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THE CARIBBEAN PRESENCE: NATIONAL AND LOCAL-LEVEL DIMENSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY U.S.-CARIBBEAN RELATIONS

A Rapporteur's Report

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Introduction

The independent countries, overseas territories, and other political entities of the Caribbean region are small in land area and population size by world standards. Given the smallness of the islands, perhaps the most striking feature of Caribbean societies is the contrast between their remarkable diversity and their fundamental similarity. Unified by broad similarities of external economic and political history, each Caribbean society has an internal history which has shaped its sociocultural, economic, and political development in distinctive ways.

The complex connection between diversity and similarity is exemplified by regional variation with regard to ethnic and racial composition, language, religion, nationality, and other sociocultural characteristics. This state of affairs is due in part to patterns of settlement and colonization which began with Columbus' discovery in 1492. It is bound up as well with the fate of socioeconomic and political institutions organized more often than not for the benefit of external groups and interests. Diversity and similarity have also been results of the continuous movement of Caribbean peoples, first from the Old World to the New, then within and between islands, and, in more recent years, out of the region altogether.

An understanding of the Caribbean and of U.S.-Caribbean relations entails investigation of various economic, political, and sociocultural factors. This investigation, in turn, requires a comparative framework which is sensitive to the general picture of the Caribbean region in its global context and to the fine-grained detail of developments on particular islands.

This essay attempts to summarize the major themes discussed at a January 1982 conference on "The Contemporary Caribbean and Its Impact on the United States" sponsored by the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. It aims to provide a record of the views expressed by panelists, commentators, and participants during the formal conference sessions and in general discussion. It is also hoped that this record might establish a basis for further investigation and discussion of Caribbean affairs and the dynamics of U.S.-Caribbean relations.

The formal sessions of the conference were devoted to the ethnic and colonial heritage of the Caribbean, contemporary Caribbean economic problems and prospects, regional trends in political change, migration, characteristics of Caribbean communities in the United States, the proposed Caribbean Basin Initiative, and relationships between U.S. cities and the Caribbean. In each of these sessions, historical and contemporary evidence of the geopolitical, economic, or sociocultural ties between the United States and the Caribbean were presented. The common theme of presentations and discussion was the increasing importance of developments in the Caribbean region for U.S. communities along the eastern seaboard. U.S.-Caribbean relations have intensified in recent years, and national foreign policy has increasingly direct consequences at the state and municipal levels.

Despite this common theme, the views expressed differed in terms of perspective, substance, and interpretation. Thus, many contrasts and some inconsistency of points of view emerged. No attempt will be made to evaluate the views presented, nor will inconsistencies in points of view or between contending interpretations be reconciled. On the contrary, a major objective of the report is to capture something of the diversity of perspective and interpretation which the conference was intended to bring to bear on issues of mutual interest to U.S. and Caribbean communities. To the extent that such intellectual diversity reflects current Caribbean reality and the realities of U.S. cities, it will be a useful basis for future scholarly research and discussions of public policy.

I. The Ethnic and Colonial Heritage of the Caribbean

The presentations and general discussion of this session explored ways in which the colonial past continues to inform the Caribbean present. The two presentations, by Gordon Lewis and Franklin Knight, surveyed the genesis and colonial legacy of Caribbean societies in two contrasting ways. Lewis emphasized variations in the cultural and social psychological consequences of European colonialism, ethnic/racial diversity, and religious pluralism among different societies. Knight focused more explicitly on the basic structure of colonial development throughout the region.

Gordon Lewis outlined the interplay of class, race, and political subordination in the emergence of Caribbean cultural forms, social institutions, and communal psychology. Referring to "ten commandments" for North Americans who deal with Caribbean migrants, he emphasized contrasts between the historical trajectory of Caribbean societies and the trajectories of societies in North and South America. With the exceptions of French Quebec and Portuguese Brazil, North American and South American societies were respectively English Protestant and Spanish Catholic. By way of contrast, the Caribbean historical trajectory was characterized by a multiplicity of cultures, ethnic/racial groups, religions, and political ties. As descendants of Africans, Asians, and Europeans, Caribbean peoples are a mixed people both phenotypically and culturally, and continuous interaction among these groups has had profound consequences.

In Lewis' view, one consequence of this heterogeneous historical trajectory has been the borrowing and blending of diverse cultural

colonial rule, this dichotomy was, according to Knight, the structural context in which Caribbean cultural forms, psychological attitudes, and socioeconomic institutions developed.

Knight emphasized the advent of the transatlantic slave trade and linkages with the "South Atlantic System" in accounting for a major shift in the objectives of colonialism from the extension of empire to the creation of "true colonies" based on plantations. As the socioeconomic structure of the plantation took root, Caribbean islands were transformed into sites for the production and exportation of bulk staples such as sugar.

