

# **Pursuing an Appropriate Development Model for Caribbean**

## **Small Islands: Can Past Experience help Subvert**

### **the Neo-Liberal Agenda ?**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*The small islands in the Caribbean have always been externally-dominated. During the post-WW II period, the State and the people have struggled with their changing circumstances: often misguided, mismanaged, and mistake-ridden, but adaptable and resourceful nevertheless. This paper reviews past experiences and draws upon them to suggest paths more likely to bring about appropriate development of these small island's societies than Core-capitalism's self-serving directives of neo-liberalism.*

Paper presented in the Session ECO 17, "Neoliberal theory and practice in Latin America and the Caribbean" at the *Latin American Studies Association XX International Congress*, to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, April 17-19, 1997.

April, 4th, 1997

## Introduction

The Caribbean is a region of small states, many of them dismissed as "micro-states." Their maritime accessibility contributed to their incorporation into the Western world's earliest mercantile empires in the sixteenth century, and their insular character both defined them as well as exposed them to external forces, external patterns of interaction and flows of capital, people and goods. The contemporary (post-World War II) experience of Caribbean people reflects both a continuation of five hundred years of externally-dominated incorporation into a succession of metropolitan empires and domains, and a widely-differing record of contemporary changes in social, economic, and political system-interactions and evolutions in specific locales: island states, island clusters and Caribbean mainland enclave societies. Environmental diversity adds to the regional character, but it is external influences especially that have contributed to regional heterogeneity, with cultural and societal diversity distinguishing Caribbean people and places (Boswell and Conway, 1992).

The externally-dominated and colonial/metropolitan-propelled agendas of Caribbean economies came under challenge in the early decades of the twentieth century, driven by the peoples' desperate state of impoverishment, destitution and exacerbated by colonial office neglect. Of course, there were the enumerable Commissions that regularly reported on the deplorable situations, recommending local action, and charging colonial responsibilities to address the peoples' plight. In the aftermath of World War II, the time for concerted action, the need for 'development' and for self-determination for Caribbean people arrived. Political action brought about the de-colonialization of many territories, though some fifteen micro-states remain to this day as metropolitan dependencies. Once reluctant, many of these colonial outposts -Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands and Montserrat - are now more confident of their external dependency because recent trend in service sector growth, tourism and industrial diversification have favored them (Connell, 1993; McElroy and de Albuquerque, 1996). The majority of the British West Indies, after the demise of the well-intentioned but flawed experiment of a West Indies Federation in 1961, sought political enfranchisement as a pathway to economic self-reliance and development (Lewis, 1976, 1985).

Region-wide, European hegemony gradually gave way to North American and especially United States' hegemony, completing the transfer of this "backyard, Mediterranean sea" region to the external domination of the United States. This geo-political manoeuvre was invoked when the Monroe doctrine ruled the hemisphere's waves in the nineteenth century; gained currency with the acquisition of Caribbean dependent territories - Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands - and assumed a neo-colonial garb, as Britain finally walked away from its Caribbean colonial responsibilities and acquiesced to North American (Canadian and U.S.) geo-political leadership in their ex-colonial domains (Thorndike, 1988). We should be reminded, lest one of the region's significant historical events is not awarded the merit it is due, that Haitian "independence" in 1804 preceded United States' hegemonic overtures. France, on the other hand, retains her *Departements D'Outre Mer*, Martinique, French Guiana and Guadeloupe and dependencies. The Netherlands hasn't formally relinquish their colonial ties with Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and St. Maarten. And, British sovereignty still persists over Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgins, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos. Other politically independent countries,

such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, saw their incorporation into the U.S. geo-political sphere become the prevailing reality of their inter-dependent status: politically, economically, even culturally.

Then came the troubled times of the 1980s, a world recession and massive indebtedness as the optimistic development plans of many of the region's politically independent states were stymied, and the international financial community sought succor in IMF- and World Bank-imposed "conditionalities," burdening the relatively powerless debtors with the costs and the pain. The ensuing re-structuring of the global capitalist project saw the ascendance of international corporate capital as the neo-liberal hegemon of the Americas: overseeing U.S. "national" capital interests' dominance, while at the same time reliant on its allegiance. Globalization beget neoliberalism in North American relations with her hemisphere, and Caribbean affairs, and political economic relations, were now more often subordinate to wider hemisphere and global issues. In essence, the Caribbean small states became even smaller geo-political players in this globalizing world (Aponte Garcia and Gautier Mayoral, 1995; Bakan, Cox and Leys 1993). Yet, the people of the region, struggled to adjust to this new dependent condition and this new dominance, as they have to other external regimes. Today, structural adjustment's "bitter medicine" is no less painful, but there is perhaps some cause for optimism, rather than a resigned pessimism (Conway, 1996).

Also rooted in the region's long-standing incorporation into external mercantile empires, colonial and neo-colonial spheres of core dominance, and the continuation of these deep-seated dependent relations to this day, is the initiation and maintenance of migration traditions (Conway, 1989; Marshall, 1982; Patterson, 1987; Richardson, 1983, 1992; Thomas-Hope, 1992). Migration colonized the region's islands, and colonial enclaves. Convict deportations, the forced mass transfers of the slave trade and the recruitment via indentured contracts ensured a trans-oceanic supply of plantation labor as well as bringing a global cultural and ethnic plurality of peoples into the region. Next, sometime at the behest of international capital, but often as not stimulated by declining circumstances in the islands, and primed by the skillful exhortations of overseas recruiters (Richardson, 1985), migrants (men and women) sought better opportunities "off the island" (Crane, 1971; Thomas-Hope, 1992), either within the region, or beyond in the American hemisphere, or in European "mother counties"(Conway, 1989). Today, emigration and repetitive circulation moves are widely-held strategies among all classes of Caribbean people. Both Caribbean source and extra-regional, receiving communities in such host metropolises as England, France, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States, are linked in social and familial networks of mutual support, wherein the maintenance and sustenance of such networks enable Caribbean people to live, survive, and even prosper as they live "between two worlds" (Conway, 1988, 1994; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Palmer, 1995). And, as a response to neoliberalism and its more punitive consequences, my argument for a sustainable future views future Caribbean progress (preferring this objective target to the loaded term "*development*") and Caribbean peoples' mobility as highly inter-related, highly inter-connected and most creatively and progressively inter-dependent.

Never mind that today in the 1990s neoliberalism reigns supreme: scarcely challenged globally, reluctantly embraced regionally, and resignedly prationalized in social science

commentary. In part because of the apparent strength and power of the globalization message, and in part as a response to 'rational' arguments that point to the powerlessness of Caribbean small states, their structural limitations and their political economic shortcomings (Watson, 1995), I want to present an **alternative perspective**: more hopeful and more *optimistically progressive*. Specifically, I wish to present some selected dimensions of appropriate development for Caribbean small islands, that utilize the migration diasporas, seek opportunities for development and management of low-density tourism styles, seek progressive solutions for local development and economic diversification, and build upon the human resource strengths of the region's small island societies, including those absent, sojourning, and resident. I want to advocate a progressive agenda for Caribbean small island societies that builds on their strengths, that progressively seeks to learn from the mistakes of the recent past, and advocates emulation of successes of some island initiatives. This then, is "work in preparation," since I am proposing that progressive new approaches should be sought by Caribbean people, Caribbeanists, and Caribbean institutions, which build upon the maintenance and continuity of on-going **progressive** practices, while learning from the mistakes of the past. I advocate a focus on global-to-local relations to forge sustainable paths that are *resistant* to the harsh excesses and dehumanizing consequences of neoliberalism, and that *challenge* free-market triumphalism, with the emphasis on "**acting locally**."

