A TREATY DOES NOT MAKE A COMMUNITY: RACE AND MIGRATION IN BARBADOS

by

Stacey L Cumberbatch
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
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of
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in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Cultural Studies

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Date: ________________________ Fall Semester 2015
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Fairfax, VA
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A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: Bean, Ganelle, Ivan, Stephen and Shawn.
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It has been a long journey for me to complete this dissertation, and I have many people to thank for seeing me through this process. I thank all of my committee members for believing in my project, for understanding its importance to the Caribbean, for helping me complete it, and for encouraging me to ask critical questions about my research. I thank my dissertation director Zofia Burr for her guidance and patience and for helping me shape my dissertation into a manageable project. I am deeply grateful to her for demonstrating to me what it means to be a teacher. I thank my committee member Susan Harewood for the detailed and insightful comments she provided. I greatly appreciate her willingness to work with me at such a late stage in the dissertation process. I thank my committee member Dae Young Kim for his support and his attention to detail. I thank my committee member Michael Malouf for his support and comments.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

African Caribbean and Pacific.................................................................ACP
Barbadian..............................................................................................Bajan
Barbados Free Press..................................................................................BFP
Barbados Shipping and Trading Company..............................................BS&T
Barbados Underground............................................................................BU
Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.......................................................CBC
Caribbean Community and Common Market..........................................CARICOM
Caribbean Court of Justice......................................................................CCJ
Caribbean Development Bank..................................................................CDB
Caribbean Examinations Council.............................................................CXC
Caribbean Free Trade Area........................................................................CARIFTA
Caricom Single Market and Economy......................................................CSME
Community Council of Ministers............................................................CCM
Conference of Heads of Government......................................................CHOG
Council for Finance and Planning............................................................CFP
Council for Human and Social Development........................................CHSD
European Community...............................................................................EC
European Economic Community.............................................................EEC
European Union.......................................................................................EU
Export Processing Zone...........................................................................EPZ
Free Trade Area of the Americas..............................................................FTA
Gross Domestic Product..........................................................................GDP
Gross National Income............................................................................GNI
Human Development Index.......................................................................HDI
Human Development Report.....................................................................HDR
Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index.......................................IHDI
International Financial Institution............................................................IFI
International Monetary Fund...................................................................IMF
Multinational Corporation........................................................................MNC
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States...............................................OECS
Prime Minister.........................................................................................PM
Transnational Corporation.......................................................................TNC
Trinidad and Tobago..................................................................................T&T
United Kingdom.........................................................................................U.K
United Nations Development Program....................................................UNDP
Universal Negro Improvement Association......................................................... UNIA
United States........................................................................................................... U.S
United States of America......................................................................................... U.S.A
University of the West Indies ................................................................................ UWI
World Trade Organization ..................................................................................... WTO
ABSTRACT

A TREATY DOES NOT MAKE A COMMUNITY: RACE AND MIGRATION IN BARBADOS

Stacey L Cumberbatch, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2015

Dissertation Director: Dr. Zofia Burr

A Treaty Does Not Make A Community: Race and Migration In Barbados

This dissertation is about the racialization of immigration in Barbados. Between 2008 and 2010, the topic of immigration generated a heated debate in Barbados. The so-called ‘immigration problem’ resulted from increasing numbers of undocumented immigrants coming from neighboring Caribbean countries, especially from Guyana. The debates about the undocumented immigrants problematize them in ways that focus on their race, suggesting that the problem is not so much, or not only, their undocumented status, but more so their race. This becomes more apparent when Indian Guyanese are singled out as being unsuitable and unwelcome immigrants while similar sentiments about Black Guyanese are not as strong, or altogether absent. This problem is particularly significant because it occurs at the critical juncture when Caribbean countries are implementing a regional integration strategy, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME),
which would permit the free movement of labor between member states, and for all intents and purposes unify them. I use textual analysis of the immigration debates taking place on blogs, regional integration treaties and immigration policies for this dissertation. The analysis in this dissertation is informed by critical race studies, Caribbean studies and post-colonial studies, and is written from a cultural studies perspective that emphasizes contextualized research. The dissertation offers chapters on the responses to the immigrants as well as chapters that situate the work within the larger scope of the history of race relations in the Caribbean and regional integration. The dissertation makes the argument that colonial discourses of race have been employed to problematize and racialize the immigrants and to justify why they should be kept out of Barbados.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

Between 2008 and 2010, the topic of immigration generated a lot of debate and conversation in Barbados. The so-called ‘immigration problem’ is as a result of increasing numbers of immigrants coming to Barbados from neighboring CARICOM countries, especially from Guyana. Public response has been varied with persons both in support of and opposed to having undocumented immigrants. The responses were also in some instances very negative, often with derogatory comments using racist language to talk about the immigrants. Even though very few people were responsible for the openly racist language, it was obvious from the blog comments that I examined, that the race of certain immigrants was the reason why they were unwanted. It is the racialization of CARICOM immigration in Barbados that I examine in this dissertation.

The conversations about Guyanese migrants in Barbados have been problematized in four major ways. First, the immigrants are perceived as changing the racial demographics of Barbados in such a way that would significantly increase the number of East Indians. The two largest population groups in Guyana are Indian (descendants from indentured labor from India) and Black (descended from African
slaves), but the former more than the latter are perceived as being problematic immigrants. Barbados is not very diverse, its population is predominantly Black, and it has small Indian and White populations. Second, the immigrants are perceived as job competition for the Barbadian population, especially the majority Black population. This is quite a common claim made in most places where there is large-scale migration. In Barbados, however, there is the added distinction that is being made between the undesirability of Indian Guyanese versus the desirability – or less undesirability of Black Guyanese.

Third, there are some opinions that a large number of Guyanese immigrants would destroy Barbados’ cultural institutions, natural beauty, peacefulness and political stability and economy. The fourth point relates directly to the previous three points, Barbadians, particularly Black Barbadians, would lose what some deem as a historically earned right to be the major inheritors and beneficiaries of whatever Barbados has to offer. This birthright refers to who labored on the colonial plantations. The Black population explain their birthright in reference to slavery and the fact that Black Barbadians are descended from slaves who toiled on Barbados’ colonial plantations, and also, to the fact that Barbados never had indentured Indian labor during colonialism. What is common between these opinions of the recent immigration is the concern about the race of the migrants. Although both Black and Indian Guyanese are immigrating into Barbados, there is more expressed concern over those of Indian descent. Specifically, there is concern
over the compatibility between the non-Black immigrants and the majority Black population of Barbados.

Discussing immigration using the language of race is nothing new, and, in fact, conversations about immigration in the twentieth century have often been dominated by concerns about the race of the immigrants. During the mid twentieth century, many developed countries – European countries, U.S.A. and Australia – have all implemented immigration quotas that, without expressly stating it, limit the number of non-White immigrants. In this regard the racialized way in which immigration gets talked about in Barbados is similar to the experiences of other countries.

The ‘immigration problem’ in Barbados is significant particularly for two reasons. First, because of the conjuncture of events that occurred simultaneously with the immigration. Barbados’ ‘immigration problem’ occurs at a time when Barbados, Guyana and other Caribbean countries are making plans to unify their economies in the form of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). Much like the European Union (EU), the goal of the CSME is to create a single market and economy between distinct countries and allow for free movement of goods, services and people. But unlike the EU where the countries all share borders, most of the CSME countries do not. Most of the CSME member countries are islands separated by the Caribbean Sea and three are a part of Central or South America.

Any cultural studies project must hold as especially important the context within which the research is taking place, and the CSME is one such context. When
Barbados’ ‘immigration problem’ began many of the countries within the CSME were already in the late planning stages to allow people to move for work within the union. In other words, there were frameworks in place that would allow people from other CSME countries to move to Barbados or any other country. But the immigrants that I am talking about in the dissertation did not come via this route, and most of them are undocumented. Although most Guyanese immigrants did not arrive in Barbados through provisions established under the CSME – problematizing Guyanese immigrants as unwanted at this time is a cause for concern because it threatens the rights of Guyanese to be counted as human, and it also poses a potential threat to the success of the CSME. The debates about the immigrants mention their undocumented status, despite the fact that not all Guyanese in Barbados are undocumented, but the debates were not limited to this issue. The immigrants were talked about more in relation to the abovementioned four points, emphasizing their race and cultural practices.

The dissertation is not about CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) immigration or regional integration per se, and yet, they both play big roles and are given lengthy explanations in Chapter four because they provide necessary contexts to understand why the ‘immigration problem’ is significant. The rejection of undocumented Guyanese immigration into Barbados is not occurring in a vacuum, but is rather occurring at a key juncture in Caribbean developmental history.

The changes to labor migration that the CSME will bring about are useful to help situate the immigration debate. The most important aspect of the CSME that is
relevant to the ‘immigration problem’ in Barbados is the fact that a component of the CSME is the movement of skilled labor between member countries (see Chapter four). Between 2008 and 2010 while the ‘immigration problem’ unfolded there were already five categories of labor that could move legally under the CSME. Eventually, the intent is to have full movement of labor and allow citizens from any member country to relocate for work anywhere within the union. What this means, then, is that at the same time that the CSME is being planned for, and implemented, undocumented Guyanese immigrants in Barbados (all of whom we can assume would eventually qualify for movement under the CSME) were being perceived as problematic for and unwanted in the society.

To be clear, the Guyanese immigration into Barbados that I discuss in this dissertation has been happening long before all of the CSME member states have fully opened their borders to each other, and as such, it gives a glimpse of the future, namely, how the populations – including racial demographics – of member countries may change and/or react. How member countries respond to this change could affect both their social stability as well as the future success of free movement of people between CSME member countries. What is at stake in problematizing and racializing Guyanese immigration into Barbados, then, is larger than any effects on Barbados or Guyana alone. Going forward towards the full implementation of the free movement of people within CSME, the effects are felt across the entire CSME. More specifically, the purpose of the CSME is to enhance the economic development potential of the member countries (see Chapter four), and so, it is this
developmental potential that suffers. The debates about the ‘immigration problem’ in Barbados tell us that there is work to be done towards uniting the people of CSME member countries.

The second reason why studying the ‘immigration problem’ is also important is because this is one of the first times that Barbados has had a large influx of migrants. Barbados had not experienced any significant immigration from one particular group of people or place until the Guyanese migrants began arriving in large numbers at the turn of the twenty-first century (see Table 2). Prior to this, there was a lot of emigration from Barbados, but rarely was there large-scale immigration into the country. The next two paragraphs demonstrate that Barbados and Guyana, like other Caribbean countries, have a long history of migration after slavery but the pattern of migration differs greatly for each country.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when most countries in the Caribbean were under populated and receiving immigrant labor Barbados was not. Barbados’ migration history tells a different story, one of a country that was over populated and exported migrant labor to the rest of the Caribbean. Writers on Barbados’ migration and population history tell us that throughout Barbados’ history, the country has exported large numbers of migrant labor to Caribbean countries, including Guyana, and also to England and the U.S.A. George Roberts, in “Emigration from the Island of Barbados”, identifies three waves of migration that occurred in the Caribbean during the post-emancipation period, specifically between 1861 and 1921. The first wave was inter-Caribbean migration,
the second was the introduction of indentured labor from India, and the third, migration of West Indians to foreign countries. According to Roberts, while Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica dominated the second wave and received most of the indentured labor, Barbados dominated the first and third waves. Roberts makes the point that the number of migrants that Barbados contributed to the population of Guyana (then British Guiana) and Trinidad and Tobago was second only to the number of indentured Indians who came as indentured labor. He says, “excluding East Indians . . . emigrants from Barbados contributed more to population growth in Trinidad and British Guiana than emigrants from Africa, Madeira and China (281). Barbados also exported labor to Panama to help build the Panama Canal, and also to Aruba and Curacao to work in the petroleum industry.