In Knight's view, the transition from settlements populated by Europeans to plantations manned by African slaves changed not only the demography of the islands, but also their economic, social, and political structures. Unlike more cohesive settler societies elsewhere in the hemisphere, Caribbean societies became riddled with anomalies, contradictions, and gaps. Given the disparity between African demographic and cultural predominance and European political domination, neither European cultural models nor the plantation economy could organize viable societies in the Caribbean. In this connection, Knight cited as examples the Haitian Revolution and attempts by peasants from the Guianas to Cuba to establish their independence from the plantation during the nineteenth century.

Knight considered cultural eclecticism and economic dependency to be the major legacies of colonialism in the Caribbean. Having failed to transform the basic structure of colonial development, regional economies remain dependent on export-oriented plantations despite the more democratic political forms of the present autonomous states, or the radical change of political structure represented by Cuba. Caribbean societies inherited administrative, educational, and social structural gaps from the colonial experience. In Knight's estimation, this heritage has undermined the Caribbean sense of self-confidence, if not the sense of cultural or national identity mentioned by Lewis.

It was observed that not all deficiencies of the contemporary Caribbean can be attributed to the colonial experience. To be sure, human and natural resources have been exploited in order to fit them into the world economy in ways which have been detrimental to long-term social and economic development (Lewis). Yet it is equally true that the natural resources essential to economic flexibility and long-term development have proved to be too limited. As a result, commodities and forms of production have remained virtually the same over nearly five centuries, and the commodities produced have decreased in value both within the region and in world markets (Knight).

Questions from the floor probed the conceptual clarity and generalizability of arguments in both presentations. One question raised the possibility that emphasis on diversity rather than uniformity of historical development and social structure reflects a theoretical and ideological bias on the part of scholars which is intended to prevent the development of regional political awareness and cooperative efforts to solve problems common to several societies (Remy). Another participant questioned what was perceived as a confusion of physical type or between race and culture, noting that it is incorrect to speak of African cultural

predominance in Cuba or Puerto Rico, which are Spanish linguistically and culturally (Medina). Several participants inquired about ways to handle sociocultural diversity in programs and organizations which deal with several Caribbean groups simultaneously.

Responses to these questions stressed that emphasis on diversity or uniformity need not reflect ideological bias. They are aspects of Caribbean cultures and societies which may be assessed differently for different administrative, political, and scholarly purposes (Domínguez, Knight). In addition, perceptions of diversity and uniformity fluctuate in response to social and political developments in particular Caribbean countries, within the region and in the world (Maingot). It was also maintained that flexibility is essential when dealing with Caribbean groups. Discussions which remain at the general level and assume consistency and uniformity within Caribbean societies or immigrant groups are likely to produce statements which are true, but not very useful (Knight).

Both Lewis and Knight maintained that there had been no confusion whatsoever between race and culture. African cultural influence among the islands varies. However, with qualification in regard to the timing of plantation development and the composition of the African and European populations in Caribbean colonies, Knight's structural dichotomy was considered to be applicable throughout the region.

II. The Contemporary Caribbean Economies

The session on Caribbean economies explored some of the causes and implications of current economic problems in the region. Discussion centered on the inadequacies of development policies since the 1950s, and the consequences of regional underdevelopment in terms of employment, foreign investment, commodity trade, migration, and tourism.

Ransford Palmer's presentation focused on the inability of Caribbean economies to absorb their rapidly growing and comparatively well-educated labor forces. In his view, the preoccupation of economic development theory and strategy with industrialization based on imported capital and export production has contributed to the creation of a severe labor-surplus problem. Utilizing a class-conflict model to describe the industrialization process, Palmer stressed ways in which government and financial institutions (i.e., commercial banks) have exacerbated problems of unemployment and underemployment by encouraging capital-intensive production methods.

Palmer called attention to the inconsistency between statements by economists and politicians in favor of labor-intensive production and concrete policy decisions. Although labor-intensive methods have been highly touted, Caribbean governments have provided industrial incentives which give preferential treatment to capital goods imports and income from them. As a result, imported capital goods are artificially cheaper than their market price, and their cost relative to local labor and raw materials is distorted. Simultaneously, private financial institutions have reinforced the capital-cheapening policy of government by what Palmer called "financial repression" in the treatment of savings and loans. Palmer contended that savers have been penalized by high inflation and low interest rates

on savings, while large borrowers have been subsidized by low-cost loans which further decrease the artificially low price of capital.

Palmer also noted other factors which have contributed to adoption of capital-intensive production methods. For example, minimum wage laws and national insurance plans have made labor-intensive production less attractive to the predominantly small firms of the region by increasing labor costs. Moreover, even in cases where more labor might be embodied in economic output, the generally limited supply of managers skilled in handling workers rather than equipment has hindered the development of labor-intensive methods, especially when militant labor unions are involved.