The paper that follows deals first with the divergent paths that Caribbean island states, small and not-so-small, have taken in their post-World War II search for solutions to their colonial neglect and distorted (under)development states. This temporal record, though disappointing and often misdirected, is examined to see whether there are lessons to be learned, and whether the peoples' responses harbor the bases for progressive institutional building and societal progress. Colonialism, post-colonial experiments and dis-illusionment with self-sufficiency, U.S. and Core-capitalist hegemony, peripheral dependency status, excessive indebtedness: these are the regional realities of Caribbean small islands and their external relations throughout the post-world War II period. On the other hand, evidence of communal collective action at local and regional scales, of self-help activism, of entrepreneurialship, of innovation and creativity counter the despondent mood that such powerlessness might engender. Experiments with social democratic regimes leave legacies. Social movements invoked "nationalism", union-movements invoked socialism, self-help initiatives like credit union associations, home self-building, communal farmers market activities have prospered. Local environmental activism has spurred *resistance* to thoughtless development projects. The successful achievements of Cuba's "*microbrigades*" are better respected in the region than in North America, Cuba's recent "green revolution" is too. The region's educated have always been at the forefront of opposition to the "forces of Imperialism," whatever their guise. The educational systems of many of the ex-colonial islands have remained their treasured asset, and this reservoir of human capital certainly offers hope and potential for the future. Most significantly in today's globalizing world, the numerous diasporas constitute an enlarged resource reservoir that the Caribbean can little afford to ignore. The second part of the paper then, presents my alternative perspective on the **Caribbean future**. First, here's the post-world War II experience.

## **B: Caribbean Development Models: Many paths, stymied progress.**

### **B.1: The 1960s, Decade of Caribbean National Independence Movements**

What were the legacies of colonial, plantation exploitation that fostered the growth of the independence movements in the post world War II era ? The alliance of sugar and merchant capital to continue these classes' dominance of island economies was one. The emergence of "reconstituted peasantries," as a small farming class always at the margins of agrarian society where plantation labor still offered proletarian wages, was another. Then there was the growth of a working class (helped by international socialist movements, and cemented in the experiences of two World Wars). Alliances of a professional, middle-class with the masses brought on struggles for constitutional reform and a widened franchise, thereby fomenting another societal transformation of note. Some would argue this alliance undermined the prospects for real progressive societal transformation, however, while it successfully fought for, and won political independence (Beckles, 1990; Sunshine, 1985).

The region's economy remained distorted and "peripheral," with two characteristics prevailing. One, was the island economies' reliance on resource extractive economic sectors, especially agriculture and mining. The other was a reliance on imported industrial and commercial goods and heavy dependence upon foreign capital and expertise to feed the people, service industry and finance internal capital expansion. The region's societal woes were equally severe. There was widespread poverty, high levels of malnutrition, inadequate and unhealthy housing stocks, little to none social welfare services, and a general lack of educational and occupational opportunities for the masses. The region's depressed state was an accumulation of decades of hardship, of declining fortunes in the plantations, of not-so-benign neglect, and of the structural limitations of many an island's once-profitable, but now economically-stagnating and too-small, plantation-mercantile economy. The Caribbean's monocrop plantation systems might seek to diversify their export staple crop, substituting bananas for sugar, bananas for arrowroot, bananas for cocoa, coffee for cocoa, citrus for sugar, but such limited adjustments of the island's agrarian production were unlikely to bring back the profitable days of the previous centuries.

The various colonial office responses to the plight of their Caribbean outposts were similar: pessimism reigned ! They perceived their territories as geographical problem areas, with overpopulation and small arable land areas making an untenable equation, with a racist view that denied industrialization as an option, and with views on geographical determinism that suggested development in such tropical climates was virtually impossible (Kuznets, 1960). They conducted commissions of enquiry, largely as a response to growing social unrest and mass political agitation, though island governors and administrations also sought colonial office agency to substantiate their petitions for more revenue to distribute. The colonial office administrators also found the infrastructural facilities inadequate, and yet they planned extensive road and power networks, they envisaged growth and territorial coverage of public utilities, and approached this development initiative in terms of state enticements, viewing the state as "facilitator" of private enterprise initiatives in this sector. Most uniform was the practice of Colonial Offices region-wide to view the inflow of foreign capital as coordinated and directed through their offices. The level of development attained would be directly attributable to the amount of foreign capital invested, or

directed to projects within each's domain (Benedict, 1967). The assessment of viable projects was to be guided by Colonial office permission, and funded by grants or state-facilitated private ventures, and often such projects were merely adequate, scarcely ever forward-looking or expansive. For example, some of the smallest Windward Islands were not deemed "developable" and airport facilities with the most meager and limited capabilities were finally built, often reluctantly. The same was argued with respect to up-grading port-facilities, upgrading communications networks, developing health care facilities: simply providing the most basic facility with the most limited technological equipment, was considered "more than adequate" (O'Loughlin, 1962).

The post-colonial path was therefore hard, with the new political leaders suffering from Fanon's (1967, 1968) "post-colonial mentalities." The nationalist model(s) of economic development were more often than not outgrowths of the postwar colonial development strategies, constrained by the same set of limiting visions that they inherited from their colonial mother-administrations, development advisers, foreign engineers, agricultural extension offices, teachers, doctors, health practitioners, legal experts, and metropolitan commercial interests. There were however, some aspects of this struggle for independence that reflected progress. The main pressures against the injustice of the old colonial regimes came from the popular masses -the workers, unionized and organized, the peasantry, and the unemployed. Mass mobilization legitimized the political climate as never before, a broader franchise was realized, there was more local autonomy, better pay and better working conditions, better prices for agricultural goods, and more security of living standards. Unfortunately, the very allegiance between the new professional class and the masses that had enlarged and enlivened the mass movements that posed a real challenge to the old elite structures, and to the colonial authorities, proved to be the movements' "Achilles heel." Time and time again, the new leaders of the independence movements, who were either drawn from the intermediate professional classes, or who betrayed their class-roots once in power, chose to *de-politicize* the masses, rather than further build upon their support and reverse the neo-colonial ordering of institutional power and authority (Beckles, 1990; Thomas, 1988). Sir Arthur Lewis' solution that islands in the region should embrace industrialization as an essential economic transformation was, in its full theoretical formulation, a thoughtful and progressive model to follow (Lewis, 1950). Unfortunately, in practice the derivative "industry-by-invitation" policies failed to fully implement Lewis' broader agenda of sectoral diversification, of the need for substantial investments in human capital development, and of the need for diversification in the agricultural sectors (Bernal *et al.*, 1984).

## B.2: The 1970s: A Disastrous Decade for Regime Experimentation

Even by the beginning of the 1970s, the nationalist agendas for economic development and social progress were in conflict: the promises offered appeared to be unfulfilled. Yet, there was a plethora of paths to follow, from Cuba's socialist experimental model, to Puerto Rico's industrialization strategy that sought "modernization at all costs" by embracing externally-directed capitalization of the island's economy. The political regimes varied, and the genesis of each was invariably due to a combination of internal and external factors, as well as regional influences. As it turned out, the 1970s was not an era where peripheral capitalist, or socialist, models of

development were going to be given the time to mature, evolve and become refined or re-structured according to each regime's longer term objectives or goals.

International, macro-structural events interceded to such an extent that the countries of the Caribbean region faced an economic development "crisis," which was part a growing "debt crisis," partially due to regime fallibilities, partially dependency-related, and partially an outcome of the region's continuing peripheral and marginal relations with metropolises. There was the unravelling of the Bretton Woods Agreement initiated when President Nixon took the US dollar off the gold standard, and made more disorderly by the growth of Euro-dollar markets. Then there were the two OPEC oil price shocks in 1974-74 and in 1978-79, which posed such energy cost burdens to render many national accounts in default. Also, the ensuing heavy indebtedness heralded the intrusion of the IMF in the fiscal affairs of many Caribbean countries, Jamaica especially. Cuba, isolated by United States' administrative fiat sought neo-colonial support from the Soviet Union to avoid its version of the 1970s crisis. Puerto Rico's industrialization progress faltered, but her peoples' answer was migration and circulation to the U.S. mainland, or greater reliance on the Federally-mandated, social welfare net. The Dominican Republic's openness to multi-national corporate involvement (Wiarda and Kryzanek, 1992), didn't spare this country from structural malaise and down-turns of national performance, that also prompted the beginning of a large-sale exodus to America, or New York City, often by way of neighboring Puerto Rico (Hendricks, 1974; Morrison and Sinkin, 1982). For the politically independent nations of the remainder of the Caribbean, countries like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Antigua, Haiti, and the Eastern Caribbean small islands, their nationalist experiments foundered in the 1970s. These are the stories, in brief.