Since the mid twentieth century avenues for large-scale labor emigration from the Caribbean to developed countries have been closed but before they were, people from the Caribbean emigrated in large numbers. Aaron Lee Segal in “Population Policies and Caribbean Crisis” writes that the majority of persons who migrated outside of the region came from Barbados, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. In the mid twentieth century, population pressure in Barbados was an important enough issue to be addressed in the country’s development plans. According to Maxwell Stamper in Population and Planning in Development Nations: A Review of Sixty Development Plans for the 1970s, Barbados’ Development Plan 1965-1968 identifies the country’s high population growth rate, increasing unemployment, increasing school-age population and high urbanization as the main population issues to
address. The 1969-1972 plan focuses instead on high dependency ratios and the strain this places on the economically active population to pay for basic social services, and the country's high population density. Population pressure, then, is a real problem that Barbados has faced in the past, but it has never had to be concerned much with immigration. Throughout history Barbados’ population demographics have remained largely unchanged, and one of the fears expressed with the ‘immigration problem’ is that this may change.

The debates on immigration that have been occurring in Barbados between 2008 and 2010 demonstrate two points: One, Barbados is not free from racism; and two, it is a topic that must be addressed both for the sake of the country and for the future of the CSME. Like any other society, racism exists in Barbados. But in Barbados it has not been part of the public discourse for decades. It may be talked about in small circles but it is not a topic that is part of the national agenda. Despite the long silence about racial concerns, race continues to matter. It is understandable to want to treat racism as something from the past, and to put it behind, but as critical race theorists such as Michael Omi and Howard Winant remind us, racism is deeply socially embedded and reappears in different forms throughout history. Although there have been decades where race hardly entered the public discourse in Barbados openly, old colonial racial issues still exist and have been re-emerging during the debates about immigration. I use the debates on the so-called ‘immigration problem’ in Barbados to argue for a re-leveraging of racial analysis in Barbados. The discussions that have been taking place about Guyanese immigrants
supports the argument that Barbados needs to have more critical conversations about race.

**Background**

Barbados is a former British colony, and as such, its history is a long narrative of racism, the evidence of which is still in existence even after Barbados gained independence in 1966 (see Chapter three). Before Caribbean countries gained political independence from their European colonizers, race was an ongoing discussion point. Caribbean people have argued with race and racism, protested and challenged them in various ways – and one of those ways was to write about them. During and immediately after formal colonialism ended there was a lot of scholarship on race throughout the region, but there has not been much after. In Barbados, certainly, there are few studies that address the racial dynamics in the country.

The problem with this gap in race studies is that it is at odds with the very long racial history of the Caribbean, and the silence gives the impression that racial concerns and discourses which accompanied colonialism do not still affect Barbados. But not enough time has passed since independence in the 1960s to make racial matters irrelevant in post-colonial societies – fifty years are insufficient. If we accept that racial concerns did not simply disappear by gaining political independence and by being labeled post-colonial countries, then, the lack of conversations about race in the post-independence periods is troubling. The
Caribbean, and Barbados specifically, cannot refrain from questioning race and racism because, as former colonial societies, these elements remain present, even if they are not discussed.

It was only when I began studying in the U.S. that I realized just how little people in Barbados talk openly about race. Instead of having open discussions about race, such as what occurs in the U.S. for example, talking about race in Barbados is often coded, especially through class. My education in cultural studies in the U.S. has exposed me to the study of racism in a way that my prior education in the Caribbean had not. This is not to degrade or invalidate my education in the Caribbean in any way – because it was excellent – but merely to point out that the study of race and racism was not a major part of my education there. I certainly had read some of the Caribbean academics who had dedicated their scholarship to the study of racism, for example Frantz Fanon, Eric Williams and Walter Rodney, but it was always in the context of the past – the historical Caribbean, the Caribbean before political independence began in the 1960s.

During the course of my undergraduate and graduate studies in the Caribbean I had been introduced to a lot of the writings on the colonial and post-colonial history of the Caribbean and the importance of racial analysis during those times. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana seemed to be exempted from this historical cut-off point to talk about race because academic research has continued on the racial tensions between the Black and Indian populations from those countries.
Many of the studies emphasized how these two groups vie with each other for political and economic control of their countries.

My education in the U.S., however, has made me realize that the lens of racial analysis had almost stopped being used in Barbados. Race was not something that was talked about much, protested or contested, it was not a part of any public debate. Previous research on race in Barbados almost exclusively talked about how it interrelates with economics, especially the fact that it is the small percentage of White Barbadians who own most of the economic wealth in a country that is predominantly Black. After the early 1990s there was very little published research on the topic of race in Barbados, which suggests the above scenario has been accepted and/or normalized to the point that it no longer bears mentioning.

A short story here may shed some light on my process of coming to terms with the differences of race in the U.S. and race in Barbados. I lived in Virginia during my first year as a student in the U.S. A fellow student, who happens to be White, asked me what I thought at the time a very peculiar question: “How do you feel living in a place where you know there was slavery?” I immediately thought it peculiar because, as a Black woman, having previously lived in Barbados and Jamaica, I had only lived in places where slavery had existed. Given this, my first thought was, what is there to think about? I have always lived, walked, gone to school and had all of my life experiences in places that were former slave societies. The fact is I had never thought about it.
I have since come to realize that my initial thought was deeply conditioned by two related things: one, in most of my lifetime, certainly my adulthood, race was not openly discussed in Barbados, and two, the Black experience in Barbados is very different from that in America. Barbados is approximately 95 percent Black and the Black population gained political control in 1966 and has managed the country since. There have not been civil rights struggles or such like for equality, no segregation lasting into the 1970s etc. as America had. This is not to deny the existence of racism in Barbados or the existence of other inequalities e.g. gender and sexuality; I have said elsewhere that Barbados continues to have unresolved issues with race. Conversely, I also realized that the student asked the question because of the reverse, race is largely talked about in America and the Black American experience is very different from the Black Barbadian one. The struggles and issues that have kept race, or at least the Black/white binary of race, constantly prominent on the national agenda in America did not exist in Barbados.

The case of undocumented Guyanese immigrants in Barbados however has opened up new and different types of conversations about race in Barbados that need to be talked about. When the so-called ‘immigration problem’ captured public attention, and when I realized that race was often raised in the context of that discussion, I was both surprised and intrigued and I began to wonder: How important is racial analysis to immigration in Barbados? To put it differently, how important is racial analysis to Barbados still?
The immigration debate in Barbados presented itself as a case to be studied. I had followed the debate on immigration as it unfolded in the newspapers and on blogs and I became intrigued mostly because I was excited to see the CSME implemented. I have always supported the idea that the Caribbean countries could be socioeconomically and geopolitically better off together than apart. After all, most of the countries are just small islands with small populations and with little to trade with the rest of the world except a tourism product that many other countries outside of the Caribbean also have. Few of the countries have more to offer, for example, Trinidad and Tobago has oil, Guyana has gold and bauxite and Jamaica also has bauxite. I was also intrigued because of the specific rejections of immigrants that emerged in conversations. My interest in Barbados is also personal because I am a citizen of Barbados.

**Defining the Caribbean**

For the purposes of this dissertation I use a limited definition of the Caribbean that includes only those countries that are members of CARICOM and also members of the CSME. In doing this, I exclude all of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean most of the Francophone and the Dutch Caribbean, but this is necessary to keep the scope of the research focused. In addition, the immigration problem in Barbados that I talk about has implications for the other countries that make up the CSME and by extension CARICOM, but it has no direct bearing on the Spanish-speaking, and most of the French- and Portuguese-speaking Caribbean. Defining the Caribbean in
this way keeps the discussion focused on this already organized grouping of CARICOM countries. Countries with full membership in CARICOM are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, and associate members are Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands. Not all of the CARICOM countries are CSME members, of the above, only thirteen are CSME member countries – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Whenever I use the term CSME I mean these thirteen countries and not the entire CARICOM group.

A Note on Method

I rely on textual data sources for this dissertation. Primary sources of data include CARICOM treaties, immigration policies from Barbados and blog discussions. The treaties are the official legal documents which describe the intentions of regional integration, and as such, they help in mapping the evolution of the regional integration process. The immigration policies on the other hand show how the government of Barbados, separate from what it has committed to under the CSME, intends to respond to immigration. I also use blog posts generated between 2008 and 2010 by the two most active daily blogs.
Although I use only two blogs, the content they generated between 2008 and 2010 was substantial. My choice of these two blogs was deliberate because this is where a lot of the conversations about immigration were occurring. W. Laurence Newman reminds us that for qualitative research, who/what gets studied is determined by their relevance to the research, not how well they represent the population being studied (211). With qualitative research, a large sample size is less important than the relevance and richness of the data generated. From a sampling perspective, I selected these two blogs using purposeful sampling, which is selecting the cases that fit the purpose of the study (Warren and Karner 164; Newman 211-214). I selected blogs because this is where a lot of the conversations and discussions were taking place, and also, because these conversations were recorded in a public format that allowed me to have access to them.

I use blog posts of two blogs – Barbados Free Press (BFP) and Barbados Underground (BU) – between 2008 and 2010. Each blog generated daily posts (sometimes more than one each day) and each post received multiple comments by people who read the blogs. I collected over two hundred blog posts, each with attached comments ranging in number from under fifty to close to one thousand in some cases. In general comments to the BFP blog, the one that censors more, were fewer than those of the BU which does not censor as much. In the end, I included 10 posts, six from BU and four from BFP and the number of comments to each post ranged from 23-331. I determined which posts and comments to use based on the richness of the comments not by the number of comments generated – although it is
helpful to have a large number of rich comments. In some case posts with less than one hundred comments had rich and robust discussion that stayed on point, and was more useful than other posts with a lot more comments, many of which veered off the main topic.

There are, admittedly, limitations to using blogs – limited internet access by the population, persons from the middle and upper classes may be represented more, few people may dominate the conversation, and discussion can easily stray off topic. In addition, by using blogs I had no access to social data such as class, age, gender etc. of the bloggers. Despite this, I felt that blog discussion provided the most useful, and equally important, accessible data on public response to CARICOM immigration.

I used posts from both the BFP and BU in order to increase the scope and difference of the opinions collected. This is especially important because BFP and BU approach censorship differently with BU allowing almost all comments to be posted irrespective on content, and BFP censoring what it deems to be offensive comments, especially those about race. Specifically, the BFP advertises itself as a blog that does not condone openly racist comments about immigrants. My expectation, then, was that the comments posted to this blog would be more tempered, and perhaps more tolerant than those from BU. I found that the language used was generally more tempered but not necessarily more tolerant.

I treat the material from the two blogs strictly as texts, much like a film or book. Meaning, I am able to engage the blog content by writing about it, but I cannot
participate in it. In reality, blog posts are constantly evolving through the comments that readers leave – and of course, people who comment are actively participating in the blog discussion. I however never became a participant in the blog discussions because I did not want to influence the discussions in any way. I treated the blog posts as texts that are fixed and closed to me, and as a result I neither became a member of, nor commented on either of the blogs.

I made the decision to use blog discussions as sources of data because one of the things I focus on in the dissertation is the ways in which the population of Barbados was responding to immigration. It quickly became clear, from reading newspapers, blog discussions and listening to call-in-radio programs, that a lot of the discussion about immigration was centering on race. I chose to use blog discussions, instead of a survey or interviews, because of the difficulties and discomforts of openly talking about race and racism. Blog discussion affords comments about such a sensitive topic as race to be posted with anonymity because people who post comments do not have to identify themselves by name. Consequently, they can feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts online than they would face-to-face with an interviewer. Blogs also provide a forum for discussion that is unmediated in the way that traditional media such as print and television are not. Traditional media are highly regulated in Barbados and I was interested in responses to immigration that were not filtered through the same censorship as the television station and newspapers. This is not to suggest that
there is no regulation on blogs, even those, like BU, that do not self-regulate the comments they receive.