Thus, government incentives and financial repression, on the one hand, and the combination of upward pressure on labor costs and inadequate managerial talent, on the other, have worked at cross-purposes in Palmer's view. As Caribbean businessmen substitute artificially cheap imported capital for local labor and capital inputs, fewer new workers can be absorbed into the labor force. This situation motivates young, better educated, and urbanized workers with high expectations to migrate. But more importantly, according to Palmer, it undermines the economic and psychological conditions for development of a "truly indigenous engine for growth."

José Villamil also criticized the conventional wisdom of classical development theory while pointing to other economic problem areas. In his view, the export bias of industrialization in the region fails to take the special conditions of declining economies into account. In addition to falling output, unemployment, and lower standards of living, economic decline is also indicated by a static social structure, as well as the decline of government services and the deterioration of infrastructure. These conditions have occurred precisely when production has become internationalized by transnational corporations, and when competition among poor countries for foreign investment capital has increased.

Citing the decline of the Puerto Rican textile and petro-chemical industries during the 1960s, Villamil noted that labor-intensive production in the Caribbean might not produce the desired results in terms of investment, employment, and generalized development. Given the option to locate in South Korea or Taiwan, and technological advances which continue to reduce unit production costs under capital-intensive methods, labor-intensive production in the Caribbean might still be unable to compete effectively in world markets.

One participant raised the question of Caribbean food imports, and asked why small-scale agriculture might not be developed both to reduce unemployment and to alleviate balance-of-payments problems. Palmer noted that grain, meat, and poultry are the main Caribbean food imports. Geography and climate are unsuitable for some types of grain production, and the cost of fertilizer for food crops and animal feed are prohibitive. Villamil suggested that the question has an important terms-of-trade dimension. Approximately 80 percent of Caribbean agricultural production is exported, while a high percentage of food is imported. He also pointed out that acreage devoted to agriculture in many countries has declined in the last two decades, notably in Puerto Rico, where agricultural land was

reduced by one half between 1965 and 1980. It was further suggested that failure to investigate the potential of agriculture might be a by-product of concentration on industrial development, and negative attitudes toward farming as an occupation.

The need for alternative economic development strategies in the Caribbean which are both flexible and comprehensive was underscored. Although no such model was proposed, it was agreed that possibilities for development along the lines of the "Puerto Rican model" were lost during the 1970s. Skyrocketing oil and import prices and declining demand for minerals and agricultural exports hit import-dependent Caribbean economies especially hard.

Suggestions for alternative development strategies emphasized the need for greater national self-reliance and conservation of human resources rather than growth based on exports. Palmer maintained that reduction of the growth rate of labor forces, alteration of economic output to reflect greater labor intensivity, and expansion of markets through regional co-operation are essential. While agreeing with these points, Villamil held that "failure planning" should be undertaken in order to encourage national economic stability by insulating Caribbean economies from fluctuations in world market conditions. Both panelists agreed that such changes will require external financial, technical, and other kinds of assistance.

Although convinced that U.S. economic and trade policy over the next decade will be crucial in finding solutions to Caribbean economic problems, participants raised serious questions about the scope and content of U.S. policy proposals. To the extent that the Caribbean Basin Initiative supports economic self-reliance and widens markets for Caribbean goods, it was considered capable of making substantial contributions to genuine regional economic development (Palmer). However, if the initiative merely proposes to extend the Puerto Rican model to the rest of the Caribbean, it will fall woefully short of meeting the region's economic needs (Villamil).

III. Political Change in the Caribbean

The session on political change dealt with the complex interrelationships between Caribbean social structure and political forms and processes. Variations in the nature of Caribbean polities, political cultures, and political ideologies were related to factors such as societal scale, political history, class and race relations, basic cultural values, and perceptions of the State. The diversity of regional political forms and ideologies was counterposed to similarities of political culture. It was stressed throughout the session that an understanding of Caribbean political trends requires examination of dynamic relationships between changing political events and more stable features of political structure.

Anthony Maingot's presentation sketched the relationships between "political landscapes"--the immediate flow of political events--and "political substructures"--enduring aspects of political processes. Stressing the complex articulation of these two levels of regional politics, Maingot indicated ways in which recent changes appear to provide an opportunity for greater mobilization of human and material resources in a new development thrust.

The concept "modern conservative society" was proposed as a heuristic device to characterize the sociopolitical foundations of Caribbean societies. Distinguishing the modern conservative society from "traditional societies" and "secular socialist states," Maingot defined it as a society which, using modern means of communication and institutional arrangements, tends to mobilize politically on the basis of an essentially conservative sense of moral indignation at injustice or corruption rather than class conflict. Thus, Caribbean societies do not fit neatly into conventional Marxist or resolutely anti-Marxist categories of political analysis.

