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THE CARIBBEAN AND THE UNITED STATES: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

A Rapporteur's Report

Gertrude Fraser
The Johns Hopkins University

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Introduction

There is great diversity within, as well as variation between, Caribbean societies. Those who seek to understand the region are confronted with a complex array of historical relationships, varying patterns of social and cultural life, and divergent forms of political systems. Along with this diversity and variation, however, there are shared patterns of economy and society. The task of defining the region and making comparisons between these societies is primarily one of effecting a balance between broad-scale generalizations and the details of particulars. Generalizations must be placed within specific contexts of time and place, while elements that initially appear as anomalies may upon further investigation provide new perspectives on regional patterns. Inquiries into the nature of shared linkages and divergent structures are important for understanding the region and its peoples. They are equally as important to discussions of Caribbean-United States relations.

On May 10, 1982, the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars hosted a conference on "The Caribbean and the United States: Problems and Prospects."* Organized in the wake of increased focus on the Caribbean by the public and private sectors, the conference facilitated an exchange between Caribbean scholars, representatives of the U.S. government, church leaders, and religious officials. It served as an informational seminar as well as a forum for the discussion of basic issues impacting on Caribbean societies and on the lives of Caribbean peoples.

There is no simple approach to understanding the complex dynamics at work in the Caribbean and no simple solutions to problems of economic underdevelopment. A variety of perspectives on social, economic, and religious aspects of Caribbean societies were represented in the conference. In this rapporteur's report, I present the major themes and summarize the results of group discussions. No attempt is made to critically analyze the various viewpoints. I have, however, attempted to capture the dynamic

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* The conference was organized under the direction of Abraham F. Lowenthal, Secretary of the Latin American Program. I would like to thank Richard Sholk, the Program's research intern, for additional notes, and Jorge Heine, the Program's Research Associate, for his patience.

of the dialogue between conference participants whether or not they gave formal presentations. To facilitate the process, a name in parentheses is used to identify a line of questioning or argument to a particular individual.

Perspectives on Caribbean Society and Culture

Conference participants and speakers offered differing perspectives on Caribbean social and cultural identity. Most agreed that shared socio-economic and historical factors resulted in similar patterns of cultural and social life; however, there was disagreement as to the certainty with which particular social values and attitudes could be identified with specific socioeconomic and historical processes. Furthermore, it was argued that the attempt to find common denominators of cultural and social identity should not lead to the neglect of the specific character of each Caribbean society (Mintz), neither can strict generalities about social identity be drawn according to demarcations of geography or language. For example, there is considerable contrast in socio-cultural behavioral patterns and notions of social identity between different English-speaking countries in the region (Knight, Lewis).

Caribbean cultural values and attitudes. While acknowledging that attention needs to be given to specifics, speakers nonetheless identified shared cultural values in the region. Three principal processes contribute to these shared features: (1) creolization--the process whereby the multi-cultural and multiracial peoples of the region interacted over hundreds of years to form a unique cultural environment; (2) colonialism--which in all its variant forms resulted in external control of the region and its particular economic and political configurations; and (3) a shared heritage of slave resistance and accommodation (Nettleford, Lewis).

What are some of the shared cultural attitudes across Caribbean societies? The tendency of Caribbean peoples to reject indigenously created institutions and behavioral styles in favor of external ones was seen as a Caribbean-wide phenomenon. This tendency to value externally generated constructs is linked to the region's dependency on external political and cultural models as a consequence of long-standing dependency (Lewis). Yet it was pointed out that the acceptance of external institutions does not mean that there are no indigenously created forms in the region. Throughout a history of domination by others, Caribbean peoples have developed unique patterns of kinship, religion, and social organization. Furthermore, the frequent deemphasis of indigenous forms does not mean that the majority of Caribbean individuals experience identity crises in their daily lives. This is due in part to the fact that most West Indians come from societies in which they are in the numerical majority. Upon migrating to the United States, West Indians have little sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the dominant majority culture (Lewis). Participants and speakers also agreed that flexibility is a valued attribute among Caribbean peoples. The Caribbean person "is likely to operate on several levels simultaneously or may exhibit tremendous flexibility in adapting to changing situations as circumstances demand. Where unpredictability is of tactical advantage, such a person may very well think of several identities instead of one" (Nettleford).

Given these shared attitudes, is there a more general acknowledgment of a pan-Caribbean identity in the region? A shared sense of Caribbean unity, while not immediately manifest, often surfaces in the light of confrontation with outsiders. The negative effects of colonialism resulted in a sense of mutual struggle and in an attachment to ideals of independence (Nettleford). On the other hand, although the potential for a generalized recognition of pan-Caribbean structures exists, only a few individuals, primarily among the intellectual community, actually acknowledge the shared heritages and identities which link Caribbean peoples (Lewis). The forces which contribute to the possibility of a shared Caribbean consciousness are the same ones which have resulted in the insular and often isolated nature of Caribbean societies (Lewis). One speaker suggested that while the external observer viewed the Caribbean as a unified whole, internally there is little sense of a shared Caribbean identity. The failure of regional organizations was an indication of this internal fragmentation (Neehall). Furthermore, the emphasis placed on the African roots of Caribbean peoples by Caribbean nationalist movements presents problems for those citizens who trace their primary ancestral roots to other world areas (Knight). On the level of individual response, it was pointed out that most Caribbean migrants in the United States make clear distinctions between citizens of the different countries in the region and only secondarily identify themselves as being from the Caribbean. They resent the tendency of Americans to gloss over these differences (Lewis).