Barbados has only one television station – the Caribbean Broadcasting Channel (CBC), – which is government-owned and controlled. Like any other television station, opportunities for any individual to be on air are limited by the programming schedule and the needs of the station as a business entity to make money. The CBC has a wide circulation as a freely accessed station but it is used as a means of public address to the populace, not as a means for public participation in discussion. The same can also be said of the widely circulated daily print newspapers – The Barbados Advocate and the Nation Newspaper. They are also heavily censored and it is not easy for a person to use this medium to get an article published. Like television, radio is quite a widespread medium of mass communication in Barbados but unlike the lone television there are some privately owned radio stations. A programming component found on most radio stations is daily call-in shows where members of the listening audience call the station and voice an opinion. Call-in radio programs, such as “Tell It Like It Is” and “Down To Brass Tacts”, are widely popular and heavily used for social commentary, but they too are controlled by gatekeepers who screen incoming calls and decide which ones to answer. Censorship, another gatekeeper, also filters what topics can be discussed and what can be said about them on air. I wanted to avoid these gatekeepers as much as possible.
In addition, my reading of the blogs revealed that a lot of the discussion about race and immigration was, in fact, occurring on these forums. In contrast to television, newspapers and radio, internet blogs – such as Barbados Underground (BU) and Barbados Free Press (BFP) – are designed to encourage audience participation through comments. The two above-mentioned blogs are very responsive to societal events and newspaper articles, often taking cues for what they post from one of the day’s newspaper headlines or a topical event. They provide a space for more open and often uncensored discussion and they allow anyone with internet access to participate in the conversation. These blogs are currently not censored in the same way as the other forms of mass media, but there have been attempts by politicians and others to close and/or censor them. The two blogs that I use have a different approach to freedom of expression; BU says it does not censor submitted comments while the BFP says it does. Some of the users who submit comments to BU say they do not want people from specific racial groups in Barbados and as a result BU has been accused of inciting racism. In an effort to distance themselves from the BU, and to show their dislike for some of the comments posted there, moderators of BFP have stopped having a link to the BU website from their own.

BU came online in April 2007 and uses for its motto a quote from George Linnaeus Banks, which reads, “for the cause that lacks assistance, the wrong that needs assistance, for the future in the distance, and the good that [BU] can do” (barbadosunderground.wordpress.com). The welcome message to the blog tells the
reader that BU’s purpose is to stimulate discussion and it is intended “to focus on the news and opinions which [are] not carried in the traditional media” (Welcome message https://barbadosunderground.wordpress.com/welcome-message/). BU supports its stated purpose by not having a comments policy. There is no moderation except “in cases where we need to apply minor edits to improve coherence” (https://barbadosunderground.wordpress.com/comments-policy/). BU has set only three conditions that persons who write comments should follow, ‘write the truth as they see it, avoid malice and retract and apologize when and if they write wrong information’ (https://barbadosunderground.wordpress.com/comments-policy/). As a result of BU’s lack of censorship all comments are posted, even those that include what may be considered overtly racist language.

On the other hand, The Barbados Free Press (BFP) blog does not explicitly state a motto or mandate, but its policies section mentions that they want “readers to leave comments and participate in discussion – but it is not a free-for-all” (https://barbadosfreepress.wordpress.com/comment-moderation/). BFP administrators moderate the posts and comments they get and do not allow overtly racist comments to be posted. The administrators do not identify a specific goal for which the blog was set up. The only clue to its purpose can be found in a statement made in the ‘About’ section which says:

Barbados is a wonderful country full of good people – but we have this one huge problem with a long-established culture of corruption and
entitlement in politics and government service. Barbados Free Press and other reform-minded folks believe that the only way the culture will change is if the international community starts examining the Barbados government's actions, inactions and policies with a critical eye. https://barbadosfreepress.wordpress.com/about/

What I take away mostly from the above description is that BFP is concerned with reform and critical examination of what they consider to be failed aspects of Barbados, and the fact that they have chosen a blog as the medium to encourage such examination by an international and Barbadian public. Both blogs, then, present themselves as spaces where there can be open and meaningful critique by members of the public.

The question, both theoretical and empirical, of whether mass media technologies in the U.S. and other developed countries have the potential to enhance the public sphere has long been debated. Sherry Turkle comments on the decreasing use of places such as “a main street, a union hall, a town meeting”, which formerly brought people together, and the increasing use of media as a meeting forum (178). What Turkle identifies is the formation of a kind of information commons in which people gather and communicate in a public sphere (see also John Thompson 121-247). The public sphere is often considered a site where a struggle for power can take place. According to Michael Warner, for example, “the notion of a public enable a reflexivity in the circulation of texts among strangers who become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity” (11-12). In “Sighting the
Public”, Cara Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang claim that for Michael Warner, “it is circulation, not conversation or deliberation which enables the formation of public discourses and the emergence of publics” (393-4). Michael Warner’s views, however, are not new; they have been long theorized by Jurgen Habermas. Jurgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, connects the circulation of information to the formation of bourgeois public sphere.

The theory of the public sphere began with Jurgen Habermas’ model of the bourgeois public sphere, which he developed in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. According to Habermas, “[t]he bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public” (27) to engage in rational-critical debate. Seyla Benhabib comments on Habermas’ view of the public sphere saying, “the public sphere comes into existence whenever and wherever all affected by general social and political norms of action engage in a practical discourse” (87). Others writing on the public sphere have summarized – based on Habermas’ work – what they consider to be the main criteria of the public sphere. Nathaniel Poor identifies four criteria that all public spheres must meet: they are spaces of discourse and are often mediated; they often allow for new previously excluded discussion; issues discussed are often political in nature; and ideas are judged by their merit not by the standing of the speaker (n.pag). Lincoln Dahlberg identifies six presuppositions that Habermas formulated for the public sphere: autonomy from state and economic power; exchange and critique of criticizable moral-practical validity claims; reflexivity; ideal role-taking; sincerity;
and discursive inclusion and equity (n.pag). Based on these criteria, there are many institutions and forms that the public sphere can take.

Jurgen Habermas has been critical of the role of mass media in the public sphere and civic participation. He argues, “the world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only” (Structural Transformation 171); it does not have the independent rational critical debate component that is essential to the meaning of a public sphere. In The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, he critiques newspapers, television, radio, and cinema in relation to the deliberative function of the public sphere. He states, “radio stations, publishers, and associations have turned the staging of panel discussions into a flourishing secondary business” (164). Admittedly, there is a commercial aspect to the print capitalism that has helped to develop the bourgeois public sphere, but Habermas’ point is that in his version of the bourgeois public sphere “you had to pay for the books . . . but not the conversation about what you had read, heard, and seen and what you might completely absorb only through this conversation” (164). Despite this early position, he later recognizes that alternative public spheres exist, and that they have the potential to challenge hierarchy and domination. His later revised view of mass media and the public sphere includes a more dynamic view of interpreting media texts (Habermas “Reflections” 438-39; Downey and Fenton 187).

The use of the internet has also sparked conversations on whether it has the potential to enhance the public sphere, and there are both optimists and pessimists who weigh in on this question. Optimists see a positive role for the internet in the
public sphere and democracy. Jurgen Gerhard and Mike Schafer, for example, argue that television and newspapers are highly regulated and tend to privilege powerful and institutional actors (144-5) but in contrast, the internet is more accessible, is less regulated and it “includes multiple actors” representing a myriad of interpretations. It is also a more cost effective means of communicating with large groups (145). Gil De Zuniga et al. claim that blogs may influence the democratic process because with them, “everyone potentially can participate” in discussion (555). Of course, having access to computers and their related technologies does not ensure deliberative political participation. Participation in the public sphere involves critical political debate and discussion with a democratic purpose. While internet technologies may help facilitate more online debate, access to such technology is not universal. In the case of Barbados, access to the internet is quite widespread (see Table 1). As Table 1 shows, during the years 2008-2010, Barbados’ internet access per one hundred people was the highest of all the CARICOM countries, and it was also almost on par with access in the U.S.
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Adapted from Worldbank.org
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2?page=1
Some, however, are optimistic even if the internet only provides a symbolic empowerment for citizens. Erik Bucy and Kimberly S. Gregson argue that even symbolic empowerment helps to legitimize “the political systems of mass democracies” (359). According to Mark Poster, although it is a capitalist object that is structured to guide those who use it, it is also open to new and alternative uses; “it remains an invitation to a new imaginary” (Poster 18). John Pavlik offers discussion board comments to online newspaper as an example of user interaction, and as a critique of the possibility of audiences simply receiving media. The point which Pavlik and Poster make is that internet and computer use results in more than a spectator or participant; it also results in a user who creates by interfacing with virtual media (see also Lister et al 113).

Not everyone is fully supportive of the internet as a form of the public sphere. Zizi Paracharissi, in “The Virtual Sphere”, is cautious in her view of the internet because of the inequality of access to the technology, for example, based on gender and class. She agrees that “online technologies render participation more convenient, but [they] do not guarantee it” because the participation is limited to only those with access to the computer and internet technologies (15). Her support for the internet as a facilitator of the public sphere is conditioned on there being “great diversity and volume of discussions” (“Democracy Online” 259). The use to which the technology is put may help facilitate political discussion, but limited or unequal access to the technology acts as a restraint.
Even equality of access to new media technologies does not equate to a means to speak according to Lana Rakow (77), because a few persons may dominate specific online discussions and blogs. The critique that blog discussions may sometimes get co-opted by a few people is not lost on some persons who post to the two blogs that I use, and some have cautioned the blog moderators not to allow a few people to dominate any one discussion. For example, in response to the blog post “Bajans Rights to Speak MUST be Protected” which appeared on BU on April 25 2010, commenter ‘anon’ reminds the moderator that some of the discussion gets co-opted by a small group of people. According to ‘anon’, “some of the posts have started well, then ended up reduced to a few people using it as a platform for exchanging insults or trying to shock people with outrageous statements, and the debate just gets lost”. For this reason, how well comments stayed focused on the subject being discussed was a more important factor in choosing which posts to include in the dissertation than the number of comments which the post generated.

There are also those who disagree that there is a positive connection between information technologies and the public sphere. Such arguments include the banality of most of the information circulating on the internet and the fact that the internet is part of the capitalist economy, which suppresses instead of encourages its use for democratic purposes. Neil Postman, for example, argues that information serves no human purpose, and that it largely circulates without meaning (70). In other words, it does not satisfy any human needs. Although John Thompson is largely optimistic about the potential for the circulation of excessive
information and the creation of new publics in which people critique power structures, he nevertheless cautions that it can also lead to media and information dependency (213-219). Media are after all ideological, so a glut of information (and often banal information) beyond what an individual can process may result more in an externally-controlled and guided individual than a self-reflexive one (214-5; Postman 70).

In addition, Lev Manovich writes that the discourses of interactivity, such as the public sphere, are ways of externalizing the mind, making it standardized and easy to program, regulate and control (60-61). According to Manovich, individuals may conform to power structures instead of critiquing them in what they define as an information society. For Nico Carpentier although “internet-based media . . . generate much optimism about [their] social and participatory-democratic potentialities” (407) internet use is often disconnected “from a very necessary articulation with democracy, empowerment, equality and a number of other crucial concepts” (411). In other words, internet-based media are not automatically equated with change and democratic practices.

**Cultural Studies Methodology**

Races do not exist in a physical sense of biological differences so what do I mean by race? While it is common knowledge now that there is one human race instead of different and distinct races this was not always the case. From the so-called discovery and conquest of the new world and the ensuing colonization of non-
White peoples it was widely thought that different races existed; now, we know better. Michael Omi and Howard Winant define race as “a concept which signifies and symbolizes conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (55). Because race is a concept that gets attached to different human bodies at different historical times, they argue “race has no fixed meaning” (71).