In Maingot's view, Caribbean societies are characterized by a series of modern conservative structural attributes which influence the appeal of mass political movements and their capacity to be sustained. Among these are high literacy rates, relatively skilled public-service sectors, well-developed labor unions, highly urbanized and mobile populations, and political mobilization in terms of parties and interest groups. In addition, a modern conservative value-orientation is indicated by deep religiosity, love and respect for the land, fondness for privacy, and intrinsic independence. In Maingot's estimation, these structural attributes and value-orientations are present to a greater or lesser degree in societies as diverse ideologically as Cuba, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, and Trinidad.

Throughout the region, modern conservatism has had increasingly important effects on economic, political, and social developments. According to Maingot, it has contributed to the redefinition of appropriate national leadership forms (i.e., the shift from "charismatic" to "managerial" leadership), the emergence of a politically active and influential private sector, and the more pragmatic approach to collective bargaining by labor unions, among other developments. Given the modern conservative foundations of Caribbean societies, Maingot concluded that native business classes will continue to play a central role in the region's politics of development. Thus, in Maingot's view, U.S. efforts at helping in the development process should certainly include cooperation with these sectors. In doing so, the U.S. policymaker must avoid confusing the "modern conservatism" of the area with support or tolerance for backward or reactionary policies. To misunderstand the engrained desire of these societies for expanding justice and human rights is dangerous, since the collective sense of moral indignation can take on revolutionary dimensions (even though often devoid of long-range revolutionary plans).

Jorge Domínguez underscored the difficulties created for American society by Caribbean sociocultural and political diversity. The existence of sovereign mini-states and the absence of pan-Caribbean consciousness (the "little islander" phenomenon) mean that there are a variety of specific problems which make the development of a single U.S. foreign or domestic policy toward the region difficult. On the other hand, experience with modern political institutions and high levels of education and leadership skills make it possible for Caribbean peoples to put political pressure on U.S. communities.

Domínguez observed that the political history and current reality of of the Caribbean engender a mind-set based on the notion of permanently permeable national borders. This fact has important social and political

consequences in the U.S. milieu. It means that migrants remain attached to their homelands and often intend to return there. Yet it also means that they bring expectations about society and politics, and organizational skills which are based on their experience with government, church groups, labor unions, and political parties at home.

Domínguez stressed that features of political culture, as well as linguistic and cultural diversity, should be kept in mind by those who work with Caribbean immigrants. For example, Caribbean peoples are inclined toward self-reliance, and in this respect appear to be attuned to the current climate of diminished government responsibilities in the United States. Self-reliance is related, in Domínguez's view, to the value placed on entrepreneurship and the willingness to take risks, which are manifested in the pervasiveness of shopkeeping and the decision to migrate itself. It is also rooted in the two-sided Caribbean vision of the State, in which conviction that government has the capacity to provide services is coupled with doubt that it will do so. Such differences in political culture among Caribbean societies are often subtle, but they may nonetheless create important problems in the U.S. context.

Questions were raised about the general approach of the session to Caribbean politics and about the utility of the "modern conservative society" concept in analyzing change. One participant inquired about the link between modern conservative thought and the ideological and ethical tenets of capitalism. He pointed out that capitalism is partially responsible for Caribbean underdevelopment and that many communist countries also appear to be modern conservative on orientation. The validity of the assumption that the Caribbean business class will be encouraged by the profit motive to lead movements for progressive change and social justice was also questioned (Medina). Another participant remarked that U.S. policy in the Caribbean, especially the Caribbean Basin Initiative, is oriented toward the political situations in Central American "hot spots" rather than the insular Caribbean (Mezsaros). Thus, it was considered unlikely that Caribbean political affairs would receive the wide-ranging and subtle treatment they merit.

In response to these questions, it was suggested that both the economic and political contributions of native businessmen have been underrated when studied at all, and that an objective reassessment of ideological opposition to the "free market principle," as well as the leadership potential of the business class is in order (Maingot). In regard to the treatment of Caribbean political issues, participants were encouraged to use information from the conference in their home communities to shift the focus of U.S. interest from crisis management to rational long-term policy development (Domínguez).

Although it was mentioned that institutions for political mobilization counterbalance the picture of Caribbean fragmentation, several participants felt that emphasis on diversity created problems. One participant argued that scholarly ideological and theoretical biases focus attention on insularism rather than the need for political education (Remy). These biases ignore and undermine attempts to develop pan-Caribbean political consciousness and action. It was also maintained that emphasis on diversity overlooks cooperation among Caribbean groups in the United States,

as in the case of Cuban and Haitian entrants in Miami, who have found common ground for communication based on their similar circumstances (González).

Responses to these questions stressed the divergence between the rhetoric of pan-Caribbeanism based on nationalist or Marxist ideology and scientific investigation of objective sociological conditions (Maingot). It was also remarked that Caribbean diversity could not be handled adequately as an abstract concept because it is a complex issue with important implications for scholarship and practical politics (Domínguez, Knight).