### **B.2.1: Radical Options**

There were new, national development models posed as "alternative paths" to peripheral capitalism, to U.S. core hegemony, to international corporate dominance and subordination. These "non-capitalist" experiments in State-led, post-colonial transformations were driven by popular desire and political support for more local ownership of the economy, more self-reliance, and more local decision-making. Political independence was to be practiced, with the expectation that economic independence, and with it societal independence, would be forthcoming. Three are treated, Guyana, Jamaica and Grenada, the fourth candidate Cuba, is not. Cuba is bypassed because it was the arch-typical model, and its dependent relations with the Soviet Union, the uniqueness of Fidel Castro's regime, and the Cuban experience of over thirty years at odds with U.S. administrations from Kennedy to Clinton, render it impossible to easily summarize here.

There was Guyana's "*Co-operative Socialism*" which came into being in 1970 four years after political independence, promoted by Forbes Burnham's People's National Congress (PNC) government on a wave of militant, anti-colonial popular support. Long held traditions of trade unionism and anti-colonial fervor were common among both the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese sub-populations, so that the PNC adopted a political platform that espoused popular socialist rhetoric while the party and clients pursued the more self-serving agenda of legitimizing the State's (their) ascendance to become a national bourgeois class (Thomas, 1983). The principals of *Co-operative Socialism* were quite explicit, and straightforward:

there was to be a tri-sector national economy under private, State and co-operative control, with the co-operative sector eventually becoming the dominant sector; there was to be an expansion of State ownership through the nationalization of foreign assets; there was a declaration that from henceforth a strategy of national development would be embraced and a program to feed, clothe and house the nation would be implemented; and finally, the PNC as ruling party, was to be the vanguard party with ultimate authority, even over the State. Though often more rhetorical than effective, the PNC embarked upon its mission. The bauxite industry was the first to be nationalized in 1972, with Reynolds Aluminum and Alcan the foreign corporations affected. Indeed, it was this issue that appears to have prompted Forbes Burnham's sudden change of political ideologies and his declaration on behalf of the PNC to follow his co-operative socialist path. Then in 1976, the State nationalized the sugar industry, appropriating the sector from Booker McConnell Ltd, who owned over 90% of the sugar plantation assets in Guyana. Political propaganda was more in evidence than actual delivery of promises in the PNC's national development program to deliver basic goods, and the Burnham regime's record of corruption, clientelism, nepotism, patronage excesses, and their gratuitous diversions of State revenues, became legendary in the region, if not the butt of region cartoonists and cause for wide-spread disrespect among the region's political leaders.

There was a gradual and accumulating deterioration of public services, as PNC- patronage favored select PNC-supporter areas, while neglecting others, especially those identified as PPP-supporter strongholds. All aspects of the public infrastructure suffered neglect: drinking water supply, electricity provision, postal services, telephone service, and public transport. All major social services and welfare nets have deteriorated, with PNC withdrawal of revenues, neglect of maintenance provisions, and assaults (by mandated freezes, and the like) on the pay-scales of professionals in these service institutions. Few new houses were built, though the opulent mansions of President Burnham and his "PNC-troika" were lavishly maintained. Guyana's education system, once the envy of her fellow Commonwealth neighbors, was treated shabbily, yet it struggled on despite the regime's short-sightedness. The University of Guyana was treated likewise, but perhaps this was more deliberate because faculty and students were at the forefront of the criticism of the corruption and malfeasance of the Burnham regime. Between 1976 and 1980 there were serious declines in real per capita income, to the tune of -15%. Unemployment rose precipitously, and a 1980 estimate that 40% of the labor force was seeking work, demonstrates the severity of the economic stagnation that had occurred. Rates of inflation rose to double-digits by 1979, and were further compounded by the government's decision to simply print more money, and to extend their debt-burden (Thomas, 1983).

Through the decade of the 1980s, Guyana continued to stagnate and regress. The PNC continued its authoritarian practices, effectively disenfranchising the masses, and the IMF-structural adjustment program "conditionalities" didn't alter the situation for the better. Quite abruptly, Forbes Burnham's death in 1985 signified the end of Guyana's "shame." Desmond Hoyte continued to lead a PNC government but his was a more conciliatory position. Finally, 1992 heralded the end of nearly twenty-eight years of PNC rule, the opposition party the PPP were voted into office, and the much-awaited return of normalcy, democracy, civility, and national self-respect for Guyanese, both at home and abroad, arrived.



Another "alternative path" was Jamaica's "*Democratic Socialism*" devised by Prime Minister Michael Manley as his political party, the People's National Party, embraced socialist teachings. Manley's (1974) book "*The Politics of Change*" served as the blue print for social transformation. In it, he advanced some of C.L. R. James' (1969) ideas for participatory democracy, he believed in the necessity for a "politics of popular participation" and generally adopted Nyerere's (1969) critical position towards colonialism, capitalism and imperialism, i.e. attitudes and psychological barriers need to be overcome, self confidence and national pride needs to be instilled, before there will be success in productive enterprise, in local independence, or in progressive development. Like the Guyanese premier, Michael Manley took on the foreign bauxite corporations, though he didn't go so far as to attempt the outright nationalization of their assets. Instead, Manley's Jamaican government introduced a production levy set at 7.5% of the selling price of alumina, replacing the previous method that strongly favored the mining company. In November, 1975, the PNP pronounced their "Thirteen Principals of Democratic Socialism," encapsulating the new government's stance in socialist rhetoric, and promoting people-power, socialism, and cooperation along with more reasoned assessments of Jamaican reality such as a continued respect for property ownership, for private sector autonomy, and the promotion of a mixed economy, part State-owned, part private (allowing some foreign ownership while promoting domestic ownership). Manley articulated five main aims in another of his literary challenges "*Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery*": i) to reduce the dependence of the Jamaican economy; ii) to create a mixed economy with the commanding heights under state control; iii) to reduce social inequalities; iv) to deepen political democracy; and v) to forge an independent foreign policy (Manley, 1982).

The bauxite levy controversy, international exposure and acclaim, and the Jamaican leader's eloquence, thrust Michael Manley onto the world stage as a spokes(person) for the "New International Economic Order" in the Non-Aligned Movement, Socialist International, and on behalf of the Third World in general. Cuba's Fidel Castro and Michael Manley held forth on behalf of the Caribbean and Latin American oppressed peoples and the PNC's willingness to entertain closer political and economic ties with Cuba, evoked suspicion and hostility from the United States' State Department. A series of destabilization efforts were put into effect, including CIA activities, media pressure on tourist visiting, and loan denials (Thomas, 1988). Although there were economic repercussions, and an escalation in social tensions, the Jamaican peoples' responses in the 1976 elections were predictably partisan and nationalistic. Michael Manley's PNP was returned to power with a landslide vote, with the charismatic leader going so far as securing "Rasta" support. But, 1977, was to see the premier's demise.

After confronting the IMF's draconian conditionality package with his "we are not for sale" declaration, within three months Prime Minister Michael Manley had to about-face on his polemic stance and accept a IMF credit line of US\$74 million, along with the humiliating conditions of the institution's structural adjustment program: begin a program of anti-labor measures; hold wages constant; agree to a 40% devaluation of the Jamaican dollar; and undertake a series of cutbacks in public spending. For the next two years, Michael Manley and the PNP abandoned their populist agenda, attempted to regain the political high-ground via pragmatism, and generally lost credibility among the electorate. It was no surprise when in the elections of

1980, Edward Seaga, and the opposition Jamaican Labor Party were swept into power on a electoral landslide of their own (Ambursely, 1983).

Prime Minister Seaga, took great pains to cultivate a friendship with the new Republican President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, and offered Jamaica as a worthy partner and recipient of development assistance under the soon-to-be-launched Caribbean Basin Initiative. The Jamaican economy, after eight years of experimenting with "democratic socialism," and five years of baiting (the United States) Uncle Sam's beard, was in crisis: real income fell 25%, real investment fell 65%, GDP fell 18% between 1972 and 1980; the cost of living had spiraled 320% in the period; unemployment had remained around 30% of the labor force throughout, and manufacturing production was only at 30% capacity by 1980 (Ambursely, 1983). Emigration to the United States was encouraged, or at least not hindered by the United States' INS. Middle- and professional classes featured in an exodus that was in part stimulated by major breakdowns in civil disorder in Kingston and by the onset of crimewaves that threatened property and people quite indiscriminately, or so it seemed. One estimate suggests that two thirds of the Jamaican Chinese community left the island by 1980, because of the pressures brought on by such crime, allied as it appeared to be with racial and class tensions. Since then, successive governments have struggled under IMF conditionality strictures. Despite programs to foster higher levels of direct foreign investment, and other neoliberal plans and policies, the island has failed to become Seaga and Reagan's open-economy, export-oriented "model of success," and Jamaica remains the troubled island it has been since political independence (Klak 1995).