Although races do not exist, racism – the hierarchical, oppressive and exploitative treatment based on perceived racial differences – still does. According to Omi and Winant, for racism to exist there must be a creation or reproduction of “structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (71). They further explain that essentialism “is understood as belief in real true human essences, existing outside or impervious to social and historical contexts” (187). In other words, for racism to exist there must be a deliberate attempt to dominate a group of people based only on essentialist representations of them. Omi and Winant also identify a selfish component to racism in that it is done to protect dominant interests (72). They caution that dominant interest may not always be White interests, and certainly this is the case when I examine the immigration debate in Barbados. Let us remember that Omi and Winant write about America, where historically, and in many respects still, dominant interest has meant White interests. But the formulation they put forward for understanding racism also emphasizes that racism must always be historically situated (61). As a result, who constitutes the dominant interests, then, may change over time.
I have hinted to the fact that there has been very little academic work on race in contemporary Barbados. While I focus on Barbados, Guyana and the Caribbean the problem of the silencing of race cannot be understood within any one location in isolation from the state of race across the globe, as the local is often influenced by, and is a reflection of the global. Before I examine the conditions in the Caribbean, I need to examine the state of racial analysis globally because there have been trends towards deracialized and colorblind racism, which demonstrates that the lack of recent engagement with race is not unique to Barbados. The silence surrounding racism must be looked at in a much wider way.

In *The Racial State* David Theo Goldberg argues that there has always been a racial component “entwined with modern state elaboration” even though the form of racial expression has changed (4). In other words, matters of race are a part of the ways in which we have come to talk about and make sense of the modern state. His use of the term modern includes from early European ‘discovery’ of and expansion of the new world that began in the fifteenth century to our present globalized era, and during this time he claims that there was a significant change in articulation of race. In the early to mid twentieth century the world experienced a shift in the way race was understood and expressed from what he calls “naturalist racial presumptions” to “historicism” (202). The “naturalist” racial paradigm views non-European peoples as “inherently or naturally inferior to those who are [European]” and serves as a justification for African slavery and the indenture of Indian and Asian populations (Goldberg, “Global Reach” 45). Racism within this paradigm is
overt and largely sanctioned by the state, as in the cases of European colonialization and American slavery.

In contrast to “naturalism” is “historicism” which considers non-Europeans as “not inherently inferior but historically immature or less developed” than Europeans, and with time and the right teachings they can be as developed as Europeans (Goldberg, “Global Reach” 46). Historicism assumes that oppression and injustice based on racial differentiation belongs in the past, while the future is marked by racelessness or colorblindness. The ideas of historicism were useful to abolitionists working to end slavery, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, the naturalist paradigm had waned in significance while historicism had increased (Goldberg The Racial State 202). But racism has not given way to a state of true racelessness and instead of overt racism many societies are characterized by racism that is more covert and more difficult to identify.

Goldberg focuses most of his analysis on state formation in the aftermath of World War II, which is when he claims the rhetoric of racelessness spreads across the globe and becomes the modus operandi of states old and new (45).

Racelessness, defined as “rendering invisible the racial sinews of the body politic and modes of rule and regulation” is the approach which states have taken to address, or as Goldberg writes not really address, their racial histories of inequality (The Racial State 203). With racelessness, race becomes disconnected from the outcomes of people’s material, economic, social and political wellbeing. In theory everyone gets treated the same and everyone has the same equality of opportunities
and access to reach their full potential, and so any failure to achieve must be an individual’s fault. Discrimination and inequalities that result from racism are not viewed in a systemic way, meaning they are not viewed or analyzed as coming from the way in which society is structured – to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others, and more importantly, that the advantaged and disadvantaged often align with racial markers. For example, most of the prison population in the U.S. is Black but Blacks are not the majority of the U.S population. Acts of racism are instead viewed as being caused by irrational individuals. But racism does not disappear even if it is not named; it is still present. What Goldberg and others have argued is that when racism is presented as racelessness, race gets rearticulated through class, especially with the neoliberal economy and the globalized circulation of capital (Goldberg, The Racial State 206-7).

Despite racism appearing invisible and as something that has happened in the past, scholars writing on race have argued that with the right analytical lens you can observe racially significant issues and struggles within contemporary society. One example is Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, who claims “race and ethnic studies lacks a sound theoretical apparatus” (Rethinking Racism 465). His solution to this problem is to define racism as the ideology of a “racialized social system” and in this way he sees racism as only one “part of a larger racial system” (467). Following Bonilla-Silva’s arguments, once a social system becomes racialized you cannot separate racism from the social system because it is always already an aspect of that system. Racism and the study of it, then, should not be relegated to the past as something
that has happened but is no longer occurring, but rather, as ongoing albeit in different manifestations.

According to Bonilla-Silva, in a racialized social system “the placement of people in racial categories involves some form of hierarchy that produces definite social relations between the races” (469). Racial categories organize peoples’ lives and those races occupying dominant positions acquire economic, political, and social gains that those in subordinate positions do not get (472). In other words, a racialized social system excludes some categories of people while simultaneously privileging others. What is at stake in a racialized social system, where people are oppressed because of their race, is people’s life chances, their abilities to have opportunities for a good life for themselves and their offspring. Whether it is in education, the legal system, health care or the economy, racially oppressed people tend to be the losers.

A systemic approach to understanding racism offers a more analytically useful explanation than the arguments that say racism is a result of an individual’s irrational thoughts and actions. At the very least, the systemic approach provides a starting point of social stratification to be examined. Taking into consideration the ways in which societies are ordered allows us to begin detecting patterns that aids in our understanding of how and why racial discrimination and privilege occurs on a large scale. In Race, Nation and Class Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein examine the structural characteristics that connect capitalism and racism. Wallerstein discusses the connection saying, “capitalism as a system begets racism”
(34). That is, racism is about political economy. Antonio Darder and Rodolfo Torres locate the origin of racism within the “the project of modernity and capitalist expansion [as a tool for] legitimating the exploitation or exclusion of racialized groups” (13). Capitalist expansion is still continuing, and so too, is the racism that accompanies it.

In “Globalization and the Unleashing of New Racism: An Introduction” Donaldo Macedo and Panayota Gounari also argue that racism should be analyzed systemically and it should not be dehistoricized because the present manifestation of racism is often related to those of the past. What this means is, when we examine any racial hierarchy we should look for similarities between the material and social realities of the past with those of the present, and when found they should not be ignored. The danger of dehistoricizing racism and adopting the idea of racelessness in its place has real consequences for people who experience racism because they often have little recourse to redress the racism they face.

Macedo and Gounari explain the danger of dehistoricizing racism saying, “the end of racism inaugurates a depoliticized space devoid of debate over meanings and institutions – a space where entailments and ramifications are simply terminated so as not to awaken dangerous memories or provoke uncomfortable discussions” (4). Talking about racism is uncomfortable, but the only way to redress the damage it causes is to have those uncomfortable conversations. To stop talking about racism means that we will eventually lose the tools and frameworks needed to discuss it, such as the language to define and describe it and places and social institutions
within which to openly talk about it and seek justice for it. It may also mean that
without critique of racist actions they become normalized; imagine for instance, if
no one had ever questioned the enslavement of African people.

Macedo and Gounari try to uncover how racism that is rearticulated through
class manifests itself. They locate the ‘new racism’ within neoliberal economic
policies and globalization. Globalization seemingly has no need and interest in raced
labor or consumers; it needs cheap labor and consumers who purchase goods
irrespective of their race. But many critics of globalization counter this by using the
lived realities of laborers and dispossessed people to suggest that race matters in
globalization (Macedo and Gounari 3-33; Weiss 128-145; Bhattacharyya, Gabriel
and Small 30-58, 161-164; Dardar and Torres 1-46; Goldberg, *The Racial State* 200-
238). What these writers have in common is they all claim neoliberal economic
policies have caused increasing poverty and economic dislocation for the world’s
poor, most of whom, happen to be non-White. In other words, there is a connection
between economic wellbeing and race with most of the non-White populations
being in some state of poverty or dispossession. Race may get hidden behind class in
such situations, but the coincidence and alignment of economic wealth and poverty
with only certain groups of people shows that there is a racial component of this
kind of class analysis. In other words, the processes of globalization still create
racism and raced subjects.

The racism experienced within globalization is often characterized by large
labor migration. Macedo and Gounari (13, 28) and Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small
describe the racism of globalization in terms of disposable and dispossessed. According to Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small “labor is increasingly treated as “disposable – available to be worked to death, or exterminated . . . dispossessed through man-made famine and pestilence . . . [and] endlessly replaceable and therefore dispensible” (162) through the part-time, temporary, contract and subcontract work they do. These practices dehumanize and devalue the working class as labor and also as human beings (Macedo and Gounari 28).

To see how race gets articulated through class we have to ask who exactly are these dispossessed and disposable workers. They are in large measure from developing countries, from former colonies and largely non-White; in many cases they are the descendents of the former colonized. This is not to suggest that White and European migrants are always treated better, as the treatment of Irish migrants in America during the nineteenth century has shown. But the point is that the groups of people who have experienced racism in the past continue to do so even though the form of racism looks different. This is why it is useful to do as Macedo and Gounari, Goldberg, and Bonilla-Silva suggest and historicize racism because examining racial hierarchies (and also class hierarchies) can help us find connections between the past and the present. Racism is an uncomfortable subject and countries do not want to be reminded of, or confront their racist pasts, but historicizing racism and continuing to study it may help us to avoid repeating racial injustices.
In *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and Media*, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam historicize racism through the concept of Eurocentrism. They explore the connection between common sense thinking and racism using Eurocentrism as the bridge that connects these two things. They define Eurocentrism as a discourse that “sanitizes Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements – science, progress, humanism – but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined” (3). So, in this respect, Eurocentrism works much like the processes of "othering" described by Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Shohat and Stam argue that Eurocentrism “embeds, takes for granted, and normalizes the hierarchical power relations generated by colonialism and imperialism” (2). The goal, for Shohat and Stam, is both to challenge the unthinking associated with Eurocentrism, meaning to expose its common sense nature, and also to move beyond it (10).

Shohat and Stam identify some key mechanisms through which colonial-style racism occurs. One, “the positing of lack, that is, the projection of the racially stigmatized as deficient in terms of European norms, as lacking in order, intelligence, sexual modesty, material civilization, even history”; two, “the mania for hierarchy, for ranking not only peoples (placing Europeans above non-Europeans, Zulus over Bushmen) but also artifacts and cultural practices”; three “blaming the victim”; four “the refusal of empathy, the withholding of sympathy for people caught up in the struggle for survival within the existing social order, the maintenance of a cool, skeptical distance in the face of claims of oppression”; and five, “the systematic
devalorization of life”. Racism in this sense operates less on the cerebral level of opinion than on the visceral level of ethnic solidarity and us/them antipathy, the pronominal level of an assumed “we” (23-4). I discuss these five mechanisms in more detail in Chapters five and six when I examine the discussions about CARICOM migrants. The fact that many of these mechanisms are being used demonstrates precisely the point that Shohat and Stam make about Eurocentric discourses, they are pervasive, enduring and easily go unnoticed.

Due largely to the legacies of European colonialism, it has been customary in many societies to think of racism in terms of a black/white binary, but racism is not limited to White oppressors and Black oppressed. Shohat and Stam point out that “in a systematically racist society, no one is exempt from a hegemonic racist discourse, including the victims of racism … oppressed people can perpetuate the hegemonic system by scapegoating one another “sideways”, in a manner ultimately benefitting those at the top of the hierarchy” (19). The above statement helps explain the situation that I examine in Barbados between the majority Black population and Indian Guyanese migrants. Specifically, it helps explain how a Black population can practice racism. Eurocentrism, then, explains that in a country like Barbados – where the majority of the population is descended from the once oppressed colonial slave labor, and where, these descendants are still economically subordinate to White economic power – the Black population too can perpetuate Eurocentrism.
Critical race theory (CRT) is another analytical lens that helps us recognize racially significant issues and struggles within contemporary society. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic in *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, identify what they call the basic tenets of CRT. One, “racism is ordinary, not aberrational”, two, “our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material”, three, “the social construction thesis holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations”, four, “dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market”, and five, being a minority means “a presumed competence to speak about race and racism” (7-9). Like Omi and Winant, Delgado and Stefancic also emphasize that because racism is a product of social structure and social thought, it is necessary to locate acts of racism within their historical specificity.