Finally, the direct relationship between Caribbean and U.S. politics was explored, particularly in connection with U.S. attitudes toward immigration. The tone for this part of the discussion was set by the general observation that continuing racial and class problems, recession, and the contraction of government responsibility make the U.S. political climate inimical to Caribbean migrants (Rivera). Several participants blamed U.S. racism both for the differential treatment of Haitian and Cuban refugees as opposed to those from southeast Asia (Davis), and for the assumption that black Americans and hispanic Americans must bear the burden of cultural and economic shock occasioned by refugee resettlement (White).

The topic of U.S. racial and class bias sparked heated exchange. One participant observed at the outset that racial prejudice is probably directed against non-whites in general rather than against any one racial group, and that the intensity of racism might be modified by the language, education, and age structure of migrant populations. Another participant suggested that the persistent charge of racial and class prejudice deflects attention from animosity toward new immigrants and refugees within U.S. minority communities (Ferré). Given the obvious racism and class bias of U.S. society, the development of a practical strategy for dealing with migrants was considered by this participant to be a more pressing need. The apparent split between minority community leadership and community members on the refugee issue was cited as a major problem. In this connection it was observed that opposition to southeast Asian refugee resettlement by black Americans, Mexican Americans, and the Ku Klux Klan was the only case in recent memory where these groups took similar stands on an issue (Ferré).

Several other participants took issue with this characterization of the situation. One maintained that there is general, but inadequately mobilized support for Haitian refugees among black American leaders and community members in New York City, south Florida, and elsewhere (Gadsden). Moreover, cooperation both between U.S. minority communities and Caribbean migrants, and among refugee groups in Miami, has been more extensive than press accounts indicate (González). While it was considered highly unlikely that U.S. attitudes will soon change, it was concluded that greater communication and collaboration between Caribbean communities in the United States and minorities is necessary.

IV. Causes and Consequences of Caribbean Migration

This session placed the movement of Caribbean peoples in historical and sociological perspective. Distinguishing the various interrelated phenomena embraced by the term "migration," discussion revolved around the administrative, cultural, political, and socioeconomic forces which facilitate the steady flow of people within and out of the Caribbean. Special attention was devoted to misconceptions about the causes of migration, and the consequences of emigration for Caribbean societies were explored.

Taking Gordon Lewis' observation that Caribbean peoples are "massively uprooted" as his point of departure, Robert Bach's presentation surveyed the dimensions of Caribbean migration to the United States from 1971 to 1979 and proposed an alternative to conventional explanations of population movements.

Led by Cuba, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, legal immigration from the Caribbean islands to the United States for the period 1971-1979 totaled 652,466, or approximately 80,000 per year on average. These figures represent nearly 16 percent of the annual totals for all countries. However, they underestimate the magnitude of Caribbean migration because illegal immigration and other types of migrants (e.g., students, contract laborers, and tourists) are excluded. Despite the unavailability of refined estimates for these forms of migration, they increase the total number of Caribbean migrants substantially.

Bach criticized five conventional explanations of migration, referring to them as myths which maintain that it results from: (1) population growth, (2) failure of economic development, (3) disparities in wages and employment between rich and poor nations, (4) labor demand in developed countries, and (5) either economic or political motives. Although containing some elements of truth, Bach maintained that these explanations are sometimes internally contradictory, and that they often fail to explain features of empirical cases.

To take just three of Bach's examples, he noted that arguments based on demographic expansion fail to discriminate between countries such as Argentina and Venezuela, which have different rates of natural growth but receive substantial numbers of migrants. Bach also observed that while differences in wages and employment opportunities suggest a rationale for emigration, they explain neither the accelerated rate of Caribbean migration since World War II, nor why countries with similar economic disadvantages have different migration rates, nor why migrants originate in certain sectors of the economy and society. As a third example, Bach pointed to the limited utility of the distinction between "economic migrants"--those who seek material gain--and "political migrants"--those who flee persecution. While this distinction is central to U.S. immigration law and foreign policy, the categories do not take account of the complexities of migration patterns or the interrelationships between politics and economic conditions.

Since Caribbean migrants are statistical minorities in their home countries, Bach also pointed out that many conventional explanations of

migration are flawed because they make most people appear to be irrational. His most general criticism of these explanations was that concentration on socioeconomic or political factors as a set of independent "push" and "pull" forces is simplistic and misleading.

Despite the North American perception that the recent "flood" of immigrants is the predominant feature of Caribbean societies, it was emphasized that migration is in fact a secondary phenomenon (Bach). Migration is and always has been conditioned by a variety of socioeconomic and political factors in the Caribbean, and by administrative decisions concerning immigration outside the region (Thomas). Based on historical experience, Caribbean peoples have come to view migration as a fact of life (Bach), despite the fact that it often deprives their home countries of some of their most talented and resourceful citizens (Thomas).