Race and ethnicity: an overview. The manner in which Caribbean people identify themselves vis-a-vis their neighbors and the way in which groups are classified within each society are important for understanding the region. Patterns of social and cultural identity are closely related to the dynamic of race and ethnicity. There is a uniquely Caribbean classification system which, unlike the situation in the United States, is not predicated on a dichotomized view of black-white relations. Caribbean peoples have never created a tandem conflict between the majority and minority cultures (Knight). Centuries of racial and ethnic interpenetration resulted in a system in which classification is based on social status, social acceptance, and social ascendancy. The individual's phenotype is not the sole or most important criterion for his or her classification into a particular racial or ethnic group (Lewis). Caribbean peoples are often shocked and bewildered at the dichotomized classification system which exists in the United States. Although discrimination does exist, the variables which go into classifying individuals are more elaborate and the system more flexible than in the United States (Knight, Lewis).

In the multiethnic, multicultural societies of the Caribbean, relations between groups vary from country to country and depend on a number of different factors. For example, relations between ethnic groups in Trinidad, where individuals of East Indian ancestry constitute almost half the population, are quite different from group relations in Jamaica, where the percentage of individuals of East Indian ancestry is much lower. The differing political histories of countries in the region also contribute to the highly variable character of group relations from society to society (Mintz).

A fundamental critique can be made of the attempt to generalize about Caribbean societies. Geographical, linguistic, and racial features often serve as the primary basis of comparison. Yet what may appear as relevant categories for comparison may be further centrifuged to factor in variables of class and relationships of power. Looking beyond traditional lines of demarcation and giving attention to the particulars of each society may yield new patterns and clarify assumptions about what is shared and not shared in the region. Apparent similarities or differences based on cultural or linguistic boundaries often submerge other patterns which are a consequence of the relationship between economic classes or of the relationship of a particular Caribbean society to external economic and political forces (Mintz). Economic classes within the same society may have divergent world views, different relationships to the polity, and different forms of religious practice. Their perceptions of their cultural and social identity will also vary (Mintz, Domínguez). Consequently, the urban worker in a particular Caribbean society may have more in common with his counterpart in another than with the elites in his or her own society. Pentecostalism, for example, may attract a particular socioeconomic group across the Caribbean, while Protestantism may seem particularly relevant to another (Mintz).

Religion and religiosity in the Caribbean. Cultural values and attitudes, concerns about group identity, and the premium placed on flexibility in the Caribbean are embedded in a complex web of relations between people and institutions. Religion and religious institutions are a vital part of the lives of Caribbean peoples and greatly influence the way in which the world is viewed and daily events evaluated. Speakers described some of the manifestations of syncretic folk religious practice in the Caribbean and placed them in historical perspective. The relationship between established churches (official religion) and folk religion, the interface between church and state, and the links between social and religious life in the Caribbean were also considered. Since many participants were involved in ministering to Caribbean migrants in the United States, particularly to recently arrived refugees from Cuba and Haiti, they were concerned with discussing the practical implications of these factors. They were also centrally concerned with placing the Caribbean individual and his or her interests at the focal point of the analyses. This provided a crucial counterpoint to the theoretical orientation of some speakers.

Folk religions. Despite the variation across the region, Caribbean folk religions may be generally characterized as syncretic religious movements (Lewis). Convince cults of Jamaica, *brujeria* and *santeria* in the Spanish islands, *vodun* in Haiti, pentecostalist or protestant churches--are all discrete forms of religious practice; however, they have developed as part of a historical process in which elements of European religious thought and practice became fused and incorporated into African-based (Afro-Caribbean) modes of religious belief with inputs from many other culture areas. The process of accretion and coalescence of different and sometimes conflicting forms of belief and practice has resulted in what speakers variously referred to as the religious eclecticism (Knight) or the religious communalism (Domínguez) of the Caribbean region.

There is usually a discrepancy between official statistics on formal religious affiliation and what is actually practiced in the various Caribbean countries (Lewis). Caribbean peoples place emphasis on flexibility of religious participation rather than on rigid identification with a single religious institution (Neehall, Lewis, Knight). There is a sense of open religiosity, and people are receptive to diverse religious experiences (Lewis). In general, fluidity and the availability of choice are normal rather than abnormal, and religious activity is part and parcel of everyday life (Knight). Thus, rather than viewing alternate modes of religious practice as superstitions, they should be viewed as reflections of the deep religiosity of Caribbean peoples who may think of Europeans or Americans as surprisingly irreligious (Lewis).

Caribbean folk religions share some basic features. There is little hierarchical ordering in these movements. They are congregationalist in character and deemphasize organized liturgy (Lewis). This often brings them into conflict with the established churches, and is an indication of an almost purposeful attempt to provide an antithesis to formal religious experience. Another important element which seems to be shared across these religions is a vision of the world in which man, society, and nature form parts of the same entity (Lewis, Neehall).

The folk concept of religion places tremendous emphasis on the direct relationship of the individual practitioner to God and to his fellow men (Neehall). In this world view, religious affiliation is linked to one's political sympathies, to one's standing in the community, and to the way in which one relates to other human beings; no attempt is made to separate out what are perceived to be interwoven elements (Lewis).

The established church. The established churches also play a central role in the life of the polity and its people. In the multiethnic, economically stratified societies of the Caribbean, religious affiliation reflects one's social position and often identifies one as belonging to a particular ethnic group or to a particular socioeconomic class (Domínguez, Mintz). It may also reflect whether an individual lives in an urban or rural area. The complicated histories of colonization in the region and the influence of various missionary groups have resulted in an intricate pattern of religious affiliation and produced many denominational offshoots of metropolitan models. The situation is a good deal more complex than an unquestioned look at official statistics and apparent colonial influence would indicate. The Roman Catholic Church claims the majority of adherents in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and in those Caribbean countries which were colonized by the French, while the Anglican Church still holds court as the official religion in those countries which were colonized by the British. Yet in Trinidad, a former British colony which also experienced occupation by the Spanish and provided refuge for French colonists during the Haitian revolution, at least a third of the population consider themselves to be Roman Catholic, while in Puerto Rico, a former Spanish colony, Protestant denominations have large and growing congregations.