A third "alternative path" was attempted by the New Jewel Movement in Grenada who's accession to power in 1979 in a "bloodless coup" started their "*Revo*" and gave this small (45 person-strong) group of intellectuals and radical leaders an opportunity to chart a "non-capitalist path towards development (Jacobs and Jacobs, 1980). The Peoples Revolutionary Government's socialist program was optimistic as well as idealistic. Several objectives were framed to thoroughly re-develop the island's economy: i) construct the Point Salins international airport to handle wide-bodied jets as the much-needed infrastructure for a restructured, locally-owned tourism industry; ii) encourage growth of a mixed economy with three major institutional bases - state, co-operative and private - with the state playing the leading role; iii) improve the quality of life of citizens through a comprehensive program aimed at upgrading social services and ensuring basic needs were met; iv) diversifying overseas trade and diversifying the portfolio of foreign aid and assistance, particularly courting assistance and linkages with COMECON countries and Cuba, and improving South-South co-operation (Thomas, 1988).

Bernard Coard as Minister of Finance certainly managed to diversify the PRG's assistance portfolio, Maurice Bishop, the Prime Minister, befriended Fidel Castro and Cuban aid and assistance was very much in evidence in revolutionary Grenada. Unfortunately, the international acclaim that Bishop garnered, championing the anti-imperialist cause on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement was often made at the expense of the Reagan Administration. Bishop's rhetoric, like Michael Manley's, was answered by U.S. State department reaction and displeasure. Bishop's principalled stance(s) might have been championed by the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus, but the Republican administration was not so amused. In the end, the "*Revo*" only lasted four years before internal strife within the ruling socialist party, the Peoples Revolutionary

Government- notably a military coup and assassination of Maurice Bishop and other followers - provided an opportunity for the U.S. military and President Reagan's administration to coordinate the invasion and occupation of that Windward "Spice Isle," (for details of this "gun-boat action" see Conway, 1983b, 1983c). Grenada was gradually re-admitted back into the fold, her airport was finished, her tourist facilities opened to foreign finance, and her national economy was to be open, export-oriented, and foreign capital dominated. A conservative path was to be trodden, and the nationalist fervor of the "revo" was suppressed, and/or put aside by the majority in the island.

### **B.2.2: Conventional options**

There were development models that embraced the economic's discipline's current views for national planning and industrialization: a favored model coming from one of the region's favorite sons and Nobel Laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis. Puerto Rican development was to take its great step forward with "Operation Bootstrap," and the encouragement of footloose industries to her shores. "Industry-by-invitation" was the more derogatory label used by the radical economists at the University of the West Indies, the New World Group, to personify this encouragement of international corporate penetration. Puerto Rico provided a regional showcase for this model, and as argued later, her experience was not one to emulate. One Caribbean island that attempted a variant of this industrialization model was Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad was blessed with oil and gas resources, both on- and off-shore, or so the politicians wished it and duly spent thoughtlessly. Her "alterative path" was labeled "*State Capitalism*" or what their Prime Minister Eric Williams termed as a "middle path for development" (Conway, 1984; Sandoval, 1983).

Using OPEC-derived windfall gains from her oil and gas reserves, Eric William and his People's National Movement (PNM) party embarked on a massive restructuring scheme to literally purchase most foreign-owned assets, and industrialize and modernize the Trinidadian economy. Five main thrusts were at the fulcrum of this State Capitalist model: I) state utilization of oil revenues to create large-scale resource intensive export industries, especially energy-intensive export industries such as fertilizers and iron and steel production; ii) to negotiate state and TNC joint-ventures; iii) the accompanying development of import-substituting manufacturing and assembly-plant operations with export and domestic market capabilities; iv) the use of the oil-boom surpluses to upgrade basic infrastructure; and v) the disbursement of government revenues into welfare funds, plus massive, yearly transfers and subsidies to bolster state-owned industries that were not profitable, though they had large patronage-fueled payrolls. By the end of the oil bonanza in 1983, Trinidad's economic engine had over-heated, the glut of revenues had not realized a much needed diversification, and the exchequer was to be once again reliant on foreign indebtedness(Conway, 1984; Ryan, 1991; St. Cyr, 1993; Thomas, 1988).

The development path taken by Barbados after gaining political independence in 1966 might be best characterized as "conservative and pragmatic." Five dimensions characterized the island's progress, which some suggest may be the region's success story (Blackman, 1982, 1991; Worrell, 1987). First, the two major parties, the Barbados Labor Party (BLP), and the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) have both ruled as residing governments in this Parliamentary democracy, exchanging positions as "opposition" and "ruling party" in accordance with the

popular vote. Both hold to parliamentary codes of civility, both view the promotion of political and social stability as a vital necessity, and agree on high standards of democratic tolerance. Both are committed to maintaining law and order, respect for the judiciary and the police force, and both hold to traditions of "social democratic" ideals, built upon British and European Fabianism and models of the welfare state. Second, the economic policies successive governments have pursued since independence are non-ideological - being technocratic, pragmatic and rational. Barbadian economic policy-making has never been framed in confrontational posturing, and its conservatism has never been flaunted, since the essence of the island's low-key approach has been cultivated as the most pragmatic response for her governments to practice.

Third, every government, BLP or DLP, whether led by Sir Grantley Adams, Tom Adams, Erskine Sandiford, Errol Barrow, or Owen Arthur, has by and large accepted the colonial mandate and early more nationalist strategies, with their outward orientation and their heavy reliance on foreign capital investment. Each government's goal was to seek to make the programs they inherited more effective, so that continuity was maintained even as regimes changed. Three major developments can be identified, in this respect: i) greater stress being placed on the importance of management for successful economic development and fiscal planning; ii) providing for the systematic development of institutions that will improve labors' skills at all levels within the country; and iii) the deliberate cultivation of an outlook and a management style that constantly tries to anticipate global economic changes, particularly in North American and European markets which the country might exploit in the tourism, export-processing and off-shore financial services sectors. Fourth, has been the introduction of measures to facilitate the inflow of foreign capital, and the close working relationship that ruling parties have maintained with the Central Bank. And, as part of this open economy policy, successive governments have encouraged local industry to be export-oriented, particularly within the regional CARICOM market. Fifth, has been the commitment of all governments to work to upgrade the island's physical infrastructure and improve basic services, to invest in education, health and welfare services, to respect and defend the island's national heritage, and to undertake the responsibility to use the most-applicable forms of institutional control and comprehensive planned use of the islands physical landscape, her coastal zone environment, and her human and natural resources - to wit, the island's quality of life (Thomas, 1988).

The national record, would appear to underscore the island's development as a "success:" while per capita GDP in 1970 was estimated to be approximately US\$678, by 1975 it had risen to US\$1,504, and by 1985 stood at US\$4,400. There were however, some not-so-healthy indicators accompanying this national accounting. Unemployment remained high, especially among young males; this structural and endemic feature being reluctantly accepted as unsurmountable in the near-term, if not the long term. It remains high to this day. The reliance on tourism and export-oriented, producer service sectors as the island's major earners of hard-currency leaves policy-makers wary and cautious over the long term sustainability of their island's economic progress. The goal of economic diversification is still not attained, nor secure. In Barbados pragmatism prevails to this day.

Like Barbados, Antigua embraced mass tourism as her development path, deliberately turning away from plantation sugar production. However, despite the completeness of this structural re-alignment of the Antiguan economy, the re-occurring excesses of the Bird patriarchy including a scarcely-disputed record of corruption, clientelism and nepotism that has dominated the Antiguan political scene, have been a major stumbling block for the island's development (Lorah, 1995). Other small islands, like St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis on the other hand, hung on to their bi-lateral trade agreements which favored their plantation exports. They also attempted to enlarge their tourist sector, and attract off-shore export-oriented assembly manufacturing. As another alternative, some of the smallest British colonies, such as the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos and Bermuda, looked to "off-shore" international finance for their salvation (McElroy and de Albuquerque, 1996). For all Caribbean islands, tourism provided their national accounts with some revenues, while the performances in other sectors did not improve. For these small islands, the 1980s were to merge with the early 1990s as a period of stagnation, or of little expansion, without any promising signs that their development paths would be easier to chart.