Critical race theory forms the basis of how I make sense of the pattern of racialized immigration occurring in Barbados. Using the tenet that racism is ordinary and is occurring everyday, one of the goals of this dissertation is to help discover how this process has been happening in Barbados specifically as it relates to immigration. Discourses of race and racism in Barbados have been particularly quiet since the early 1990s, and a critical theory approach would advise not to take this quiet to mean the absence of racism but instead to look for ways in which it has become hidden or perceived as what Omi and Winant call “common sense” (59). As a cultural studies project that addresses race in a Caribbean context, this
dissertation contributes to three related fields of knowledge: Caribbean studies in general, Caribbean cultural studies in particular and post-colonial studies.

**Outline of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. In chapter one, the introduction, I discuss the research problem, define my method and methodology and present background both about the Caribbean, especially Barbados, and myself to provide context for understanding how I came to this project. Chapter two chronicles the history of race relations in the Caribbean. I deem it prudent to start at the very beginning of modern Caribbean race relations because it is necessary to understand the long and complex history of race in the Caribbean and the myriad ways in which Caribbean people have contended with and talked back to issues of race and racism. In addition, this long history is a necessary stage upon which subsequent chapters make sense. In other words, later chapters would be meaningless without the thorough history detailed herein.

Chapter two covers the wider scope of the entire Caribbean, and not Barbados and Guyana specifically, because the racial analysis during colonialism does not have to be country specific and what is written about one country is often applicable to the others. In addition, many of the academic studies do not focus on any specific country. Distinctions in the racial dynamics between countries do occur, and those are noted. Chapter three continues the emphasis on the history of race relations, but unlike chapter two, which is Caribbean-wide in its focus, chapter three
has a very narrow scope of only Barbados and Guyana. In it I detail the state of race relations in these two countries with an aim to explain what the issues are, how they are similar and/or different from each other, and what, if anything, has been done about them – including talking about them.

Chapter four is where I discuss regional integration because this is a part of the larger circumstance that makes this research significant. One of the tasks that I attempt to do in this chapter is to demonstrate that regional integration has been a part of the reality of the Caribbean for decades in one form or another, and CARICOM specifically for almost forty years, when the ‘immigration problem’ occurred. So, after forty years, as the case in Barbados demonstrated, many people were not ready for integration. Regional integration has been intellectualized, but the actualization – the real unification of people proved to be difficult. What I demonstrate in chapter four is that a part of the problem is a very top-down approach to regional integration.

Chapter five is where I talk about the ways in which the topic of undocumented Guyanese immigrants becomes a concern about the race of the immigrants and the damage that Barbados and Barbadians could and would suffer because of said race. In chapter six I focus on the numerous denial of race being a factor in the rejection of Guyanese, and especially Indian Guyanese migrants. Three opposing factors, reality, nationalism and culture are instead proposed to explain why the very specific group of immigrants seem to be singled out as being unwanted in Barbados. The findings in chapters five and six show that even if it is not talked
about openly, or if it is hidden behind codes such as nationalism, race still continues to matter in Barbados. I end with chapter seven, the conclusion.
CHAPTER TWO
THE HISTORY OF RACE RELATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to historicize the race relations in the Caribbean and in the process trace the ways in which racial analysis has been a useful tool for understanding Caribbean society from colonialism to the immediate post-independence period of the 1970s and 80s. To do this I go back to European enslavement of African labor and colonialism. Race relations that have resulted from slavery and colonialism have helped to shape all Caribbean countries in the past and they still continue to do so. At the general level slave and colonial experiences were very similar in the various countries, but over time, and with the advent of formal political independence from colonial rule the middle 20th century, some experiences have differed.

Colonialism is the starting point for obvious reasons; it is the system that forever changed the world and it is responsible, in a very real sense, for what we have come to know as the modern Caribbean. This is not to ignore the importance of pre-colonial populations, some of which continue to exist in small pockets in Dominica and Guyana, but we have to acknowledge that these populations too have been irrevocably changed – and in most of the other Caribbean countries cases
killed by disease, war or enslavement – from their contact with European settlers and colonials. In this chapter I describe how issues of race and racism have unfolded and changed and been contested in the Caribbean from colonialism to around the time of political independence in the 1960s and 70s. I try to follow a chronological timeline for this narrative that is not always possible because the developments are not strictly linear.

Race relations in the modern Caribbean first take shape on the slave plantations and continually evolve from there. There are two models – the “plantation economy model”, and the “creole society model” – that help to explain the social structure of the colonial Caribbean. They differ in their explanations but they both agree that racial stratification is one of the guiding forces and primary features of the colonial Caribbean. The descendants of African slaves and European owners and workers are the majority of inhabitants in most Caribbean countries and some countries also have populations of East Indian and Chinese descended from indentured laborers. In Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago the Indian-Caribbean and Black populations are the majority inhabitants, while Jamaica has some Chinese population.

In addition, Dominica and Guyana also have indigenous populations who lived in these countries before European colonialism and Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have maroon populations. Maroons are the descendents of slaves who escaped from the plantations and slavery by running away and establishing their own communities in mountains and forests. Most of them escaped
very early after being brought to the Caribbean, and as a result, they experienced plantation slavery for a short time only.

The discourses of race in the colonial Caribbean are primarily about Black slaves, White plantation owners and other Whites working on the slave plantations, and about indentured laborers in those countries where they existed. Although I am writing about race relations in the Anglophone Caribbean and these countries were all British colonies I stress that even within this small grouping of countries, Caribbean race relations are complex and complicated, and race is experienced differentially from one country to another in the post-independence period, especially where there are descendants of indentured labor and an indigenous population. Despite these differences plantation slavery is still the starting point for any analysis of modern Caribbean race relations.

**Plantation Economy Model: Racial and Economic Stratification**

The socioeconomic structure of the slave plantation has at its center the plantation as a “total institution”, in control of both the economic and social lives of its inhabitants. The slave plantation is the site of combined racial and labor stratification where labor and non-labor neatly coincide with different racial categories. Control and separate spaces for labor and non-labor are key components necessary for the success of the plantation economy. Writers on the “plantation economy model” use Erving Goffman’s definition of total institutions to describe
slave plantations and argue that they are both economic organizations and social communities. Goffman defines total institutions in the following way:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same things together. Third, all phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled with one activity leading at a pre-arranged time into the next, the whole sequence of events being imposed from above by a system of explicit, formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution. (17)

The aim of the plantation is an economic one – to make money for the colonial owner – and all of the people on a plantation are focused on this economic goal. Socially, the ubiquitous nature of the plantation dictates the lives of people who reside there, organizing them into a well-defined racial stratification system with legally separated spaces and functions for the plantation residents. Slaves – the majority of the population – provided the forced and unpaid labor while the White planters managed and owned the slaves and plantations.

Writers on the plantation economy model – including George Beckford 61-67; Kari Levitt and Lloyd Best “Character of the Caribbean Economy”; Raymond T.
Smith “Social Stratification” 228-233; Lloyd Best “Model of a Pure Plantation Economy” 305-7 – describe the plantation as a rigid social stratification system resembling a caste-like structure with all other forms of stratification, for example class, color and gender, secondary to the primacy of racial stratification. Franklin Knight describes racial stratification on the slave plantation as “a narrow-peaked triangle, horizontally divided into three sections “a large base of mainly slaves, a very small middle of free people of color, and a very small apex of whites (95; see also Mandle 10-16; Knight 94-120; Patterson 52-69; Adamson 4, 11-13; and Beckford and Witter). In Persistent Poverty, George Beckford describes the caste-like line saying, “racial characteristics determined the caste line that separated masters from slaves in slave plantation society . . . It separates the superordinate white planter and commercial classes and other white people . . . from the subordinate class of black people” (68). The rigid stratification is attributed to the perception of race in naturalistic terms, that is, race as biologically determined and consequently, mobility within the plantation economy was impossible because a person’s racial origin was the only factor determining their status.

The plantation economy model connects racism to political economy, a point which Eric Williams makes in both “Race Relations in Caribbean Society” and Capitalism and Slavery. He notes, “the distinction in race and color was only the superficial visible symbol of a distinction which in reality was based on the ownership of property” (“Race Relations in Caribbean Society” 54; see also Gordon K. Lewis 20-21; Ralph Henry “Eric Williams and the Reversal” 822-30; Alan
Adamson 12). As part of the capitalist economy, Williams, Adamson, and Gordon K. Lewis, hold economic stratification of the plantation as the primary form of differentiation and racial stratification as secondary and superficial. But on slave plantations a person’s skin color determined their ability to keep the wealth they created. So while colonial plantations were first and foremost about making money, the system was inextricably linked to racism.

Unlike Williams, others who write on the “plantation economy” model privilege both the economic and racial aspects equally. George Beckford, in Persistent Poverty for example, emphasizes the interrelationship between the plantation as both a social and an economic system. Likewise, Hilary Beckles agrees that economics was the prime mover of slavery and the plantation system, but there was also a “racist nature of pro-slavery ideology” (“Capitalism” 779) that rationalized eventually only using non-white labor (785-6). In other words, the choice that colonizers made to only use non-White labor forces us to think of the plantation as more than an economic entity, it forces us to think of the social and cultural meaning attached that choice, and the values attached to the people who labored.

Despite the usefulness of the plantation economy model for explaining social stratification and a continued structural dependent relationship between the post-colonial developing Caribbean and developed Europe, it has been heavily criticized. Political economist Don Marshall, writing in Caribbean Political Economy at the Crossroads, critiques the plantation economy model for being too historical, static
and “economistic”, lacking analysis of class, state, political and ideological changes occurring in the decolonization processes (61). In other words, the decolonization process introduced nuances to the racial dynamics that the plantation economy model is unsuited to analyze. Because the plantation economy model focuses on the coincidence of racial and economic stratification it does not account for the more subtle ‘cultural’ ways through which thinking about race have evolved. As previously stated, the model is silent on the discourses of race in the twentieth century even though this is a period when the question of race comes under much scrutiny as I discuss later in this chapter.

Don Marshall’s critique is similar to the way Eric Williams sees the development of Caribbean race relations into the twentieth century. Williams agrees that the plantation society model explains race relations during slavery, but he argues that developments in society have made significant changes to its utility. He notes, “as the climate of the modern world is hostile to the traditional economic basis of Caribbean society with its racial overtones, so the growth of democracy has necessarily destroyed, at least in the moral sense, the racial foundations on which Caribbean society has been built” (“Race Relations” 56). In other words, Williams emphasizes that the modern world rejects the old ideas of race that were dominant during plantation slavery (57) – ideas of what David Theo Goldberg calls ‘naturalism’ –, that races do in fact exist, and that there is a biologically inscribed hierarchy between them.
Other writers, for example Susan Craig in “Sociological Theorizing in the English-Speaking Caribbean” and Clive Y. Thomas in Plantations, Peasants, and the State, critique the plantation economy model for not accounting for the agency of the inhabitants of the plantation to affect changes in their own lives, for being too reductionist, and for being too institutional in outlook. They claim that the model doesn’t account for the myriad forms of resistance that slaves and non-slaves erected against the racist practices and structures of plantation slavery. For example, there were slave revolts in each Caribbean island and the slaves practiced other forms of resistance such as stealing food and destroying property (P. Clarke Pig tails 69-74) and refusing to work (Frucht 379-88). Additionally, Jamaica and Guyana have maroon societies formed by slaves who ran away immediately upon being brought into these colonies. Maroons in Jamaica rejected slavery, and yet, they also formed alliances with colonizers to capture and return runaway slaves in return for their own freedom, adding another complexity to the already nuanced relations between the groups on and around the slave plantation.