The church in the Caribbean is one of the principal organizing forces at the community and national levels and has recently made efforts to create pan-Caribbean associations. One of the most successful regional newspapers is published by the Caribbean Council of Churches (Neehall).

Respected individuals in the community are often lay religious leaders; this is particularly true for rural Caribbean communities. Frequently they number among the few literate individuals and are instruments for the dissemination of information about the outside world; and their opinions heavily influence the manner in which the populace reacts to external events. This phenomenon seems to be part of a more complex process which may conveniently be conceived of as a process of "double migration" (Domínguez). On one hand, there is a migration of ideas from the United States to the Caribbean. Behavioral norms and values, consumption patterns, and religious practices are brought in from the United States and are filtered to the entire populace in part through church and lay personnel. On the other hand, there is "migration through space" as Caribbean individuals influenced by the flow of ideas from the United States decide to emigrate to the source of these valued goods, services, and behavioral styles.

Church and state in the Caribbean. What is the relationship between church and state in the Caribbean? Obviously the variables are complex and the relationship between church and state varies according to the political histories of particular countries. The Caribbean is not a political or ideological whole (Neehall). Most speakers noted, however, that the church in the Caribbean has a close relationship to the polity. It is not unusual for church leaders to mediate between political parties or to act as the arbitrating body in labor disputes. One speaker commented that the church in the Caribbean has been historically a conservative body, often serving the purposes of the politically and economically powerful (Lewis). On the other hand, another speaker argued that the churches in the Caribbean were beginning to speak out against social, economic, and political injustices, both directly and indirectly (Neehall).

Noting the connections between Marxism, Christian ethics, and social teaching, another speaker suggested that the interface between Marxism and religion is being explored in the Caribbean, especially among the intelligentsia (Lewis). Following through on this observation, it was pointed out that those countries which have undergone Marxist communist revolutions were those which have Roman Catholicism as a dominant religion (Domínguez). Yet, alternative and contradictory explanations can be employed to account for this fact; conference participants did not explore the possible implications of the conjuncture.

Perhaps one of the central relationships between church and polity in the Caribbean lies in the area of "public" primary- and secondary-school education. Throughout the region the majority of these institutions are run jointly by church and state. Although the state provides primary financial assistance and develops the curricula, the church and church personnel are in charge of the school's daily administration. There is thus great overlap between religion and education. For example, the priest tends to be the primary-school principal as well as spiritual leader of the parish (Knight).

The close relationship between church and state has some disturbing consequences. Using the Haitian example, it was maintained that the established church supported a dictatorial government, one which is violent and militaristic and is purported to have tortured individuals. Priests and religious personnel are perceived to be closely associated with the

government, and as a result the majority of people have tended to move away from the church. It was argued that this is disturbing to migrants who want to be classified as political refugees. It was also suggested that in the case of Haiti, and perhaps for other countries in the region, the closeness of church and state might be a variable contributing to the continued high incidence of membership in folk religions (Malan).

Folk religion and established church: the interplay. Questions were raised regarding the interaction of established churches with syncretic folk religions. It was noted that the established churches were unable in some respects to come to terms with the folk view of religious belief and practice. Although there has been no systematic effort, some denominations, particularly the Catholic Church, have made some attempts to incorporate folk elements into their liturgies (Neehall). However, as in the case of Haiti, although some folk rites are being used by the Roman Catholic Church, there has been no systematic effort to understand them as illustrative of a particular vision of the world with an internal logic of their own (Smarth).

Another speaker commented that historically there has always been a struggle between formal, organized authoritarian churches and Caribbean folk religious movements. During and after slavery, the dominant churches were often closely associated with colonial governments, repressive slave masters, and external authority, and were usually avoided by the masses (Lewis). However, in what is seen as a recent and growing trend, established official denominations have developed movements to counter this phenomenon and have attempted to be more flexible in dealing with the multiplex religiosity of Caribbean peoples. The Catholic Church, for example, has developed a counter-pentecostalist movement embedded in a renewed interest in biblical fundamentalism and charismatic Catholicism. People thus are able to negotiate their own views of the world within the established church. As a result, the influx of members into new Pentecostal churches has declined. In addition, the ecumenical movement among Caribbean churches is an attempt to bridge the gap between the various denominations in the hope of providing a framework for closer collaboration (Neehall).

One participant wondered whether the attempt to incorporate folk religions into orthodox denominations would increase fragmentation. He feared that the church would not help the individual (in this case the Caribbean migrant) to formulate a consistent sense of self (Wenski). It was pointed out that since the majority of Caribbean people participate in multiple religious experiences membership in established churches is not viewed as inconsistent with participation in syncretic folk religions (Domínguez). Indeed, alternate modes of worship usually involve the established churches. Santeria in Puerto Rico is illustrative of this principle (Peláez). It was further maintained that this approach to religious experience is part of a larger world view and a manner of thinking about one's life (the "supermarket approach"). Themes from different religions are chosen with the aim of taking advantage of as many opportunities as possible and participating in as many forms of religious experience as the situation demands, the ultimate goal being to enhance the individual's life. This approach to religious experience is reflective of the endeavor to manifest rather than dissipate religiosity. It was emphasized that

flexible strategizing on the part of Caribbean peoples is not necessarily a conscious belabored activity but evolves as a result of the presence of different religions and modes of religious experience in a region where the colonial process brought together people of varying geographic and cultural regions (Domínguez).

The U.S. Church and the Caribbean

Since the juxtaposition of various forms of religious belief is considered normal rather than abnormal in the Caribbean, the individual who views him/herself as orthodox while fully participating in other religious experiences is often faced with tremendous conflict in the United States, where the emphasis is placed on choosing one form of religious worship (Domínguez). This individual is baffled by the necessity of restricting himself to one mode of worship and often becomes furtive and ashamed of his religious beliefs. Churches in the receiving society are going to be challenged by the Caribbean migrants' world view and by their approach to religion.