In a survey of four major phases of Caribbean migration patterns since emancipation in 1834, Bach outlined the effects of the larger global system on the direction, form, volume, and local consequences of migration. From 1835 to 1885, migration took the form of short-distance moves by single contract workers away from former slave plantations to other colonial territories. Between 1885 and 1920, migrants moved out of colonial boundaries to work on sugar plantations and construction projects in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Panama, experiencing North American racism for the first time and beginning the flow of remittances. From 1920 to the end of World War II, migration declined as a result of the Great Depression, and Caribbean migrants learned what Bach called the "lesson of vulnerability" due to the repatriation policies of Cuba, the United States, and other countries. From the postwar years to the present, migration has intensified and shifted out of the region toward industrial countries: to Great Britain until 1962, and then to the United States.

Throughout its history, then, Caribbean migration has been influenced by changes in the international labor market, shifts in the immigration policies of industrial countries, and the increasing inability of the United States to control the region politically and militarily (Bach). The intensification of migration toward the United States was in part a reaction to postwar U.S. economic success in the Caribbean. It was also facilitated by the amendment of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Act in 1965, which made immigration from former British colonies easier, and the temporary modification of the law in the case of Cuban and Haitian refugees during 1980 (Thomas).

Features of the global system in which the Caribbean is involved establish the general parameters of migration patterns. Yet questions about why particular people migrate and where they resettle remain. Bach suggested that violence, upheaval, and coercion associated with both economic and political forces motivate people to migrate. In the Haitian case, for example, while the incidence of political repression may be somewhat exaggerated, fear of political repression and the unavailability of good agricultural land discourage peasants from investing energy, time, and money in economic enterprises (Maguire). Bach, Thomas, and others agreed, however, that direct contacts between people in countries of origin and destination--social networks--furnish the most persuasive answers to questions of who migrates and where.

First, migrants are often recruited by private or government-sponsored agents who provide resources, information, and, in some cases, promises about opportunities in the country of destination. Second, family reunification plays an important role both because migrants want to reestablish kinship ties and because they know that it is the cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy. Finally, a "migrant ideology" has developed in the Caribbean (Bach). All societies have institutionalized patterns for social and economic advancement. In the Caribbean, emigration is one option available to those who seek to better themselves. The ideas of "becoming better off" and "getting out" are linked, even if migrants intend to return home eventually.

V. Caribbean Immigrant Communities and U.S. Cities

Although the historical origins of Caribbean communities in the United States can be traced to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most Americans have only recently become aware of them due to increased immigration. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, there are today between five and six million persons who originate from Caribbean countries in the United States, or approximately 2 percent of the total population. In declining order of population size, the major Caribbean communities in the United States are Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians, Jamaicans, Haitians, Trinidadians, and other English-speaking West Indians (Kritz).

While Caribbean communities comprise only a small percentage of the U.S. population, legal and illegal immigrants represent substantial portions of their home-country populations. New York City, for example, is the second largest city in several Caribbean countries, and, in cases such as Puerto Rico, there are nearly as many persons residing in the United States as in the country of origin. Miami, to take another example, has steadily growing Cuban and Haitian communities, and the city is viewed by many as the hub of the Latin American world according to one participant (Ferré).

Mary Kritz's presentation reviewed some of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Caribbean immigrant groups and a few major themes which have attracted the attention of scholars and policymakers. The presentation concentrated on Caribbean communities located in the northeastern states.

Caribbean immigrant groups may be distinguished in terms of cultural, demographic, linguistic, racial, and socioeconomic criteria, as well as legal status upon entry to the United States and length of residence. However, Kritz noted that this diversity is only one side of a complex picture. Members of Caribbean communities also share certain characteristics as people who have sought to improve their economic, political, or social conditions through migration, and who have developed a migrant ideology based on the migration experience.

Since the mid-1960s, legal immigrants have been about 50 percent female, and despite the conventional focus of migration studies on males, women and dependent children constitute nearly 75 percent of the migrant population. In Kritz's view, proper attention has not been directed to the special needs and problems of female migrants. In particular, do

female migrants have lower employment and earnings patterns than male migrants or native males, and how do they adjust?

Kritz also observed that, contrary to popular U.S. belief, most Caribbean immigrants are relatively well educated and skilled for employment in urban industrial and service centers. Although quantitative data on the Caribbean presence are insufficient to permit reliable predictions, there is little reason, in Kritz's view, to believe that Caribbean immigrants will not replicate the experience of other immigrant groups in terms of upward socioeconomic mobility.

