft and occupy their place in the spaces created by neoliberalism's sweep across the globe. Importantly, the ability of *some* to consume is meant to stand in for the potential buying power of all. This is a space of tension on St. Croix, a place where it becomes clear that neoliberal logic has not been internalized by most Crucians. The expectations—manifested as economic pressures—that Crucians place on the spending habits of EDC girls belie the notion that 'EDC money' is equally available to all. It is precisely because EDC hiring so clearly builds on pre-existing hierarchies of race, color, class, and gender in ways that exclude great swaths of the Crucian community that these residents expect relatively-privileged/appropriately positioned EDC girls to ensure some economic benefit to the wider community. As capitalism has run roughshod through the region before, the

expectations that EDC employees will spend their salaries in ways that benefit Crucians broadly, marks an attempt to intervene in the cycle of wealth consolidation. Certainly, anyone can be a millionaire—if only can they apply enough pressure on EDC girls to spend more freely.

Given the centrality of consumption to my analysis of the EDC program, it would be tempting to understand the initiative as one that allows white people from the mainland US to relocate to the USVI and 'consume' the island and its resources (for instance, Mimi Sheller (2003) has suggested this relationship in her work on the Caribbean). However, this reading discounts the agency of the Crucians with whom I talked and worked. Instead, I argue that the opportunities afforded female employees of EDC companies allow for the mutual consumption of the island *and* the EDC program. I understand these women as drawing on both their background and their current status as EDC employees—a combination that results in a new subject-position. EDC girls are neither ideal neoliberal subjects, convinced of the primacy of the market above all, as they are sympathetic to the critiques of the program offered by their fellow Crucians and remain invested in their community against neoliberalism's emphasis on the lone, entrepreneurial individual. Neither are they, according to many Crucians, ideal community members, as (1) their ability to be worked into systems of global capital mark their already-present privilege, and (2) they often frustrate spending expectations by shopping as they choose. EDC girls occupy neither of these positions perfectly. Rather, they are ambivalently-positioned, navigating the demands that come from all sides.

There is, of course, a darker reading of this: If the new subject-position occupied by female EDC employees represents something like a midpoint between local and

foreign, it stands to reason that they are expected—to some degree—to perform a mediating function in society: the local grist for the mill of global capital. I want to argue that while these employees *do* serve as something like a buffer between 'EDC people' and Crucians (an arrangement more than a little reminiscent of the island's societal structure under colonialism), there is more going on than this. Rather than merely being appropriated and performing a legitimizing function for the EDC program, I argue that through their everyday practices, these women are crafting—and themselves occupying—new spaces on St. Croix. Crucians are *consuming* this development initiative—actively negotiating its presence, reception, and possibilities on St. Croix. It is important to note, however, that while 'EDC girls' are 'consuming' the EDC program, their relationship to this initiative consistently places them in a precarious position on St. Croix, subject to competing expectations from both the broader community of St. Croix and the EDC sector in which they work. *As the* capital of EDC people is not seen as being reliably beneficial to the broader community of St. Croix, the consumption patterns of 'EDC girls' are expected to meet this obligation. *As the money* earned by EDC girls is presumed to be easily gotten—as a result of hiring preferences that favor the relatively privileged for employment and the dearth of actual labor understood to be performed by these workers—their fellow Crucians expect these women to dispose of their newfound relative wealth conspicuously, spreading this money throughout the community. These community expectations, manifested in calls to "spend up the EDC money" and requests for loans, coupled with the suspicion with which many Crucians view the sector in which 'EDC girls' work results in the ambivalent positioning of these women.

'EDC girls,' perhaps, are in the best position to 'use' this development program, as they are the Crucians with access to EDC connections and capital. Their ambivalent positioning, being beneficiaries of EDC opportunities not otherwise available locally, while at the same time viewed as responsible to the broader community, result in these 'lucky' women actively crafting their role in their community and workplaces. This ambivalence was summarized by one former Stanford employee who said to me, "everybody wants to talk bad about the EDC, but everybody wants [and here I would add that the primacy of the market ensures that they desperately *need*] a job."