The U.S. church and the Caribbean community: some recommendations. Condemning the multiplex religiosity of the migrant and counseling that a definite choice be made is not the strategy for the church to adopt. Rather, it will be important for religious personnel to examine the historic and logical underpinnings of syncretic religions and the "supermarket approach" to religious practice in order to understand how these fit into present-day experiences of Caribbean people (Peláez, Domínguez, Wenski). Churches need to confront and understand alternate forms of worship. The Catholic Church needs to explore other modes of presenting man and involving parishioners, perhaps by incorporating folk rites into the liturgy or establishing storefront churches (McCarthy).

Those who minister to Caribbean communities must be aware of some of the factors which have shaped the Caribbean person's approach to life and religious experience. The political and economic changes in the region mean that the Caribbean individual is a person who has been confronted with questions concerning his/her relationship to the church, to the family, and the state (Neehall, Domínguez). He or she has, in some fashion or other, placed these various elements in particular configurations. The specific manner in which individuals have ordered their priorities depends on a number of variables such as the individual's class background, relative orthodoxy, political affiliation, and ideology. These variables are interrelated and are important for understanding the differences which exist between migrants from the same society (Domínguez). For example, in most of those countries that have undergone leftist revolutions (e.g., Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba), the church (specifically the Catholic Church) has been reduced to a sect (a sect in which public membership restricts access to other institutions and goods and services in the society); and thus the decision to express or not to express religious belief has economic, social, and political implications. Individuals who migrate are the ones most likely to have identified with north Atlantic consumption patterns and are the ones who rejected premises of the revolution in their country. In the case of early Cuban migration to the United States, those who migrated were the most orthodox religiously, with little involvement in folk religions. On the other hand, Mariel

migrants are demographically more characteristic of the Cuban population--members of the working class and more phenotypically black individuals are represented. Folk religions probably play an important role in their lives, and they may, if not encouraged, be kept away from established denominations because of the presence of the longer settled, more orthodox migrants (Domínguez).

As the Cuban example illustrates, the U.S. church also needs to be conscious of the variations that exist between different sectors of the same society (Domínguez). Migrants from different sectors of the same society may hold different views of the world and have differing relationships to religious experience. The church, in recognizing these variations, will be more prepared to offer relevant counseling and forms of worship. In turn, the church and members of its congregation are offered the opportunity to learn from peoples with different world views and with new and exciting perspectives on the relationship of man to God and to his fellow human beings (Flachmeier).

Role of the United States church. Participants and speakers felt that the church in the United States, in its commitment to the plight of recent Caribbean migrants and with a history of ministering to Caribbean migrant communities, had to fulfill many functions. As a transnational institution, the church is concerned not with national or social boundaries but with solutions to problems facing human beings (McCarthy, Domínguez). Intrinsic to its transnational character is its role as advocate, providing assistance to individuals who may be documented or undocumented migrants, who may be undergoing tremendous stress and strain and confronting psychological problems due to their marginal position. The church serves as comforter and as mediator between the migrant and the host society, often introducing the migrant to a new community and aiding in resettlement (Flachmeier, Domínguez). The involvement of churches in the plight of Haitian and Cuban refugees reflects their importance as mediators and advocates (Flachmeier).

One speaker maintained, however, that despite its commitment to these roles, the ultimate aim of the church is to spiritually help the migrant. Another participant, although acknowledging the mandate of the church and religious institutions to aid undocumented and documented migrants, pointed out that attention has to be given to the economic dimension. Payment for legal services and housing, for example, would entail great financial costs. In a similar vein, another speaker explored the deeper implications of the church's commitment to Caribbean migrants. He argued that there are social, economic, and political costs and benefits involved which the church has to recognize. At a pastoral level, migrants make the pastor's work infinitely more difficult even though they contribute to the cultural diversity of the congregation. In ministering to Caribbean migrants, churches are engaged more rather than less; positions have to be taken on issues full of conflict, even at the risk of alienating older and more traditional members (Domínguez).

Furthermore, as part of a greater nexus of political and economic forces, the church plays a role in the processes of migration itself. In taking a positive stand on family reunification and in helping the resettlement of migrants, the church probably aids in stimulating

migration; however, as a community of assistance, the church cannot nor will not choose the option of rejecting these migrants (Domínguez). It was argued, however, that attention has to be given to alternative forms of providing assistance to Caribbean peoples which will not stimulate migration.

Should the church have a role in basic economic and political development of the Caribbean? (Domínguez) In partial response to this question, a speaker suggested that the church as a transnational community might play a role in assisting the Caribbean itself. He specifically suggested that satellite communities in the Caribbean with ties to U.S. religious communities could be formed. This would stem the flow of migrants to the United States as economic and social programs of self-help could be instituted (McCarthy). Other participants cautioned against any attempt to assist Caribbean peoples that did not respect their historical and continuing struggle for independence (Nettleford). Churches and religious institutions have to make every effort to provide aid that would build bridges to economic independence rather than create new bonds of dependence (Domínguez).

Migration and Migration Policy

Discussion of the relationship between U.S. churches and the Caribbean community must confront the issues surrounding the movement of Caribbean peoples to the United States.

Immigration policy: the Simpson-Mazzoli bill. U.S. immigration policy has an influence on the form and level of the migration process and is responsible for determining the status of Caribbean migrants to the United States; the latter function is of particular importance to the undocumented migrant. Representative Mazzoli, a Republican from Kentucky, briefed conference participants on his efforts to change existing immigration policies and engaged in a discussion on the most recent migrations of Cuban and Haitian refugees.