Theories of Creolization: Reification, Subversion and Negotiation of Hybrid Identities

The “creole society model” offers alternative explanations of slave plantation society, especially the rigidity of the stratification exhibited there. It is also a critique of the plantation economy model since it addresses some of the above absences in the plantation model. O Nigel Bollad defines creolization as “a process of cultural interaction and synthesis” (18). He however cautions that like the myriad
definitions of the term “creole”, “creolization has not been adequately defined or clearly located within a broader theoretical model of cultural change” (18). Carolyn Allen also comments on the difficulty of defining “creole” in “Creole: The Problem of Definition”. She states that “[c]reole is among other things, language type, person, style and culture” (48). Although difficult to define, there is agreement that the starting reference for theories of creolization is “the Atlantic crossing and colonialism” (Allen 50; see also King 3-29, Scott ix). In other words, theories of creolization emerge directly out of the experience of plantation society (Chrichlow 201-3; Brathwaite “Caliban” 59-60; Benitez-Rojo 55-56).

Theories of creolization, like the plantation economy model, explain the relationships between the different groups existing on the slave plantation, but they also explains these same relationships beyond the parameters of the physical plantation unit and the plantation economy. Many creolization theorists argue in favor of activities both on and off the plantation that bring together the disparate African and European groups on the plantations with the later Indian, Chinese and other indentured labor. They emphasize processes of assimilation, cooperation, and hybridity formed as a result of the various interactions between these groups. Hybridity, a major concept in theories of creolization, is at odds with the idea of racial purity, as Shalini Puri reminds us in *The Caribbean Postcolonial*. She states, “one source of the increasing appeal . . . of the rhetoric of cultural hybridity lies in its refusal of racist purisms” (3). In other words, creolization moves away from the ‘naturalist’ ideas of race so prevalent in explanations of the plantation economy
model. Creolization however does not move towards the ideal of racelessness because it emphasizes the analytical necessity of race for the Caribbean.

Historian and poet Edward Brathwaite is a key figure in defining the concept of creolization. In *Contemporary Omens* he states that "because of the complex historical factors involved in making [creolization] it ... is not whole or hard ... but cracked, fragmented, ambivalent, not certain of itself, subject to shifting lights and pressures" (5). The historical factors Brathwaite refers to are “mercantilism, slavery, racism, superiority/inferiority syndromes” (5) in which there are dominant and subordinate groups in the four main cultural carriers of the region – African, European, Indian and indigenous. What Brathwaite is saying, is that there is no single experience for any of the racial groups on the plantation; there is no single Black, Indian, indigenous or White experience.

Rex Nettleford in *Cultural Caribbean Identity* agrees with Brathwaite when he states “the term creolization ... refers to the agonizing process of renewal and growth that marks the new order of men and women who came originally from different Old World cultures ... and met in conflict or other on foreign soil” (3). And Ceilia Britton claims that creolization “is a strategy of both resistance and accommodation. It forges its own language out of the tension of its relationship to the dominant language, which it simultaneously subverts and restructures (34). According to Brathwaite, Nettleford and Britton, creolization, then, is not a state of being or a particular point in time and history, but rather a continual process that operates across time, and is also fractured with contradictions and conflicts. Or, as
Edouard Glissant writes, “creolization . . . is not linear and not prophetic, but woven from enduring patience and irreducible accretions” (*Caribbean Discourse* 142) of cultural practices. Despite the different definitions of creolization, the above theorists all agree on its relevance to understanding the amalgam of peoples that populate the Caribbean.

Using the explanation of creolization as a non-linear and smooth process, Edward Brathwaite (*Development* 296-311), Elsia Goveia, and Raymond T. Smith (233-245) reject the isolationist views of the “plantation economy model” which say that there was limited interaction between and across the individual plantations. In contrast, they argue that plantations were never completely isolated from each other and activities like Sunday markets, centralized governmental services, and sexual unions between both Black and White residents sometimes brought different racial groups together. Brathwaite, Goveia and Smith, like Edouard Glissant, reject the idea that the plantation and its remnants are characterized only by distinctiveness, separation and purity between the cultural elements. One obviously visible example of this is the sexual unions between White colonizers and their Black slaves, the evidence being the mixed, or as they were called, mulatto children that resulted. This example is not to romanticize the sexual unions or to ignore the fact that many came about as a result of rape, but rather, to show that the rigid separation of the racial groups was not always binding.

People who subscribe to theories of creolization emphasize that fusions, creativity and hybridity occur despite, or because of, the boundaries that were
present in plantation society. Edward Brathwaite, for example, argues that the process of creolization started with the seasoning of the slaves that took place during the first three years of their arrival on the plantation. Seasoning, which includes being given a new name being taught European languages and religion and being introduced to slave work routines, is an attempt to strip the captured African of his African heritage and prepare him for his new life as a slave. Seasoning never completely erased all of the African culture – language, religion – and so, European culture was added to the African remnants, resulting in hybrid forms of cultural expression in many ways, including food, religious practice and language.

Michaeline A Chrichlow and Patricia Northover explain that through the process of creolization, African laborers tried to transform themselves from objects of colonial derision to proper English and/or European subjects (17). This happened largely because in the post abolition and emancipation periods, force as a means of control and common values such as adherence to the superiority of all things English, acceptance of White dominance, Christianity, education, and respect for law kept the increasingly race- and class- differentiated Black and White society together in the same space (R.T. Smith 235-6). The result is a mutual acculturation as both groups accept the superiority of all things English. The English colonialists certainly did, and at the same time considered things African to be inferior. Likewise, many ex-slaves also considered English ways to be superior and as a result tried to emulate them.
Edward Brathwaite, R.T. Smith, Elsa Goveia Richard Burton, Percy Hintzen, Michael Green and Micheline Chrichlow and Patricia Northover all agree that creolization is a continuum formed from mixing racial and cultural groups and that Englishness occupies a privileged position and is held as an ideal benchmark along this continuum. In other words, creolization occurs within a stratification system that places whiteness at the apex and blackness at the bottom, and in fact, reifies the ideas of racial purity that is a hallmark of the slave plantation. As Burton reminds us, “creolization is not a homogenizing process, but rather a process of contention between different racial and social groups” (6; see also Bolland “Creolization and Creole” 36-39). Burton further states that as structural contradictions go, “Afro-Creole cultures are themselves a paradoxical amalgam of the radical and the conservative that . . . simultaneously challenge and confirms the dominant [European colonial] order” (8). Thus, although there is acculturation, European dominance is also maintained and reified. Creolization results in each racial and ethnic group influencing the others around it and forming increasingly complex color stratification and class differentiation in the each stratum, but these do not transform the pattern of racial stratification – White is still at the apex and Black at the bottom.

There is uncertainty about whether the transformations stemming from creolization described above can be considered as anti-colonial discourse with an aim to break the psyche of colonialism, or if they reify colonial ideas. With regard to creole languages, Edouard Glissant’s position is that they are transformative and
defiant. He states, “the role of Creole in the world of plantations was that of defiance” (127) because they are the forms of expressions that the “slaves [and] then agricultural workers, imposed” (128) on the colonial plantation. Similarly, Celia Britton notes, “both during the colonial period and in the aftermath of decolonization, language was and is a key site of conflict” (1). Glissant further clarifies the role of creole language stating: "Creole is originally a kind of conspiracy that concealed itself by its public and open expression . . . [it] could conceal and reveal at the same time a hidden meaning" (124-25; see also Britton 25). Creole languages could be used as a conspiracy tool because, according to Glissant, creole languages sounded like nonsense to many creolizers, and because of this, the slaves and ex-slaves used it to communicate secretly.

Celia Britton argues that when Glissant writes about the transformative potential of creole language he means its potential for camouflage. She says, “camouflage is inherent in the basic structure of the language . . . Creole thus developed as a subversive language whose purpose from the start was not simply to communicate but also to conceal its meanings, thereby turning the master’s language against him” (25). According to Glissant and Britton, the development and use of creole languages is subversive and both anti-colonial (an opposition to) and post-colonial (a move beyond). Creole language represents a rejection of the dominance and superiority of European languages as the only languages of expression. In this way, creole languages fit within the larger ambit of subversion
and an ideological redefinition of self from the colonial image to a distinctly Caribbean identity.

The “creole society model” explains mixing and interaction between mostly Black and White but in many respects Indian and indigenous groups have been left outside of this model. The mixing and interactions challenge and modify the rigid caste-like stratification from the plantation economy model of society, but it nevertheless falls short of transcending the racial structures that still inhere from the colonial plantation. Writing on Jamaica, George Beckford and Michael Witter in *Small Garden Bitter Weeds* argue that the social stratification structure from the plantation era remained in place until the immediate independence period of 1962. They contend that Jamaica contains groups of Lebanese, Chinese and Indians who were, up to independence, deemed socially White and stood above the Black masses but still below the Europeans (46-47; 67-68). These groups further increase the racial and ethnic stratification and although they were not European White they were also importantly not Black, which was the least desirable category within society.

George Beckford comments on the similarity between plantation and creole society models saying, R.T. Smith’s “description of creole society indicates that it differed only in degree not in structure from plantation society” (41). In other words, while the stratification was not as rigid in some cases, it was still rigid enough to keep in place the black/white chasm. Accordingly, creole hybridity does not transcend the Eurocentric racial binaries but instead reinforces them (Percy
Rex Nettleford and Cecilia Karch, like C.L.R James’s account of Trinidian society in *Beyond a Boundary*, demonstrate a level of stasis in the embedded old colonial relationships despite post-colonial developments. This is not to suggest that racial stratification has not changed since colonialism, indeed there has been great strides in upward mobility for non-Whites. Access to education, jobs in the civil service and tourism, among others, are responsible for increasing upward mobility among the Black and Indian populations. But what some writers have pointed out is that despite these changes, some old relations still remain.

Both the “plantation economy model” and the “creole society model” have provided analysis of race that has proved useful beyond the colonial period. In *Identity, Race and Protest in Jamaica*, Jamaican cultural critic Rex Nettleford examines the colonial legacy of racial discrimination at Jamaican independence. He highlights the conjuncture of race, class, and color by arguing that despite social mobility achieved for the majority Black population through education and adult suffrage “in the minds of many Jamaicans, it is still a poor-Black, a middle-class and privileged brown man, and a rich or wealthy White man. This is the traditional color/class correlation” (24-25). Nettleford and others (Conway 53) contend that class, color, and race often coincide, with levels of access to resources and mobility between social strata strictly policed. What they argue is that political independence
from a colonial power did not automatically bring with it a shift in thinking about race as it correlates with economic class and color. Nettleford’s quote reminds us of the difficulty in overcoming the psychological effects of slavery, especially those pertaining to the perceived normalcy of the social and racial hierarchy.

The previous sections contain discourses of race in economic term, as anti- and post-colonial identity negotiation, as subversion of the psychological damage from colonialism, and as reifying colonial ideals. These, and more, emerge at the turn of the twentieth century and continued through the 1970 as the Caribbean experienced very overt anti-and post-colonial challenges from “Black Power” and “pan-African” movements.

**Twentieth Century Anti- and Post-Colonial Challenges**

During the period between plantation slavery and constitutional independence beginning in the 1960s there were significant changes in the Caribbean, which are not accounted for here – for example there was emancipation from 1838, a number of slave and labor rebellions in throughout the region, and also labor riots during the 1930s in most Caribbean countries. Their omission here does not signify their lack of importance to Caribbean race relations, but rather, the need to compress lengthy periods of Caribbean history in order to provide a comprehensive overview. During the twentieth century most Caribbean countries were transitioning between colonialism, neocolonialism and post-colonialism – between being colonies and independent countries. By this time slavery had ended
and Caribbean countries were approaching political independence from their colonizers, and so, it is important to understand how a change in the political economic circumstances translated into societal critique. This section examines how race was used during these changes to help make sense of Caribbean societies. It focuses on some of the key ways that race has been reflected upon during this period, including, pan-African movements of Garveyism and Rastafarianism, Caribbean Marxists such as Walter Rodney and CLR James, and Black Power movements throughout the Caribbean.