### **B.2.3: Neo-colonial options**

Although most of the Caribbean island nations had sought political independence, colonial ties and neo-colonialism persisted. The neo-colonial situations are only summarized here, since they present comparable models to the other alternatives examined earlier, rather than models to be advocated. On the other hand, McElroy and de Albuquerque (1996) have recently presented an interesting and somewhat suggestive case, that colonial dependence has been advantageous for some microstates, especially those seeking to attract off-shore financial operations. For other Caribbean islands, like Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, the disappointing development experiences under neo-colonial dominance is all too apparent (Sunshine, 1985). Again, in the interests of parsimony, treatment of every Caribbean territory under neo-colonialism is not attempted. Notably, Haiti is not examined (see Fass 1990; Lundahl, 1979, 1983, 1992).

Puerto Rico's Operation Bootstrap started in 1947 when U.S. industrial corporations were invited to open their factories on the island, with a package of stimuli to subsidize their investments, including tax-free repatriation of profits, freedom for U.S. income taxes, and promises of low wage, non-union labor. In its earlier years, the industrialization experience was claimed to be an "economic miracle," with average annual growth rates of GDP of 6% in the 1950s, of 5% in the 1960s, and 4% in the 1970s. Outside foreign investment, mostly from U.S. sources, increased from \$1.4 billion in 1970 to \$24 billion in 1979, Puerto Rico had the highest per capita level of imports from the U.S. and 34% of total U.S. foreign direct investment. After an earlier enticement of labor-intensive light industrial enterprises, like shoes, glassware and clothing (many leaving after their 15 years tax-shelter time was up), petroleum refining and petrochemical production came to predominate. After 1973, the refining sector slumped, but pharmaceutical stayed on, exacting a severe price in terms of pollution, and off-shore environmental degradation (Meyn, 1996). In addition, such rapid industrialization came with its geo-political price: namely greater dependency on foreign capital and greater dependency on U.S. subsidies and welfare assistance. Paralleling the successive waves of invited industry, have been excesses in nuclear power plant siting, with toxic spillage and the poisoning of land and water eventually igniting

popular local resistance. Mass circulation between island and mainland has been the accompanying human response to this rapid, and destructive pattern of industrial transformation of the Puerto Rican economy, and the structural unemployment that still haunts the island is a constant reminder of Operation Bootstrap's myopic vision (Sunshine, 1985).

Modernization of the infrastructure and of the leading sectors of the island's economic bases of the French *Departements D'Outre Mer* benefitted tremendously from metropolitan subsidies, and from preferential access of their tropical produce to the European market. The Dominican Republic however, experienced Gulf & Western's dominance in its sugar industry, without the longer term returns that would translate into domestic sector growth and expansion. When Gulf and Western abruptly pulled out in 1978, and sold its considerable holdings, this perhaps symbolically signaled that the Balaguer government's attempts to replicate their own version of Brazil's economic miracle had foundered: export revenues were in decline, debt obligations were increasing, and civil unrest mounting (Wiarda and Kryzanek, 1992). Haiti, long exhausted by the exploitative and autocratic regimes of the Duvaliers and their elite clients, found US aid fomenting and entrenching greater and greater dependency than the political economic situation would have reflected (Fass, 1990). Migration, environmental degradation of arable land resources, of forest cover, and of river basin systems, as well as widespread corruption and authoritarian inhumanity characterized this unfortunate peoples' lives and struggles for existence.

Cuba's growing dependence upon trade and commerce, and financial support from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe's COMECON countries, also reflected the country's plight under a neo-colonial regime. Yet, in distinct contrast to the experience of the rest of the incorporated Caribbean peripheral states, Cuban social transformations were considerable and deep, social welfare services were equitably administered, *microbrigade* housing performances were impressive and Cuban fortunes seemed to be at variance with the region's (Mathey, 1997).

### B.3: The 1980s: Global Recession, Indebtedness, IMF/World Bank Restructuring

In 1978-79, many of the Caribbean economies registered "peak performances," but this boom merely heralded a bust and recessionary slide that reverberated through the region, the hemisphere, and the world. Led by the Reagan administration's counter-inflationary strategies imposed to bring the U.S. domestic economy into order, using draconian "supply-side" policies and fiscal measures, the Caribbean, along with the rest of the world, was dragged into a global recession. And, although the 1980-1983 period was referenced as the official trough, where market clearing took place and the economies of the world were "rationalized," for many Caribbean, Latin American, and African economies, the "depression" was a decade-long experience of continuing hardship, global indebtedness, and externally-imposed re-structuring imperatives. Economic accounting of the dramatic declines experienced in six Caribbean countries for the 1980-83 period is demonstration enough of the dramatic change of fortunes occurring after 1980. By the end of 1983, the six economies of Barbados, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago averaged approximately -17.0 per cent change in real GDP at 1980 factor prices, with Jamaica suffering the most at -27.3 per cent (Bakan, Cox and Leys, 1993).

In addition to the external shocks that rained down on Caribbean economies, there were long-standing internal dis-economies that made these distorted economies doubly, trebly vulnerable to growing imbalances in their national accounts: reliance on external financing or too-high import bills, weak economic management in public and private sectors, and the high costs of maintaining the social welfare net. But, it was the peripheral vulnerability of these economies to the world recession that were most significant: the second oil shock of 1978 and 1979 dramatically increasing energy costs, the slackening of demand and declines in prices of export commodities, and the strictures on discretionary monies in North America and Europe that reduced tourist volumes, shrunk tourist spending and forced bankruptcy among fledgling tourism entrepreneurs in the region. Global foreign direct investment was in retreat during the 1980-83 recession, and the Caribbean peripheral economies ranked low on any priority list for diversions of the shrinking pool of international capital flight, and/or reinvestment.

The remainder of the 1980s decade scarcely paints a rosier picture than the 1980-83 recessionary trough. The global competitiveness of Caribbean export staples and mineral resources continued to decline in relation to other regions of the South, (the "restructuring" competitors in Latin America, Africa and Asia). There was increased protectionism on the part of Northern countries, especially the United States, with bi-laterally negotiated quotas for Caribbean commodities reduced and re-negotiations for increases in foreign market-shares in East and South East Asia disadvantaging Caribbean commodities, such as coffee, and other tropical products. East Asian and Asian trade relations were to be strengthened, and the competitiveness of the Caribbean small economies was by and large disparaged, viewed as having limited potential in the globalizing market-place that promised much for an emergent global commercial order. The "debt trap," as some critics have labeled the IMF/World Bank "conditionalities," scarcely provided a lending hand to the struggling Caribbean states and their people (Latin American Bureau, 1983).

MacAfee, (1991) depicts the plight as a "hemorrhage of dollars," with debt repayments far exceeding the inflow of aid, loans and grants. For example, in June, 1990, Guyana the nation with the most depressed economy paid off debt bills of US\$237 million, yet it had to take on more than US\$276 million of new debt (MacAfee, 1991: 13-14). With their debt burden risen to a punitive level, Caribbean relative levels of indebtedness are above the hemisphere's: in 1988, the debt as a percentage of the region's combined GNP/GDP was 79 per cent, as compared to 44.2 per cent for Latin America; and Caribbean debts to foreign governments hover around 40 per cent of the region's total debt, whereas the rest of Latin America's indebtedness to foreign governments is only 11.5 per cent. Perhaps illustrative of the powerless position many Caribbean financial managers face is the continuing reality that while the Canadian government has agreed to forgive a proportion of the un-repayable loan owed them by several Commonwealth Caribbean countries, the United States' government has not been so philanthropic (MacAfee, 1991). The crisis the Caribbean finance ministries, economists, development planners, industrial development corporations, even the region's multi-national corporations, face is deeply structural, deeply global, and highly problematic. It has always been so, for these ministates, ever since their incorporation into the earliest imperialist domain in the 15th and 16th centuries. And, it is today, in the 1990s.