The Simpson-Mazzoli bill, according to Mazzoli, is an attempt to introduce an immigration policy that is neither nativist nor racist and which, in its humanistic character, does not reflect selfish or exclusive goals on the part of the United States. It calls for the passage of employee sanction laws which would punish employers who hire illegal aliens; concomitantly a secure tamper-proof verification system identifying legal immigrants is to be developed, thus ensuring that employers could not plead ignorance. The bill also calls for a strengthening of U.S. borders--a reflection of its emphasis on preventive measures. Mazzoli also maintained that the present asylum procedure system is an unfair and impacted one. Therefore, the bill provides the guidelines for a new procedure in which, in contrast to the present system, the roles of enforcer and judge would be separated. Presently the bureau which enforces immigration law also determines the fate of the immigrant. Under the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, the asylum procedure would be undertaken by the judicial branch. Additionally, the bill contains guidelines for speeding up the asylum process.

highly unlikely, therefore, that their names would appear in newspapers or lists of political dissidents. Yet this is one of the primary questions asked to determine political refugee status (Malan, Smarth). There should be a more specific set of criteria for the Haitian case. One participant suggested that the asylum process would be facilitated if congressmen went to Haiti in order to rate its human-rights index. In the case of Haiti, Congressman Mazzoli maintained that a group of congressmen who had recently visited Haiti are convinced that the situation is an economic rather than political one. He discounted the possibility, suggested by one participant, that the nondelivery of letters to deported migrants is an indication that they had been punished politically. For future cases, however, he suggested that a corps of individuals should be trained to deal with the asylum process and with the specifics of political and economic repression in the sending countries (Mazzoli).

Another participant discussed the demarcation between the voluntary involvement of the religious community and the mandatory involvement of the government. He commented that although members of the religious community recognize their mission to aid those in distress, and although they have been closely involved in the resettlement of the recent waves of Cuban and Haitian migrants, the voluntary sector should not be expected to do the job of the legislative and administrative sector. Government agencies need to realize that the United States is the primary port of entry for Haitian migrants, and should develop an efficient, relevant, and compassionate procedure for dealing with these individuals.

Caribbean Migration: Two Views of its Dynamic

Discussion of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill and U.S. immigration policy provided an introduction to a more detailed discussion of Caribbean migration. Two theoretical approaches were presented. One speaker viewed migration as a secondary phenomenon in a global economic system. This perspective emphasizes the complexity of economic and political forces which influence the migration process and suggests that these forces occur somewhat independently of specific immigration policies. The alternative approach argues that migration is directly related to the desire for cheap labor by U.S. corporations.

In the global theoretical approach, migration is part of a continuing historical process in which, at different periods, different configurations of movement occur. Particular historical, economic, and political circumstances result in the migration of different sectors of a society's population (Bach). The current rates of Caribbean emigration to the United States are related to the industrialization of the region and to the economic and cultural penetration of the Caribbean by the United States (Bach, Domínguez). During periods of economic upswing in the United States, rates of migration tend to go up; in periods of recession, rates tend to go down. Current migration patterns are characterized by the heterogeneity of migrants and the greater presence of women (Bach, Kritz). In general, this pattern reflects the movement of more Caribbean peoples into the marketplace and their search for employment (Bach, Knight, Kritz).

The alternate analysis maintains that migration varies not according to complex external economic-political forces and their effects on the region, but rather on the form of U.S. immigration policy at any given moment. According to this perspective, the migration process has two phases. In the first phase, the process is initiated by employers who recruit cheap labor, while the second phase is characterized by a self-perpetuating and controlled dynamic. Once migration is initiated, it will continue to grow unchecked as the flow of information back to the Caribbean and the upward mobility of already-arrived immigrants encourage others to migrate. Restrictive immigration policies should be the primary means of stopping the unbridled flow of Caribbean people to the United States (Connor). In its emphasis on a single cause-effect process, this theoretical perspective does not differentiate between migrants and migratory waves.

For those who view migration as an historical, political-economic process, importance is given to understanding it from the Caribbean point of view. As a result, this approach is concerned with the migratory patterns of individuals. In the world-view of the Caribbean individual ("survival is no crime"), migration is seen as another means of enhancing one's life chances as well as the life chances of family members (Bach). From this perspective, migration is a stage in the life-cycle. One's ultimate goal is to gather adequate social and material goods to return home (Bach, Knight). This view informs the migrant's action, although in many cases the tendency to encourage the migration of other family members increases the chances that the temporary stay will become permanent (Bach, Kritz).

Contrary to the view of migration as an uncontrolled phenomenon, this approach points out that social networks organized along family lines are well established and have a significant impact upon migration rates and upon the particular experience of individual migrants. Legal rules and regulations governing immigration are often manipulated by members of these social networks. Furthermore, the new migrant's pattern of settlement into the host society often mirrors that of other family members. Menial jobs, for example, are passed on to incoming family members as the previous holder moves up the pay-scale (Bach). Often, this tight social control makes government enforcement of regulations difficult.

In the alternative view of Caribbean migration, cultural constructs which influence Caribbean peoples' view of migration are irrelevant since the primary goal is to halt the migration flow. Analysis of the migration process is based on a model of competition and conflict. Immigrants come into conflict with native workers because they are a source of cheap labor and take the jobs which would normally go to U.S. workers, since labor supplied by immigration exceeds the number of low-paying jobs. In turn, immigrants are also in competition with U.S. workers for social services. Hardships are created for the native worker who comes to resent the immigrant (Connor). Other participants strongly rejected the suggestion that immigrants overwhelmingly utilize social services (Kritz, Bach).

An important question arises from this view of the immigration process. Do low-paying jobs exist because immigrants are available to take them, or would these jobs exist regardless of the presence of

world areas, they take on greater significance when it is realized that for most Caribbean countries migrants to the United States make up 10 to 15 percent of their population. What might be some of the variables effecting the migrant's adaptation to the new society? Are there patterns of adaptation which typify migrants from specific Caribbean societies? Migratory patterns across Caribbean populations as they related to adaptation to the host country have been analyzed; the data indicate that New York City is the port of entry for most British West Indians, while most Cuban immigrants enter through Florida. However, as the length of residency increases, there is a diffusion to other states (Kritz).