In large measure I consider these reflections on race to be parts of anti-colonial and decolonization efforts and discourses. This is a critical period of change for the Caribbean, and the people who talk about race, as well as the ways in which it gets talked about, are much more varied. And so, for example, we see people like Rastafarians adding their voices to racial analysis, and we also see class analysis being increasingly interspersed with how people make sense of race. The discourses about race and racism emerging during this time, for example Pan-Africanism, focus on the implications of race within wider diasporic and international communities. I try to present the discourses chronologically but it is difficult to always adhere to this because the anti- and post-colonial struggles did not occur in a chronological fashion because there were multiple struggles occurring simultaneously. In addition, the anti-and post-colonial challenges described below did not happen in the same way in each Caribbean country. What I describe below are some of the
significant ways in which people began to compete against the dominant ideas about race and colonialism.

**Pre-texts to Rastafarianism: A Note on Black Inferiority**

As previously discussed, colonial plantations were maintained through physical force and an ideology of non-White inferiority (Chevannes 9; Price xi-xiv; Bogues 11). Writers on the creolization process have argued that these two forces have continued after emancipation and into the twentieth century. The ideology of Black inferiority created by plantation slavery is widely acknowledged in post-colonial literature. For example, Aimé Césaire, in *Discourse on Colonialism*, explains the existence of the idea of Black inferiority in his argument which says “colonialism = thingification” (42). What Césaire means by this is the contact between Europe and its colonies dehumanizes, objectifies, brutalizes, deracializes, and destroys the identity of the colonized. Césaire is specific about the process of colonialism and its affects on the colonized. He writes:

> The atmosphere in which we lived, an atmosphere of assimilation in which Negro people were ashamed of themselves – has great importance. We lived in an atmosphere of rejection, and we developed an inferiority complex . . . the black man was searching for his identity. And . . . if what we want is to establish this identity, then we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are . . . that we are black; that we were black and have a history. (91)
His solution to the “thingification” is Negritude, which, according to him, “is a concrete rather than an abstract coming to consciousness” (91). Contrary to the negativity assigned to blackness under colonialism, Negritude recognizes and celebrates blackness in positive attributes and it recognizes the historicity of a Black civilization (Césaire 92). Negritude then, is as act of subversion of the ideology of Black inferiority.

Frantz Fanon in Black Skin White Masks also discusses what it means to find a Black identity in the midst of an ideology of Black inferiority (109-140). He describes how Black people are perceived as objects through the stereotypes imposed on them (109-110). He recounts an experience where he was seen and called a Negro by a young White girl saying, “I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: ‘Sho’ good eatin’” (112). Despite wanting to be seen as a man and nothing else he was instead seen as a Black man and defined by that ‘Black’ distinction. The little White girl associated Fanon only with negative stereotypes. From his encounter with her, Fanon says, “my body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored. . . . The Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly” (113).

Fanon rejects the ways that Black inferiority casts Black people as being different, and ‘Other’. Instead of being objectified as a Black man who is always perceived as different (Other) than a White man (113), he wants to experience being a man. Fanon’s writing brings to the fore the “psychological alienation caused by
colonialism” (Britton 10) whereby Blacks have come to believe in the ideology of inferiority, and as a result have helped to repeat, reproduce and perpetuate it. He sees this as a problem of both psychology and economics. He states, “[i]f there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization – or better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority” (11). According to Fanon, the material reality of Black people – their economic state and their economic power, or rather, their lack of economic power – is connected to their psychological assessment of their blackness in negative terms and both should be addressed simultaneously. Fanon introduces power as a critical component in the ideology of Black inferiority.

Rex Nettleford explains how reproduction of inferiority occurs. In *Identity, Race and Protest in Jamaica* he points to a “white bias” of the Black masses and the brown middle-class (30) that happens when the Black masses uphold the superiority of all things European and White over and above anything non-White, but particularly Black (28-37). Nettleford further claims that this “white bias” “betray[s] a self-contempt and a lack of self-confidence”, which, in his opinion, is the greatest obstacle to national identity (33). If Black people conform to a White bias it negates critical engagement with racism because they have already accepted White privilege as the norm and as the correct order of society. With such acceptance there is no recognized need for critique or change. What connects Fanon’s encounter with “white bias” is that they both have a common beginning in the dehistoricizing of Africa and its people and a retelling of African stories from the White colonial
perspective. The end result is that under colonialism, colonized people have little control over how they are perceived and they sometimes internalize and act according to the inferior status given to them. But sometimes, colonized people also reject such perceptions, as is the case with Garveyism and Rastafarianism.

The anti-and post-colonial struggles that focus on race consciousness, racial equality and the positivity of blackness are responding to colonial ideologies of non-White inferiority, but particularly Black inferiority, inherited from colonialism. Some of the earliest in these struggles were Pan Africanists, especially Marcus Garvey and his Garveyite movement, who are a precursor to Rastafarianism before it formed in Jamaica. As a Jamaican born in 1887, Marcus Garvey experienced the social and economic divisions within Jamaica’s plantation society, and it is these divisions that Rupert Lewis claims Garvey first begins to write against (“Garvey’s Perspective” 230). Likewise, Rastafarianism emerged as a response to those same divisions. Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) advocate a race consciousness that calls for Black independence from Whites, equality with Whites and a racial emancipation of Black people (H. Campbell, “Garveyism”167-186; H. Campbell, Rasta and Resistance 51-58; Hill, Introduction xvi-xxii; Martin 22-37; Benn 236-237).

On the issues of race consciousness and racial purity Garvey writes in The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, “I believe in a pure black race just as how all self-respecting whites believe in a pure white race, as far as that can be” (37). Garvey’s philosophy of racial purity calls for the repatriation of all Blacks to Africa.
His mantra, “Africa for the Africans”, means both a physical removal from the West and a coming together in African of all Black people. It also means, “the building up for themselves a great nation in Africa” (*Philosophy* 68, 70-72). Garvey did not simply mean further segregation for Blacks and Whites, he intended to develop an independent Africa. According to him, the goal was to have economic and political independence for the African continent from her colonizers. To this end Garvey established business endeavors under the auspices of his UNIA (Martin 33-37) in order to promote what he calls racial self-reliance.

To be clear, Garvey is rejecting the idea of a racial hierarchy. He is not embracing racial purity with a goal of replacing Black people at the apex of the social hierarchy and White people at its bottom. He is not advocating that Blacks should dominate Whites. Tony Martin comments on Garvey’s concept of self-reliance stating, “self-reliance was a necessary corollary to race first” (32). In other words, Garvey saw a need to sever the dependent relationship that Blacks had on their former colonizers. This is why Rupert Lewis says of Garvey’s ideology that it goes “beyond anti-colonialism to advocate a program of decolonization” (233) in the physical, economic and psychological sense. Garvey’s philosophical influence in the Caribbean is especially strong among the Rastafarians, who regard Garvey as a prophet in their religion.
Rastafarianism: Race Consciousness, Racial Equality and the Positivity of Blackness

What is Rastafarianism? According to Barry Chevannes in *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology*, Rastafarianism “arose first in response to European slavery and then, following emancipation, in response to the system of social, cultural, and economic oppression on which modern Jamaica was built” (1). Similarly, Rex Nettleford makes the claim that the general role which Rastafarianism plays in Jamaican society is “to . . . redress the imbalance of history’s systematic weakening of any claim to achievement which descendants of Africans would otherwise make in the New World” (110). I have already discussed in detail the oppression to which Chevannes and Nettleford refer to earlier in this chapter and will not repeat it here. Anthony Bogues claims that “Rastafari . . . has remained an ontological site of resistance to the West’s efforts to make the black subject into an object stripped of its ordinariness and humanness” (153; see also L. James 145). He further locates Rastafarianism as an “antiracist and anticolonial struggle to annihilate” the objectification which Blacks occupied during colonialism, and as an effort to resurrect in its place a state of being (154). Rastafarianism, then, simultaneously critiques the problems of colonial oppression while offering solutions to overcome them.

Mutabaruka, who is a Rastafarian, describes Rastafarianism as “a Black Power Movement with a theological nucleus” (27). He further contends, “the root of it is the need and necessity for a people to come out of what we call white
domination and white supremacy” (33). In this regard, Rastafarianism, which some label as liberation theology (Erskine 1-38; Mutabaruka 27; Nettleford 52; Murrell 29-30), subverts some of the root causes of Black oppression (Edmonds 41-66) in areas such as economics, politics, psychology and religion. Leslie R. James, in “Text and the Rhetoric of Change: Bible and Decolonization in Post-World War II Caribbean Political Discourse” defines liberation theology as an interpretation of biblical scripture from the perspective of the poor and oppressed for the purpose of transforming society. He describes Rastafarianism’s version of liberation theology as using the bible as “an apocalyptic biblical subtext which . . . focuses on the biblical books of the Psalms, the Prophets, and Revelation” (148).

Liberation theology is an important aspect of the Rastafarian movement because it rejects the ideas of a divine basis for oppression, a view which colonial powers taught to the slaves. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell notes that liberation theology is a part of many of the early slave rebellions in the Caribbean, such as the 1865 and 1931 rebellions in Jamaica and the late nineteenth century Bedwardian movement (17-18). Moving forward into the twentieth century, Leslie James argues that the rhetoric of liberation theology has continued into the to post-independence period (145-163). Connections between religion and slave society have been widely acknowledged, especially the close relationship between Christianity and colonialism. Eric Williams, for example, in Capitalism and Slavery argues that slavery was first and foremost an economic venture and religion was a tool of its execution, and the result of both working together was racism (Capitalism 7; see also Murrell
“Dangerous” 13-23). The theological basis of Rastafarians is to locate racial oppression outside of a divine order with an unknown futuristic end, and instead in the social system, as man-made, and thus possible to change.

Theological aspects of Rastafarianism perform a transformative function. The theological center of Rastafarianism recasts Christianity and the second coming of a messiah through a Black lens, something that Marcus Garvey also discusses. Garvey argues that it is useful for every race to see God through their own spectacles and especially for “… Negroes [to] believe in the God of Ethiopia” (Philosophy 44). Garvey never identifies Halie Selassie as God, but Rastafarians have deduced that former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie is the messiah foretold in the bible (Erskine 139; P. Clarke 46-50; Mutabaruka 27; Nettleford 42; L. James 149-50).

According to Noel Leo Erskine, “Halie Selassie became the symbol of black resistance in a culture that marginalized blackness” (139, 33-35; see also Edmonds 35-36). Erskine further states that having Halie Selassie as the messiah “gave them [Rastafarians] permission to re-value themselves and see themselves as made in the divine image” (34) of Halie Selassie who was Black and African. For Rastafarians to replace a White Christian messiah with a Black one is significant because it stands in stark opposition to the colonial narratives of Africans as backward and heathen beasts suitable only for burden. Furthermore, Anthony Bogues claims that it “defines Africans as human” (154) because if God is in human form and Black, then all other Africans in the diaspora are, and were always, human, not animals they were perceived in slavery.
The sociopolitical aspects of Rastafarianism also perform a transformative function. By this I mean that Rastafarians practice certain lifestyle choices that exemplify an attempt to liberate themselves from oppression. For example, they keep their hair in its natural curly state without straightening it to resemble the straight hair that most Europeans have. They embrace speaking language dialects as a way to reject the superiority of all things English, and they promote self-employment as a way to avoid economic dependence on anyone. Rastafarianism, then, practices the changes it wants to see in society, which is why Mutabaruka argues that Rastafarianism “is an experience rather than a written phenomenon” (26). Similarly, Ras Sam Brown – also a Rastafarian – states, “[y]ou cannot join Rastafari. It is an inspiration that comes forward” (qtd. in Price 6). Charles Price uses Ras Sam Brown’s and other interview data to conclude that “[b]ecoming Rastafarian is characteristically a conversion process, an identity transformation . . . it is not only a religious conversion; it is also a racial one, a transition of Blackness from low to high salience in a person’s self-concept” (8). In other words, people are meant to experience and practice Rastafarianism, not theorize it.