## **C: From the West Indies Federation to CARIFTA/CARICOM, CARIBCAN and CBI: The on-going saga of regional integration**

But how may these island societies overcome the limitations their essential smallness, islandness and limited resource-bases pose ? One long-standing idea or "seminal truth" according to Gordon Lewis (1968), was for Caribbean countries to unify, to join in a federation and seek economic and political integration. Certainly, there were such configurations suggested under colonial auspices: the 1897 British Royal Commission's proposal for a federation between Barbados and the Windward Islands; and the 1938 Caribbean Labour Congress' support of integration, which included the Bahamas, Belize and British Guiana in its regional schema. On the other hand, the Royal 1938 Moyne Commission viewed such an integration as a far off ideal (Thomas, 1983).

The first serious attempt at such a regional grouping was the British government's coordination of the West Indian Federation of ten of their colonial island territories in 1958. Though it lasted less than four years, before the Jamaican people's referendum, and Sir Alexander Bustemante's nationalist message in favor of their island's independence doomed it, the ill-fated West Indies Federation left its legacy. Regionalism was viewed sympathetically. Eminent regional economists like William Demas argued long and consistently on behalf of the advantages of regional integration for small, disadvantaged territories (Chernick, 1978; Demas, 1965). Despite the success of ensuing national movements of the major players among the Federation, namely Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados in the 1960s, others while first directed to other federal arrangements by the British Colonial office, eventually sought their own independent enfranchisement. Eric Gairy's Grenada declared independence in 1974, after flirting with integration ideas with Trinidad and Tobago. Then, five of the British Commonwealth's "associated states" - Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla - all sought and won political independence between 1978 and 1983. Subsequently, Anguilla re-petitioned to rejoin the British colonial family, and currently in 1996, Nevis is petitioning to sever its ties with St. Kitts (McElroy and de Albuquerque, 1996). Elsewhere, among other European colonial groupings, the Netherlands maintains its widely scattered federation of colonial island territories, and the French *Departements D'Outre Mer* have evolved to become Caribbean extensions of a unified European Union, albeit a francophone extension (Sutton, 1995).

The collapse of the Federation might have promoted political independence for island territories, but it didn't remove the integrationist ideas from the development debate. Heads of government among the Commonwealth Caribbean family of independent nations held annual meetings, if nothing else to keep the dialogue for greater unity open (CARICOM, 1981). There were after all several regional interests to foster, or to collectively "own": the University of the West Indies was one, the highly successful West Indies cricket team another (Beckles and Stoddart, 1995). So, in December 1965, the heads of government of Antigua, Barbados and Guyana collectively agreed to form a three-country free-trade agreement, CARIFTA, and three years later in 1968, this Caribbean Integration and Free Trade Agreement was expanded to incorporate the participation of all ten of the West Indies Federation members plus Guyana. Later, this CARIFTA grouping, also admitted Belize in 1974 and the Bahamas in 1983. In 1973,



however, the formalization of CARICOM among the signatories to the Treaty of Chaguaramas as a common market to replace CARIFTA, appeared to herald the strengthening of the integrationist quest. CARICOM was based on three principals: (I) a common market, based on free trade within the group, a common external tariff, a commitment to the progressive removal of non-tariff barriers to trade, harmonized fiscal incentives and free intra-regional movements of capital (notably omitted, was a similar commitment to negotiate for the free movement of labor within CARICOM); (ii) establishment of areas of cooperation and the formation of inter-ministerial committees to collaborate in areas of health, education, science and technology, energy, mining and natural resources management, in areas of agricultural development, food and industrial sectors, and cooperation in the development of communications and transportation infrastructure; (iii) the coordination of foreign policies (Thomas, 1983). The promises were expansive, the commitments real, but the performance of CARICOM was not equivalent, either in terms of collective actions, nor in terms of cooperative enterprise. The heads of government continued to meet annually, but the rhetoric and the political will was never sufficient, the plans often more ambitious than practical, the community resources were never sufficient.

CARICOM still offers itself as an institutional forum and a political vehicle for the coordination of greater regional organization (Maingot, 1994). However, external forces, and macro-structural imperatives that rain down on each countries' ministries, directing and determining these institution's policies and practices, scarcely provide the necessary lee-way or regional, communal actions, and local practices. Rather, bi-lateral negotiations - CBI, CARIBCAN, the European Union's Lome agreements dominate (Sutton, 1995). Furthermore, IMF and World Bank conditionalities reign supreme, giving little room for the Caribbean Development Bank's multi-lateral lending programs to make their mark (Hardy, 1995). Integrationist schemes are now being constructed in line with today's neo-liberal thinking, the agenda is re-cast in terms of fiscal and monetary criteria. Political integration remains a mythological ideal, and the open economic systems of the insular Caribbean are now more than ever, open (Watson, 1995).

#### **D: Confusion reigns in the 1990s**

The economic crises of the 1980s decade precipitated a new era of reflection and introspection among national economic planners, Caribbean development specialists and academic political economists, indeed all of us concerned with the "development" of Caribbean societies. "Diversification" was one rallying cry: spawning policies to promote export-oriented industrialization, expand tourism, encourage agricultural diversification for niche markets. Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAE) were held up as the potential niche for Caribbean small farming, but the reality of neoliberal regimes suggest otherwise (Bakan, Cox and Leys, 1993). Producer-services, was touted as a new sector where the Caribbean might find a solution (Blackman, 1982). "New Tourism" was to be promoted enthusiastically (Poon, 1993). Despite our recognition of the limitations small countries face, there was still the hope and optimism that prospects for growth and economic expansion were not insurmountable. Now in the mid-1990s, the Caribbean appears still mired in confusion over paths to take, over what kinds of diversification will actually contribute to development (see Klak (1995) for an excellent analysis

of the constraints the region faces in its attempts to promote export-oriented industrialization policies), and over the long-term prospects for tourism.

Serious commentary on the place the Caribbean holds in today's globalizing economy is anything but optimistic (Aponte Garcia and Gautier Mayoral, 1995; Watson, 1995). With their lens firmly fixed on relations at the national scale - addressing issues of national economic space, the nation-state, sovereignty and nationalism - such critiques don't focus-in on internal affairs, nor regional issues, and they definitely don't address micro-scale issues, like gender-relations, family structures and community-level processes. For example, Hilbourne Watson (1995) sets about studying today's Techno-Paradigm shift at the level of global class relations in the international state system. He thoroughly and convincingly argues that a sea change in the global political economy is dramatically changing the playing field for Caribbean institutions, governments, private capitalist sector(s), international financial institutions and development agencies. He goes on to chronicle the declining significance of the nation-state, the Caribbean's structural dichotomies which limit economic development and enterprise, and the crisis the people and institutions of the region face in the twenty first century's "seamless global economy." Watson (1995) characterizes this situation as an *End to Geography*.

Such a political economy perspective may suggest an end to one geography, that defined by former global-to-national inter-relations. However, it is more likely the "ending" is merely the subordination of one geography to another geography, and the necessary replacement of this prevailing perspective by others because of the growing complexity of socio-spatial relations. Watson hints as much when he posits that the Techno-Paradigm shift has "implications for all aspects of human activity, including: the territorial base where humans reproduce the social conditions of their existence and develop material and intellectual culture; the nature, forms and functions of the state; ideology and consciousness, class and gender relations; and international relations in the broadest social sense," (Watson, 1995: 76). What is shifting is the functioning scale of the system, not towards a dominant, centralizing tendency as the term "globalization" might suggest, but to a more complex shifting of interaction scales through a spatial hierarchy of "global-to- ?? (vis. global -->national -->regional --> local/communal -->family --> individual) systemic interactions, productions and consumptions of rules and resources, dynamic linkages and social actions.

I believe we should examine today's globalization processes at the micro levels where social life and space most essentially inter-connect: the local, communal, familial, the individual ? A broader inspection of the character, nature and scope of Caribbean peoples' lives is possible without losing a critical perspective of social processes and their explanations. "Structurationist" lenses give a fuller recognition to human agency, than the macro-structural, class analyses, or macro-economic formulations of political economy. I don't want to go so far as to fault all analysis that has its sights firmly focussed at the national level. After all, institutional policy-making can be well served by such perspectives. My concern is for the integrity of **explanatory power** and for the specification of appropriate contextual frameworks within which Caribbean peoples' lives are embedded: the time-space configurations of the region's micro-states, their intra- and extra-regional extensions, people present and absent, and the global and regional linkages that form the means of connection.