The particular histories of entry and settlement have implications for the level of income and the life-cycle decisions which migrants make. Furthermore, the migrant's experience in the host country can only be understood with reference to the manner in which migration was initiated. It was found that those immigrants who have been positively selected because of technical or other skills fare better in the host societies. Their incomes are higher and their socioeconomic status increases at a faster pace. The data also reveal that with the exception of cross-Hispanic organizations, Caribbean migrants have no formal unifying sociopolitical or cultural organizations across communities. The formation of organizations along the lines of country of origin mirror the insular pattern of institutional formation in the region itself (Kritz). Yet Caribbean migrants also tend to set themselves apart from the black American and Hispanic American communities in recognition of some shared Caribbean identity (Knight).

Female migration. Twentieth-century Caribbean migration is marked by the high percentages of female migrants. Women represent 51 to 55 percent of all migrants. Many of these women work in the health services and domestic sector. This is particularly true of British West Indians. Most of these female migrants are either married or have young children, while the percentage of unmarried women past the age of 18 is increasing, as is the category "female-headed households" (Kritz). Various explanations were given to account for the high percentage of female migration. It was suggested that this pattern is related to the availability of domestic and other traditionally female-filled jobs. The attraction of skilled women to opportunities not available in sending societies is also a factor. The social mobility of these women is often blocked in their home countries (Knight, Kritz). It was also noted that this pattern reflects the fact that women are the backbone of the vast unofficial economy in the Caribbean (Lewis).

Patterns of adaptation: a cross-societal comparison. Comparison of Puerto Rican "migrants" with those from the British and other Hispanic Caribbean countries revealed major differences, but also raised a methodological debate. Briefly, it was argued that when taking into account socioeconomic status, level of education, and utilization of social services (especially welfare), British West Indian migrants have higher average incomes and higher levels of education and utilize social services less than a comparable group of Puerto Rican "migrants" (Kritz). Puerto Rican women more likely will be separated, widowed, or divorced than other Hispanic groups. In challenging the relevance of these findings, a

speaker argued that it is false on a number of counts to compare Puerto Rican "migrants" to West Indian or other migrant groups. Puerto Ricans are not migrants in the classic sense but rather are United States citizens. They are an ethnic rather than a migrant group sharing many of the problems of black Americans and other native minorities (Knight).

Furthermore, the language variable is to be considered. British West Indians fare well because they enter the United States with the advantage of speaking English or a variant of English. They do not have to confront language barriers, which is a positive factor in their upward mobility. Additionally, Puerto Rican "migrants" as well as Mexican migrants differ in composition from West Indian migrants because of their relative ease of movement back and forth between borders.

Similarly, the earlier wave of Cuban migration cannot be compared to the more recent Mariel migration. The 1962 Cuban immigrants had economic and political support from the United States. Furthermore, they were self-selected entrepreneurs and skilled professionals. The relative social mobility of Puerto Ricans also cannot be compared to Colombians or people from the Dominican Republic. The relative ease of entry into the United States results in a more demographically representative Puerto Rican population while, in the latter case, migrants are generally only representative of the educated and economically well-off sector of the sending societies (Knight).

These qualifications, however, do not change the basic conclusions, given the available data. Caribbean patterns of migration do not differ from earlier European immigration to the United States. On first entering the United States, Caribbean migrants, who in many instances have been positively selected, experience downward mobility and are often able to obtain only unskilled or semi-skilled employment. After 11 to 15 years, however, income levels are usually on a par with those of whites. Additionally, in the second generation there are high levels of education and marriage outside the group (Kritz).

Given the statistics, one must look beyond the specifics of Caribbean migration to understand the current characterization of these movements as uncontrolled and largely illegal and as placing unprecedented burdens on public coffers. This negative perception of Caribbean immigration may be partially explained by the economic downswing in the U.S. economy over the past years. Americans fear that the country will be inundated with dependent Caribbean immigrants, and they respond with efforts to legislate more restrictive immigration policies and patrol borders more intensively (Kritz). One speaker cautioned, however, that the United States is no longer in a position to completely legislate its immigration policy. Caribbean and other sending societies have become politically and economically confident over the years and will strongly object to attempts to significantly alter current regulations. Additionally, migrant groups (both documented and undocumented) have found a new consciousness and will organize to legally fight what they perceive to be unfair policy shifts (Bach).

Caribbean-United States Relations: The Caribbean Basin Initiative

The final session of the conference was devoted to a discussion of the Caribbean Basin Initiative drafted by the current administration and now awaiting approval by the legislature. Throughout the conference, participants and speakers had made reference to the interrelationship between the Caribbean social, economic, and political landscape and U.S. policy toward the region. Discussion of the most recent policy initiative provided the opportunity to examine some of the variables in detail.

The definitional debate. Given their differing colonial histories and the varying patterns of social and cultural life in the region, the countries of the Caribbean have always eluded easy definition. Differing perspectives on the features which provide the minimum criteria for inclusion lead to disagreements as to which countries are to be defined as Caribbean. Geographical boundaries can be extended to include as Caribbean all countries whose borders are washed by the Caribbean sea, whereas more specific criteria which emphasize certain historical connections reject this all-inclusive definition.