At present, Cubans approximate the socioeconomic position of native whites, English-speaking groups approximate that of native whites, and Puerto Ricans rank far below native whites and blacks. Within this continuum, however, there is considerable variation among Caribbean groups in demographic structure (age distribution, sex ratio, and family structure); performance on socioeconomic indicators (education, employment rates, family income, and occupation); acculturation (bilingualism, intermarriage, and political participation); and settlement patterns (population concentration and dispersal). In Kritz's view, the range of variation along these lines has two major implications given differences in the socioeconomic profiles of U.S. cities. It means that the Caribbean presence has different effects on urban areas in terms of demand for education, employment, and social services. In addition, the specific nature of sociocultural diversity among Caribbean immigrant groups and their current positions in U.S. society will influence the type and degree of further cultural, political, and social integration.

Despite Kritz's general optimism, both she and other participants explored factors which may modify the extent and rate of upward mobility, and influence U.S. reaction to the Caribbean presence. Given U.S. fear of illegal immigrants as potential economic competitors with a different cultural and racial background, much will depend on what happens economically and politically in the host communities. In this connection, Kritz noted that the attitudes of local government officials and representatives of the private sector toward immigrants affect public opinion in important ways.

Other participants called attention to the implications of the disparity between U.S. and Caribbean conceptions of color and race. It was noted that the U.S. civil rights movement stimulated the development of ethnic, national, and racial pride among Caribbean immigrants, as well as greater awareness of the ground rules of U.S. politics (Maingot). This fact and secondary migration within the United States play important roles in acculturation and sociopolitical integration. While the importance of "strategic ethnicity" was a major lesson of the 1960s for Caribbean immigrants, competition and conflict among immigrant groups may intensify if U.S. ethnic integration swings back from cultural pluralism to anglophilism in a period of economic and political retrenchment (Maingot). Similarly, conflict between Caribbean immigrant groups and native groups may increase due to the politics of census enumeration and its relationship to political representation, and disbursement of federal and state funds (White).

It was also noted that groups such as Barbadians, Jamaicans, and Trinidadians have experienced "invisibility" due to dispersed settlement patterns and close political and social relations with black Americans (Kritz). The lower profile of these groups makes measurement of their socioeconomic characteristics more difficult. Yet these groups, as well as Haitians and black Hispanics are also changing the meaning of the concept "black," thereby increasing the diversity of the U.S. population in general and of the black population in particular.

Several participants stressed the positive effects of the new migration. It was observed that Caribbean immigrants contribute to the development of strong communities by setting examples of cleanliness and orderly behavior, and by helping to revive the work ethic (Gadsden). High employment rates among both legal and illegal immigrants were also emphasized, as were their roles in the official and "subterranean" economies. It was contended that Caribbean immigrants have filled jobs which natives do not accept, and sustain small marginal businesses, thereby preventing the collapse of large cities in the U.S. northeast (Hester). In the case of Miami, it was maintained that Cuban immigration over a twenty-year period has produced an urban renaissance (Ferré).

Several suggestions were made concerning ways to change the predominantly negative U.S. perceptions of Caribbean immigrants. The local and national news media were criticized for failure to report on Caribbean communities even-handedly (White), and for failure to investigate the underlying causes of the events reported in sensational news stories (Maingot). The news media were also criticized for their reluctance to address the politically sensitive issues of race and class directly (Hylton).

There were also calls for immediate changes in U.S. immigration policy. It was suggested that illegal Haitian immigration must be stopped in order to give the Miami Haitian community time to achieve a degree of social and economic stability (Maingot). Another participant proposed a thorough rethinking of immigration policy designed to remove its traditional xenophobic elements and to recognize the contributions immigrants make to U.S. society (Ferré). Based on the contention that the problem of illegal immigration results from mismanagement of government policy, still another participant recommended immediate amnesty for Haitian and Cuban refugees who are currently detained, and absorption of resettlement costs by the federal government (Hester).

Finally, the need for grass-roots political coalitions and funding support was mentioned (González). It was suggested that such coalitions might deliver basic social services to refugees and exercise leadership in disputes among Caribbean immigrant groups, and between immigrants and U.S. minority groups. Private foundations were called upon to devote more time and resources to grass-roots coalition-building as well as to research and policy development at the national level.

VI. The Caribbean Basin Initiative

The presentation during this brief session outlined the general economic, military, and political objectives of the Caribbean Basin

Initiative (CBI). Discussion was limited to a few questions designed to place the CBI in the context of themes raised during other sessions.

Luigi Einaudi opened his presentation by defining the "Caribbean basin" as the insular countries of the Caribbean Sea, Central America, and parts of northern South America. Calling attention to the Carter administration's relative lack of interest in the Caribbean, Einaudi stressed that the Reagan administration considers the region to be vital to U.S. interests and central to its conception of the developing world. The CBI is a response to the weakness of past U.S. policy, which, in Einaudi's view, has permitted the Soviet Union and Cuba to make inroads in the "soft underbelly" of the United States.

The CBI aims to support the peaceful development of stable representative democracies in the Caribbean by providing economic and military assistance to friendly countries. Einaudi maintained that greater emphasis will be placed on economic assistance in the form of trade, investment incentives, and emergency grants-in-aid than on military assistance because the economic development of the Caribbean region is the surest way to defend U.S. interests.