In Caribbean societies, smallness is the rule not the exception. There is openness and inter-relatedness of the social, economic, political and cultural spheres with the outside world (Conway, 1990). Intra-regional, transnational, international, multi-national, even 'virtual,' linkages within networks, via movements of people, capital, material things, ideas, commitments, obligations, and facilitated in ways never before envisaged by today's transportation and communication infrastructure, characterize the geographies of Caribbean people. For Caribbean people, the global-to-local, time-space configurations, are more influential than ever, and neglect of the **local**, of **person-to-person interactions**, of **family networks**, of **presences and absences**, leaves any analysis short on applied content, if not of conclusions. Smallness in societal interactions and a ubiquitous openness of Caribbean society shouldn't be construed to mean that island, national, and regional identities are lost, diminished, or devalued. Indeed, we don't need to question the consensus that Caribbean island people retain their identity, despite absences, transnational lives, multi- and transnational experiences: people reflexively constructing their social life in what Giddens has referred to as a globalizing process of time-space distancing of their life paths - processes by which societies are 'stretched' over shorter or longer spans of time and space (Giddens, 1993).

Are there signs for optimism ? I believe so, despite the 'rational' arguments that dwell on the region's structural constraints, that all-too-convincingly catalogue the pain and suffering imposed by neo-liberal regimes, by re-structuring, IMF- World Bank-"conditionalities," and predict the growing dominance of the Core economies, the growing inequalities between Core and Periphery, and the greater concentration of capital power in the hands of fewer and fewer corporate elites, technocrats: the international capitalist class no less. The region is not so bereft of human resources, the experiences of the people have not been totally without positive returns, and island-specific examples may point the way to an agenda for the future that is not hopeless or helpless. There is evidence of communal collective action at local and regional scales, of self-help activism, of entrepreneurialship, of innovation and creativity, which counter the notion that powerlessness reigns. The experiments with social democratic regimes were built on firmly held socialist principals among the masses and this legacy has not vanished, even though it has waned. The region's anti-colonialism traditions certainly fostered "nationalism", and searches for new identities among Caribbean people: a progressive movement of considerable merit. Long-standing traditions of labor union-movements characterize these islands' societal orders. Many an island's lack of infrastructure and (under)development helped foster self-help initiatives like credit union associations, home self-building, and community activities. Today, in Puerto Rico, Barbados and other islands, local environmental activism has spurred *resistance* to thoughtless development projects (Conway and Lorah, 1995; Bermann Santana, 1996). The successful achievements of Cuba's "*microbrigades*" are better respected in the region than in North America, Cuba's recent "green revolution" is too. The region's educated have always been at the forefront of opposition to the "forces of Imperialism," whatever their guise. The educational systems of many of the ex-colonial islands have remained their treasured asset, and this reservoir of human capital certainly offers hope and potential for the future. Most significantly in today's globalizing world, the numerous diasporas constitute an enlarged resource reservoir that the Caribbean can little afford to ignore.

Past experience has left its mark, there are legacies on which to build an alternative path to one that is fashioned, or agreed to by default, by resigned acquiescence to neoliberalism and free-market triumphalism. Here is my **alternative perspective**.

### **Towards a future of global-to-local relations in the Caribbean**

Despite the somber history and current context revealed in the preceding pages, I want to conclude with a set of evaluations and recommendations containing a measured note of optimism. I draw upon observations from Caribbean reality to frame a set of alternative paths with potential for a progressive transformation of peoples' life-courses, and life-politics: a vision of a sustainable future for Caribbean people, no less (Nettleford, 1993). Included among the issues taken into account are the following: (1) gender divisions and relations; (2) the strengths, weaknesses and dynamism of local, informal economies; (3) pressing needs for appropriately managed tourism policies; (4) a region-wide need for innovation and aggressive transformations in the private sectors of micro-states to meet today's challenges in more diversified economies capable of competing for "niches" in the globalizing markets of the Caribbean region and the American hemisphere; (5) the unrealized potential of the region's diasporas; (6) progressive use and empowerment of existing local (and regional) communal agencies and institutional bases; and (7) the need for environmental policies that mesh with economic plans for industrial and agricultural diversification, that better meet the plurality of local needs and draw upon local and regional co-management and stake-holder, self-management initiatives (Conway and Lorah, 1995).

If the societies of the Caribbean region are to muster their collective agency to address the problems they face, then women as well as men must be given the responsibility, and afforded the chance(s) to fully participate in the endeavor. Some might argue, that women's participation is the essential ingredient that has been missing in the project to date. We are clearly past the day, when we have to debate the importance of women's roles in the development project facing Caribbean people (Mohammed and Shepherd, 1988). Nor should we embrace simplistic notions that women's domestic roles prohibit their participation in labor markets, or that within Caribbean family contexts, matrifocality, extra-residential unions and alternative patterns of parental responsibilities, are anything but flexible family forms that are appropriate and viable in the prevailing societal conditions (Barrow, 1996). Women participate, women contribute, women undertake progressive communal activities, notwithstanding there are vulnerable groups among the "poorest of the poor," according to Massiah, (1983).

The involvement of more and more Caribbean people in a whole range of casual and temporary, small scale economic activities, classified as "informal" or "underground" might be dismissed as ephemeral, as merely survival or subsistence, or as "disguised-unemployment," because they appear to lack the long-term continuities of formal employment. Such a prejudiced view of this complementary 'real-life economic' sector (Wheelock, 1992), belies it's central role in the day-to-day struggle of the Caribbean poor, and not-so-poor, to make ends meet, to put food on the table, to acquire some modest savings, to provide for children's schooling needs, among other household basic needs (Roberts, 1994). Local-level and community-level activities have long traditions, often built on church affiliations, community self-reliance, and village community

endeavors (Gomes, 1985; Riviere, 1981). The "higglers" of rural Jamaica have been highlighted as successful female entrepreneurs in the trading business (Durant-Gonzalez, 1985), and the realization that Trinidadian (and Commonwealth Caribbean) poor maintain deeply-entrenched traditions and practices of rural-urban interactions in informal transfers of goods, people (labor), services, favors, reciprocal activities, obligations, financial and communal support (Lloyd-Evans and Potter, 1991; Potter, 1993), suggests that such important self-help networks are in place, and may be effectively operating elsewhere in the region.

On the other hand, peoples' reliance on "informal sector" activities should not be heralded carte blanche as a salvation. Some underground economic activities are criminal, by intent and purpose, some embroil participants in dubious and illegal ventures, and some snare relatively innocent (if desperate) people in their vice-, prostitution-, gambling-, and criminal rings (Richardson, 1992). Currently, the extent of the penetration of international drug- running cartels in many Caribbean countries' underground economy is a very real threat as well as a serious problem, serving as a somber counter to any more positive characterizations of such "internationalized" systems of informal enterprises (Cumberbatch and Duncan, 1990; Griffith, 1995; Maingot, 1994). That drug-smuggling is also embedded in the neoliberal "marketscape of opportunities" that is the North American hemisphere's commercial domain has not escaped notice (de Albuquerque, 1997). If we are to characterize informal sector activities in terms of their potential to foster positive returns for Caribbean people involved, then it may be worth stressing that it will be at the local level, and at the community level that such activities contribute to livelihood. Beware, the international influences, and be wary of the international patrons and financiers (money-launderers (sic ?) who offer "get-rich-quick" schemes (Conway, 1996b) !!

Where does tourism fit in this equation ? The governments in the Caribbean, one by one, sooner or later, have come to rely on this complex, multi-faceted 'global' industry. The growth of this twentieth century, industrial ensemble as a world-wide phenomenon has been nothing short of spectacular, outstripping many other more-conventional commercial sector expansions. Yet, the industry provides plenty of evidence for its critics, who have been especially critical of the social costs incurred (Karch and Dann, 1981; MacAfee, 1991; Pattullo, 1996). On the positive side however, there is Auliana Poon's (1993) persuasive, and enthusiastic, propositions on how the Caribbean can plan for and benefit from "new tourism". There are, however, several un-resolved issues we can offer up here, as much to test the robustness of Poon's positive views, as it is to critically challenge her main arguments about 'new tourism' and what it means for Caribbean development.

Where do we stand ? Let us generally concur with the positive perspectives Poon (1993) proposes to help develop a sustainable tourist industrial sector: putting the environment first; making tourism a leading sector, strengthening marketing and distribution channels, building a dynamic private sector; seeking to be competitive - globally rather than intra-regionally. These then are the issues requiring more scrutiny, and research by Dimitri Ionnades on Cyprus' tourism (Ionnades, 1992; 1993, 1995a, 1995b) helps provide further insights.