The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) in its present form includes as Caribbean many Central American mainland countries. Its proponents argued that these Central American nations share similar economic and political features with those countries which traditionally have been defined as Caribbean (Bosworth). Opponents of the plan argued that this all-inclusive definition means that the bill cannot adequately address the problems of those countries traditionally defined as Caribbean in the scholarly literature (the island states, and the mainland states of Surinam, Guyana, Belize, and French Guiana) (Dymally). The plan's proponents responded, however, that while the United States had perhaps indulged in a bit of "imperialist cartography" in including mainland Central American countries in the Caribbean basin, it was felt that both mainland and island countries face similar economic problems. Economies in the Caribbean basin are for the most part small and fragile. Furthermore, since the majority of these economies are dependent on monoculture, cash-cropping is the principal source of foreign exchange; consequently they are all sensitive to fluctuating external markets. For example, during the early 1970s, the majority of these countries felt the impact of rising oil prices, and then in the late 1970s they were hit hard by the general worldwide recession which resulted in a decline in demand for traditional Caribbean export goods. As a consequence, Caribbean mainland and island countries were caught in similar balance-of-payment crises, with increasing rates of unemployment and high rates of bankruptcy. After extensive consultation with Caribbean governments, the Caribbean Basin Initiative was developed in an effort to deal with the economic problems shared by the countries in the region. At the same time, the plan has a built-in flexibility which enables it to deal with the particulars of the various countries in the region (Bosworth).

One speaker feared that the focus on the basic problems facing Caribbean-United States relations was being lost in definitional debates (Fascell), but others strongly argued that the very notion of a Caribbean basin had been based upon particular political and economic goals of the

United States. By including areas of mainland Latin America within the Caribbean basin, the administration has ignored the shared history of slavery and of "export-propelled" plantation economies which distinguishes Caribbean countries from Latin America. According to this view, the administration shows its lack of concern with the needs of the Caribbean by its all-inclusive definition of Caribbean-basin countries. It was argued that the Caribbean Basin Initiative is largely a Central American-directed initiative and only marginally gives attention to those countries traditionally defined as Caribbean. From this perspective, the rationale behind the administration's redefinition of the Caribbean region is guided by its fear of communism and by the "communist threat theory" of policy-making. The underlying aims of the redefinition are reflected in (a) the fact that the bulk of financial assistance is being allocated to Central American countries with right-wing military regimes, (b) Grenada's exclusion from the plan, and (c) the awarding of $50 million of $350 million in emergency aid to Jamaica which has broken ties with Cuba (Dymally).

The CBI: Its features. Disagreement surrounding definitional parameters used by proponents of the Caribbean Basin Initiative extended to the discussion of its basic features and the long- and short-term outcomes of the plan. Those who support the CBI argued that it will effectively protect U.S. economic and political interests in the region, ensure that Caribbean "sea lanes" are kept open for the United States, and encourage countries of the region to maintain democratic institutions while continuing to nurture the long-standing historical interdependence of the Caribbean and the United States (Bosworth).

Three basic features of the CBI plan are essential to achieving these ends. In its first phase, the CBI offers a substantial increase in aid to the region and offers it immediately. This would help to stave off the balance-of-payments problems of many of these countries and to provide an immediate source of foreign exchange. It would be especially crucial for Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Secondly, in fiscal year 1983, economic aid to the region will be geared to developing the infrastructures of the countries in the basin, particularly the smaller islands of the eastern Caribbean. Thirdly, in what was seen as a revolutionary step in U.S. policy toward the region, the CBI guarantees countries of the Caribbean basin access to U.S. markets for a 12-year period. Tariffs will be diminished or removed on Caribbean trade goods. Guaranteed market access will bolster traditional export goods and foster native investment. Furthermore, investment by U.S. entrepreneurs will be encouraged by tax incentives. Proponents of the CBI argued that the plan's tripartite structure--aid, access to U.S. markets, and investment--will create jobs and increase the volume of exports from the region (Bosworth). This will result in positive and fundamental shifts in the economic base of Caribbean-basin countries, while protecting and maintaining the United States' vital interests (Bosworth, Fascell).

Critics of the CBI argued, on the other hand, that the plan will not result in any fundamental changes in the economies of the Caribbean countries. While the CBI will benefit U.S. corporations, secure right-wing governments, and maintain and protect U.S. interests, it will not address the essentials of social and economic problems in the region.

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Specifically, the clause which gives preferential treatment to Caribbean products is illusive and restrictive. It is restrictive because approximately 90 percent of Caribbean products already enter the United States duty-free, while the two products--rum and sugar--with the potential to affect the level of exports from the region are currently on an exemption list. The clause is illusory because, contrary to appearances, it will not be to the primary advantage of Caribbean countries. Rather, the principal beneficiaries will be those U.S. companies which, under the plan, will be encouraged to manufacture their goods in the region with the guarantee that U.S. markets will be open and accessible to them under favorable tariff laws. Consequently, if goods sold in U.S. markets are U.S.-owned, neither indigenous production nor development of the region will be facilitated (Dymally).

Two major criticisms were levelled at the granting of tax incentives to U.S. investors. There is no guarantee, in the tax-incentive clause, that tax-exempt monies will be channelled into business investments which will benefit the region rather than individual U.S. companies (Dymally). It was pointed out that a similar approach employed in Puerto Rico under Operation Bootstrap resulted in a wholesale exodus of U.S. companies after the initial period of tax-exempt status had expired (Bach). Secondly, tax incentives will probably not result in lasting investment in the countries of the region. More fundamentally, critics maintained that the plan does little to build an essential infrastructure (Bach, Dymally). Supply-side economics and the straightforward marketplace approach of the initiative will not prove relevant or effective in countries with small and fragile economies and underdeveloped infrastructures (Dymally).