With regard to trade, the CBI proposes to open U.S. markets to a wider variety of Caribbean goods by removing import duties, and to furnish Caribbean industries with U.S. marketing expertise. In terms of investment, two things are proposed. First, tax incentives already available to U.S. companies which invest in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands will be extended to those which invest elsewhere in the region. Second, U.S. influence will be utilized to help Caribbean countries attract foreign investment from other sources.

In Einaudi's view, the two major strengths of the CBI are its cooperative, multilateral character, and its extension of the dominant economic vision of the present administration to the Caribbean. The participation of Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela was emphasized, as was the proposed creation of a Central American Economic Community (CAMEC). Aside from the philosophical merits of multilateral cooperation and reliance on the private sector, Einaudi also observed that the CBI is realistic as far as domestic politics is concerned. Neither the Congress nor the U.S. taxpayer would stand for a program in which the U.S. government bore the financial burden alone.

Questions from the floor reflected the skepticism with which current U.S. policy in the Caribbean had been approached throughout the conference. One participant inquired about the administration's response to Mexico's stipulation that Cuba be included in the CBI as a ground rule for its own participation (Palmer). Einaudi replied that there is an agreement to disagree between the sovereign states of Mexico and the United States. In no event will Cuba be included.

Two questions touched on immigration. One participant wondered whether regularization of Cuban immigration is planned (Martínez). Another participant, echoing doubts expressed by Congressman Rangel, questioned the assumption that private industry would come to the aid of Haitian refugees in south Florida. While admitting that he is not an expert on

migration, Einaudi indicated that ending illegal Haitian immigration is perhaps the only objective of the CBI which competes with anti-communism, despite the fact that it is not a primary focus of the initiative.

In response to a question about bases for the CBI other than anti-communism (Lowenthal), Einaudi noted that the image of anti-communism and U.S. fear of immigration are essential to the pursuit of U.S. policy in the Caribbean. Without them, there are simply too many domestic problems to obtain public support.

Finally, the term "Caribbean basin" was questioned, and the right of "North American empire-builders" to redefine Caribbean geography was challenged (Lewis). Referring to the United States as an "unconscious empire builder," Einaudi maintained that the United States has the right to select among currents in Caribbean history as it sees fit. He suggested the historical relationships between Haiti and Louisiana or Barbados and Panama as examples of the type of regional interrelationships envisioned by the CBI.

Conclusion

The range and diversity of views expressed during the conference make it difficult to draw simple conclusions. While the conference focused on the implications of economic, political, and sociocultural developments in the Caribbean for U.S. society, scholarly and policy-oriented approaches contrasted, and some aspects of the topic received more attention than others.

Differences of perspective, substance, and interpretation among points of view were due in part to the diverse disciplinary and institutional affiliations of conference participants, as well as the capacities in which they work in their home communities. In addition, variations among Caribbean countries and among the U.S. cities where Caribbean peoples have settled gave rise to different concerns and emphases. Since participants were usually more familiar with one Caribbean group than others (e.g., Cubans or Haitians vs. English-speaking West Indians), and better informed about the situation in one city than another (e.g., New York City vs. Miami), points of view often differed on the basis of this particularistic knowledge.

Although no formal consensus among participants was reached, there was widespread agreement about the importance of economic and political factors in current and future U.S.-Caribbean relations. It must be admitted, however, that participants were generally pessimistic about the immediate prospects for change either in the Caribbean or in the United States. Thus, while the links between developments in the Caribbean and problems on the state and municipal levels were demonstrated, no single course of action capable of resolving problems was suggested.

Several participants noted, for example, the growing importance of multilateral cooperation in finding solutions to Caribbean economic problems. Yet, as Americans become aware of the need to treat Caribbean nations as full partners in decisions which affect both Caribbean and U.S. interests, it has also become increasingly difficult for the United States to alter its own policies unilaterally, even in matters of vital domestic importance such as immigration.

It was also observed that potentially positive U.S. foreign policy proposals such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative raise serious questions in themselves. Some participants questioned the ability of the CBI to respond effectively to the needs of underdeveloped Caribbean countries. Others indicated how the initiative may well increase competition and conflict between Caribbean countries and U.S. cities by diverting money for investment and trade.

The Caribbean presence within and outside U.S. borders will continue to force Americans to consider the type of society which currently exists in the United States and which may exist in the future. Despite the pessimistic tone of the conference, it was recognized that problems in U.S.-Caribbean relations will not soon disappear. Given this reality, the needs for flexibility in approaches to the Caribbean region and for further communication between scholars, policymakers, and the general public are perhaps the most important themes of the conference.

"The Contemporary Caribbean and Its Impact on the United States"

Conference on the Caribbean for State and Local Government Officials of the Eastern Seaboard

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