"New tourists" are certainly a welcomed differentiation, with their higher multiplier effects and their 'niche markets' providing wider opportunities and incentives for a differentiated and

more culturally-rich Caribbean tourism product, (as argued elsewhere: Conway, 1993b). Weaver's (1991, 1993) advocacy of "alternative ecotourism" strategies for some venues appear appropriate too. I should add other low-density variants are equally socially-conformable and appropriate: such as - sport tourism, nature tourism, heritage/culture tourism, even retirement tourism. However, whether new tourism's emergence heralds the industry's transformation to a flexible, restructured ensemble replacing "mass tourism," as "*flexibilism*" has been thought to restructure Fordism/Taylorism manufacturing systems, is still in considerable doubt (Ionnades, 1993). Caribbean venues such as St. Croix, Puerto Rico, and Barbados already in Stage III, of what McElroy and de Albuquerque (1991) consider as "High-Density Tourism Styles," are already so dependent on mass tourism, they may not have the flexibility to diversify in appropriate, and environmentally-sustainable ways. The major external airlines that dominate the travel scene, have the delivery of masses of tourists at the heart of their interests in serving the Caribbean. The cruise-line invasion of the Caribbean, is scarcely a contemporary new trend of tourism with the dimensions of *flexibilism*, those of us who advocate the maintenance of low-density styles for Caribbean places would like to see encouraged. Indeed, the threat posed by unplanned and managed, cruise-line tourism appears considerable, and may constitute an immediate, or fast-looming crisis that should merit the progressive, even aggressive, intervention of the State, to ward off this assault, or at best neutralize its overwhelming effects.

Poon's (1993) unbridled enthusiasm for such benign direct effects under neoliberalism must be questioned. These forces are dominant globally, for sure. But, Caribbean people, and decision-makers in the public and private sectors alike, must retain a healthy skepticism of the effects of such global external forces. Most crucial in this respect must be the **progressive and pro-active** involvement of the State in their "stewardship role", with the maintenance of each country's landscapes, coastal zones, marine habitats, as well as cultural heritages. There must be progressive co-management and local democratic economic-decision making, involving not only those within the tourist sector, broadly defined, but local communities, public-private coalitions of local authorities, NGOs, artisans, citizens, even children (Conway and Lorah, 1995). Being "flexible," being creative, embracing visionary plans for island tourism bundles to be at the forefront of the fifth wave, taking advantage of appropriate information and communication technologies, where Caribbean self-interests and territorial sovereignty are neither compromised nor subverted to international and transnational capital profiteering, is to be adaptable and opportunist. If, "capital-by-invitation" is nothing more than today's variant of the failed "industry-by-invitation" model that haunted Caribbean industrialization experiences, then skepticism should be the watchword.

Furthermore, the unknown, under-explored, and most-probably under-valued, dimensions of a sustainable tourism industry might very well be the industry's capacities to incubate and spawn a wider set of multiplier effects than previously envisioned. These must go beyond the essential linkages that tourism must engender between local agriculture, local micro-businesses (formal and informal), local producer services, even local manufacturing-customizing of imported technologies and of imported commodities (both product lines in need of customizing for tropical/Caribbean island uses. The wider set, involves tourism's place in transnational systems, in inter-regional associations and cooperative ventures (rather than competitive scenarios), and tourism's partnership with other sectoral expansions, especially communication services

development and customizing. The State's role in aiding and facilitating co-management initiatives, where tourism planning, environmental conservation and marine resources management and local, democratic economic decision-making, are joint-undertakings, treated as a merged bundle of policy-mandates and practices, is crucial for a future in the long-term.

Long-held traditions of international mobility, of emigration and circulation are highly inter-related with the region's development and underdevelopment experiences, are at the bases of today's well-developed diasporas, with enclave populations in multi-local networks spread between locales within the Caribbean region, the hemisphere (North America) and trans-Atlantic (in Europe). Family networks, wider kin networks, ethnic networks, and inter-network transfers, all facilitate the movement of people, goods, information, technology and capital. The Caribbean residents are linked to overseas relatives, friends, business acquaintances, and a wealth of opportunities far wider than the geographically constrained fields of the island home. The potential for better use of these already existing circuits is obvious, and it is progressive. Overseas Caribbean enclave populations constitute political, social, cultural and economic forces that are presently under-valued and under-utilized. Remittances constitute a flow of capital and goods in kind that have progressive impacts on recipients' likelihoods (Conway, 1992). Return migrants are a pool of under-valued resources too easily dismissed as ineffective "agents of change." (Gmelch, 1992). The future of every Caribbean society is inextricably tied to the wider society, which would include the overseas, enclave sojourners, emigrant-relatives, and ex-patriates as essential functionaries, not lost emigrees.

### **Last, but not least: Bringing the environment into the equation**

The long-term survival of Caribbean tourism is dependent upon environmentally conscious plans of action. The responsible "stewards" however, must be us, Caribbeanists, Caribbean democracies, and the Caribbean people. We can no more leave it to the international community, as we can to international business, commerce and financial capital. Others' (self-)interest, is scarcely accountable when it comes to regional and local self-interest.

Are there ideas in John Cox and C. Sid Embree's (1990) Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Report that provide us cause for optimism? The collective consensus of the participants in the 1990 Kingston Conference on the Public Policy Implications of Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Region was measured, but constructive and positive. Was the consensus of this "meeting of minds" informative? Yes, is an initial response. However, have Watson's (1995) and Maingot's (1994) complaints of the crippling structural and institutional constraints been given sufficient weight? No, not if the neoliberal agenda remains super-ordinate and dominant. It must be challenged locally (Conway, 1996). The Report's optimistic message is worth summarizing here. The conference concentrated on discussions about the kinds of policy shifts that would be needed regionally, nationally and internationally, to bring about sustainable development of such a natural-resource dependent area as the Caribbean. A statement prepared by a drafting group and distributed to participants and the media distilled the essence of the conferees' thinking. Though the last two decades had witnessed drops in standards of living and rapid increases in population in a number of countries, the nearly six per cent per annum increase in economic growth that was felt to be needed to meet the peoples' basic needs is possible without

destroying the natural environment. But it would have to be a new kind of growth. Under this new growth regime, the region would have to begin living off the interest on its stock of ecological capital, instead of running down its stock of natural resources. It would require that national development policies and projects emanate from ecologically-sound analyses of the natural resource base, and that projects not meeting "sustainability" criteria are rejected, even those promising immediate foreign exchange earnings, offered by international donors, or promoted by international financial institutions.

Most importantly, sustainable development goals could only be reached when development policies integrate economic and natural resources management planning. This new sustainable development regime must embrace a strategic imperative to involve people on the development process, and the recognition that culture is a pre-condition of development and progress. In this regard special attention must be given to involving women, youth and the labor force in decisions affecting their lives, livelihoods, local environments, and living spaces. The conferees noted the constraining effects of indebtedness, of continued impoverishment, of the widening gap between the affluence (and consumption excesses) of the North. All of these contribute to the unsustainability of the current patterns of Caribbean development.

The participants, however, saw signs for optimism in the new priorities emerging at the international level, where environmental project support has been thrust to the forefront of global consciousness (Cox and Embree, 1990). It has been further pushed into the spotlight by such UN efforts as the Rio Environmental Conference of 1992, its accompanying NGO Forum, and the recently concluded Barbados Conference. Recent examinations of the extent of environmental action, and of the growth and "success" of regional co-management efforts by NGOs such as CANARI and CCA, would suggest some progress is at least underway (Conway and Lorah, 1995; Renard, 1992; Smith and Berkes, 1991; Smith, 1994) Among many analysts, intellectuals, scientists, practitioners, and NGOs the "will" is there, but is government "political will" up to the task? Will the peoples' strengths be drawn upon, will their innovativeness be allowed to flourish, or will "market forces" be allowed to frustrate and constrain the peoples' opportunities, whether in the Caribbean Region or in the enlarged, hemispheric Pan-Caribbean community of peoples? Past experience, might suggest we need to be cautious in acclaiming that the future offers hope. Certainly, honest we must be: the twenty first century is anything but certain.



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