Focusing on a slightly different set of variables, it was argued that the Caribbean Basin Initiative has contradictory consequences. While the plan's explicit intent is to foster an economic climate in which rates of emigration to the United States will be curtailed with the provision of jobs in the region, the emphasis on private-sector investment will only result in an increased disparity between wealthy and poor, increased rural-urban migration, increased dependency on the United States, and consequently increased numbers of Caribbean migrants to its shores (Bach). Critics also feared that the CBI will encourage bilateral links with the United States at the expense of interregional cooperation. Individual Caribbean countries will come into conflict as they vie for favorable trade and tariff agreements with the United States. Thus, the plan perpetuates a policy of "divide and rule," while it rewards and punishes Caribbean nations according to how they line up along an east-west line (Dymally). It was maintained that this policy approach gives little or no recognition to alternate economic strategies, particularly Caribbean-initiated strategies and options (Dymally, Bach).

An alternative approach. Inherent in the criticism levelled against the CBI was an alternative approach to U.S. policy in the region. A number of specific recommendations were suggested, including a call for the elimination of sugar and rum tariffs, the appointment of an Assistant Secretary of Caribbean Affairs, and more conciliatory stances towards Cuba and Grenada. More generally, referring to what has recently been characterized as a "developmentalist approach," a call was made for a program of across-the-board economic assistance which would focus

attention on long-term development projects rather than on immediate U.S. ideological and military interests (Dymally). Rather than seeing a communist threat as the root of the problem, the alternative approach addresses the problems caused by unemployment and poverty, while recognizing culturally and historically valid definitions of the Caribbean (Dymally, Bach).

Counterpoint. Proponents of the Caribbean Basin Initiative responded to some of these criticisms, although there seemed to be little room for a rapprochement between the two viewpoints. During this exchange, there was some confusion regarding the amount of overall aid provided to the region. A distinction was made between the Caribbean Basin Initiative with its emphasis on investment incentives and other forms of aid in which funds are allocated according to different criteria--through, for example, the Foreign Affairs Committee (Dymally, Bach). This distinction was not sufficiently clarified; however, it was suggested that in criticizing the CBI, its opponents focused attention on the more publicized policy and ignored other ways in which straightforward aid could be given in the region (Bosworth).

It was further argued that the preconditions for the developmentalist approach were unrealistic. In drafting the CBI, the administration considered other theories of economic development but finally concluded that the only significant growth in underdeveloped countries was export-led, with incentives for entrepreneurs to take risks. Additionally, it was pointed out that in fiscal 1983, during the second phase of the plan, $60 million will be earmarked for the eastern Caribbean, thus addressing the smaller islands' need to develop an economic infrastructure (Bosworth).

The suggestion was made that the eastern Caribbean islands lack the indigenous personnel and technical skills to administer the aid provided; already existing aid is utilized at a slow rate. Although no attempt was made to explain the dynamics of the process, this participant, a former U.S. ambassador to the region, also noted that there is a lack of interest in agricultural development in these islands. Agricultural output is declining in both relative and absolute terms. The problem, therefore, rests not with the United States but with the islands themselves (Shelton).

Another participant, however, using Haiti as an example, challenged these statements. The dynamics of the decline in agricultural output have been precipitated in large part by the continued support for and encouragement of mono-crop agriculture by the United States (Smarth). It was also pointed out that U.S. economic interests and intervention in the region have helped to foster many of the current problems. Deforestation of the region, for example, is directly related to U.S. capital investments (Bach).

The United States' relationship with Grenada was discussed. The plan's main critic argued that the exclusion of Grenada from the Caribbean Basin Initiative is another manifestation of the reward-and-punishment strategy. The United States has refused to meet the Grenadian government half-way. He argued for a more conciliatory stance toward Grenada and for the recognition of its ambassador-designee to the United States. The administration's treatment of this small and predominantly black island country

borders on racism (Dymally). This charge was fiercely denied by the plan's main supporter, who maintained that the best foreign-policy response to Grenada is to ignore it (Bosworth). Other participants, however, pointed out that there is a tremendous imbalance in United States-Grenada relations. The United States wields the economic and political power while Grenada's only weapon is its rhetoric (Lowenthal, Bach, Dymally). Indeed, all Caribbean nations have suffered from a long history of asymmetric relations with dominant powers. A foreign-policy approach that is not cognizant of these facts does not address the real problems at hand and will only further alienate and disenfranchise Grenada as well as other Caribbean countries (Lowenthal).

What is Puerto Rico's role in the new Caribbean Basin Initiative and how is it to be affected? Some participants maintained that Puerto Rico will serve as a bridge between the United States and the Caribbean, particularly since it was closely allied to U.S. interests. In contrast, other participants argued that this view of the situation obfuscates the complexity of Puerto Rican perspectives on its place as a Caribbean country and the role it should play in the region. Furthermore there is resentment and anger since most Puerto Ricans realize that the Caribbean Basin Initiative, by opening up U.S. markets to the rest of the Caribbean, will have adverse effects on Puerto Rico's economy, both in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Conclusion

The conference provided an intensive analysis of a number of key issues. Nevertheless, there were some areas of inquiry which were not discussed in detail but which merit further analysis. The suggestion was made that the availability of the migration "safety-valve" could significantly defuse political and economic crisis and unrest in the region (Bach, Connor). What are the implications of this suggestion and what factors might foster confrontation rather than migration? More attention needs to be focused on the relationship between church and state in the Caribbean and on the rapprochement between Marxist ideology and established relations.

There was some difference of opinion concerning the settlement patterns of Caribbean migrants. One speaker argued that Caribbean migrants tend not to form and remain in enclave communities (Kritz), while another argued that Caribbean migrants often live in enclaves of Caribbean communities in the United States, although maintaining a lively dialogue with the outside (Knight). The resolution of this issue seems to rest with the availability of more comprehensive data.

Finally, some participants commented that the conference had tended to focus too frequently on the English-speaking Caribbean. Furthermore, given time constraints and the conference's format, relevant areas of inquiry could not be sufficiently explored nor seemingly factual inconsistencies resolved. Other participants regretted that the conference did not have a more ecumenical character.

The Contemporary Caribbean and Its Impact on the United States: Problems and Prospects

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