The practice of Rastafarians wearing their hair in its naturally tight curly state is an effort to subvert many of the colonial beliefs and internalized inferiority complexes about blackness and ugliness. In a real sense, the practice of growing and wearing locks – also known as dreadlocks or dreads – is using the body as a site of resistance against the aesthetic status quo. Rastafarians wear their hair in what they call locks/dreadlocks in contrast to the prevalent practice among many Black
women – and some men – to chemically or heat process their hair in order to make it straight, and supposedly manageable, like European hair (Waters 48).

Stereotypical claims made about black hair – it’s difficult to comb, it’s fuzzy and unruly and it’s not business presentable – all make it appear bad, burdensome and in need of a fix through straightening. Locks represent a refusal to accept that black hair is problematic and in need of a change. The decision to process hair or leave it unprocessed is influenced by what are the acceptable cultural practices in society, and when Rastafarianism first emerged in the turn of the twentieth century and even into many decades that followed, a person’s hair (and skin color) affected their ability to secure jobs in the Caribbean, especially in banks and retail stores.

The fact is, black hair that was maintained without some treatment to straighten it was not as acceptable as it is today, and it still is not acceptable by all as the 2009 documentary Good Hair demonstrates. Good Hair is a documentary about the value – social, cultural, economic and political – of hair in the U.S. It shows there is a high demand, in all four of the above mentioned categories, for straight synthetic or human hair because women pay almost a thousand dollars to have straight hair weaves put on their hair, but no such demand exists for Black hair in its natural state. American Comedian and actor Chris Rock, the main character in the documentary, was unable to give away free wigs made from Black hair to both Black and non-Black customers because the customers assigned low or no aesthetic value to Black hair. Good Hair is about the U.S. and was produced much later than when Rastafarian values of Black pride first emerged, but the documentary is still
demonstrative of the negative values of ugliness and undesirability that are still associated with Black hair. To give another example of the negative perception of Black hair from the early 2000s in the Caribbean, I am reminded of my own experience when I first made the decision to stop chemically processing my hair and wear it in locks. About five months into my switch a church pastor asked me when was I going to “do something with my hair”, as if leaving it unprocessed was unacceptable and something had to be done to correct the problem.

Another effort at erecting a positive Black identity by the Rastafarians centers on the use of dialect as an acceptable means of speaking in public spaces. Stuart Hall gives an example of when this first began to happen in Jamaica in “Negotiating Caribbean Identities”. He discusses and celebrates the acceptance and prevalence of patios being spoken openly on public radio between the 1950s and end of the 1960s in Jamaica, and he attributes this “profound cultural revolution” to Rastafarianism (12). Patios is the speech of the Black working classes in Jamaica, it is neither standard English nor any African language. It is instead a dialect of English and is mostly spoken by the Black and poor masses and shunned by the educated middle classes and the upper classes. For it to be deemed acceptable for public broadcast can be interpreted in some ways as a major achievement and shift in the cultural acceptance of aspects of the Black population. The development and success of reggae in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and the rest of the world, is also widely credited with helping to spread Rastafarianism and its ideals.
Although Rastafarianism has made many sociopolitical critiques to Caribbean society in racialized terms, according to many, it has completely ignored any gender analysis (Yawney 65-75; Turner 16-22). In addition, as former slave societies, the perception was that racial oppression was higher on the list of social ills than gender. I am not saying that gender was or is less important than race, only that in the context of Caribbean society at the time, racial issues were more visibly pressing. Rastafarianism focused mostly on addressing racial oppression, but they have also been credited as being some of the first to address both race and class together. According to Obika Gray in *Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica, 1960-1972*, the Black identity consciousness that developed in its early stages before WWII was divorced from articulations of class. Gray (146) claims that Rastafarians were the exception because they interpret “the lower classes in racial terms” (146). Nevertheless, for Rastafarians, racial experiences of the late colonial Caribbean society trump those of class. But class analysis, in addition to that of race, did become useful as I examine in the next section.

**The Development of Class Analysis**

The increasing relevance of class analysis to Caribbean societies can be explained in two main ways, first the growth of the middle classes – especially the entry of a larger number of the Black and mixed population to the middle classes, and second, the Caribbean scholars who began using Marxist theory to help analyze Caribbean society. Increasing class analysis did not mean that there was no longer
room for racial analysis, but instead that the social stratification became more
complicated, and only using racial analysis to explain Caribbean societies was no
longer sufficient. This is the point that Norman Girvan makes when he says that
questions about class also need to be asked in addition to those of race. Girvan
comments that oppression “is no longer identical to the question of [the colonial
perception of] phenotypical race” (*Political Economy of Race* 29). So while in the
past, especially before the early twentieth century, to speak about injustice and
oppression in the context of the Caribbean was to speak about race only, this is no
longer the case as the twentieth century develops. It is important to recognize the
moments when issues of class became separated from and significant in their own
right, from those of race, and the growth of the middle classes is one of these.

The growth of the middle classes occurs because of very real societal changes
in the twentieth century, especially immediately leading up to and after political
independence, which led to increasing social mobility and correspondingly
increased the number of people in the middle classes. As I have already said, in the
past class was so interpolated with race that to talk about race was, in a very real
sense, to talk about class as well. During colonialism class stratification was limited.
There were two main groups, labor and those who owned labor, and as I point out
earlier in this chapter, this division mostly coincided with race – non-White labor
and White owners or labor. There was very little in between in the form of a middle
class.
When colonialism ended and newly independent countries were formed the class stratification began to slowly change. I am not suggesting that the rigid system of stratification during colonialism suddenly ended with political independence, but rather, changes began to occur in the newly independent countries that resulted in the development of a middle class. As I will discuss later, the expansion of the middle classes began earlier than independence but only in small incremental ways. Political independence brought one notable abrupt change, political power and control shifted from a White colonial controller to local leaders who were usually either Black or mixed Black/White. While the Queen of England or her representative the Governor General remains the head of state, her power is only as a figurehead. The political sphere became one avenue through which some people – usually educated and/or labor unionist – could become socially mobile.

Meaningful liberation means advancement for all groups of society not just passing power to a few political elite, but as Derek Gordon, Carl Stone and Selwyn Ryan describe below, political independence across the Caribbean was characterized by merely passing political control from one group to another without redress of the racial and economic disparities. Political independence and the transfer of political power was significant, but only very few people were able to benefit directly from this political power. Writing on Trinidad and Tobago, Selwyn Ryan describes what he perceives as the continuation of mental slavery after the 1962 independence in Trinidad saying, “what happened was the Anglo-Saxons had been replaced by Afro-Saxons” (“Struggle for Black Power” 41; see also Girvan
“Political Economy” 27-31). In other words, the Black leadership that came to power at independence acted similarly to what existed before, even if they were a different color. Writing on Jamaica, Derek Gordon and Carl Stone argue that in the aftermath of Jamaica’s 1962 independence educated Blacks, browns, and Indians filled the dominant economic and political positions vacated by the colonials, but this did little to help the poor uneducated Black working classes.

If we accept the arguments made by Gordon, Stone and Ryan, then, political power was available only to a few educated elites at the time of independence in the 1960s. Class and race were still positively correlated, and so, to address class without also simultaneously doing the same for race was to ignore a major part of the problem. In other words, the majority of the Black population was gaining the least during this period. In his essay “Race and Economic Power in Jamaica” Carl Stone argues that there was increasing economic mobility between WWII and Jamaican independence in 1962 (248-52) but the working class Blacks gained the least. According to Horace Campbell, “[Walter] Rodney’s political activism grew out of this period of the transition from nationalist anti-colonialism to political sovereignty in which the middle classes now dominated Parliament and the Cabinets in a context where there had been no fundamental change in economic relations” (116).

The newly formed independent countries focused a lot of their efforts on economic and social development. Socially, countries sought to make improvements in health, education and infrastructure, all of which would enhance the lives of the
population. Infrastructural developments of roads and transport systems meant easier connections and travel between rural and urban areas, and of course, an extensive road network is also an asset to economic development. Education is a recognized route to social mobility and many countries began building more schools in order to increase access to education for the population. Barbados, for example, implemented a policy of free secondary education for its citizens in 1962. Coupled with building more schools, especially secondary schools, free secondary education allowed masses of poor people access to formal education. In Dominica, Cecelia Green comments on the role that education has played in social advancement for girls and women especially. She writes, “among the rural population, education was increasingly perceived as a means to alternative desirable livelihoods for daughters” (65), but overall, there were more educational opportunities (including learning skills outside of school through apprenticing) available for boys and men. People were able to use their educational skills and credentials to secure jobs in the civil service.

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital helps us to understand how educational achievement and greater access to education can lead to social mobility. Bourdeiu’s concept of symbolic capital refers to the value placed on educational achievements. In *Outline of a theory of Practice* Bourdieu makes the point that cultural capital, such as educational achievements, can be translated into economic capital. Educational policies such as free education remove class position in a broad sense, and having the money to pay for education specifically, as impediments to
being able to access a formal education. They also mean that more and a varied number of people are able to attain education and potentially transform it into economic capital. Economic capital can then be used to gain social mobility.

On the economic side of development, the new countries expanded the civil service and created more jobs. Civil service jobs contributed to social mobility in two major ways: one, they meant steady employment and income, and two, they were non-agricultural jobs. Having a job supplying a steady income is, of course, a good thing because it provides money to survive, but civil service jobs represent much more than just a steady source of income. Having a job that was not in the agricultural sector was highly valued in the 1960s and 70s when most Caribbean countries gained independence. Agricultural work was the norm for most people and it was hard work with modest pay. Work in the civil service was highly valued because it was the type of work that people could make careers out of – teachers, nurses, police officers, postal workers and clerical workers. Persons performing these jobs have opportunities for promotion, which in turn means more money and social status. According to Cecelia Green in "A Recalcitrant Plantation Colony Dominica: 1880-1946", in Dominica civil service jobs were initially very gendered, sticking closely to the stereotypical dichotomy of women as nurturing and men as protective. For example, in 1946 in Dominica, women almost exclusively performed the job of nursing and they dominated in the reaching profession (68). Green does not indicate where men dominated, but it was more than likely in the police force.
Social mobility was also made possible because of increasing remittances that were being repatriated back to Caribbean countries from people who had migrated before independence. Caribbean people migrated in large numbers during the early to mid twentieth century. They migrated to Panama to work on the Panama Canal, to England, Canada and the U.S. and they often sent money back home to their families. George Roberts, in “Emigration from the Island of Barbados”, wrote extensively on the amount of remittances sent to Barbados from persons who migrated between 1861 and 1921. Using reports of remittances received by money order through the post office in Barbados between 1901-1920 Roberts reports “1,370,660.00” British pounds were remitted (286). However, he estimates the total remittances into Barbados that are directly attributed to emigration at “2,326,000.00” British pounds (286). According to Roberts, most of the Caribbean migrants in the early part of the twentieth century were from Barbados, but the function of remittances works the same way in each country.

Each country also had specific developmental initiatives in various industries that helped to grow their middle classes, and in general, tourism has played a big part in many countries – Barbados and Jamaica to name a few. In Dominica, for example, Cecelia Green recounts the development of the banana industry beginning in the 1950s and 60s and says it is “the single most important feature of Dominica’s development to date, spawning the emergence of a “modern” black middle class” (67).
The second reason why class analysis became a lens through which to critically engage Caribbean countries is because of the influence of Caribbean intellectuals who either identified as Marxist or with Marxism. According to Marxist theory, the working class struggle seemed larger than that of race because working classes of the world could, in theory, affect systemic changes to the capitalist system.

Many countries in the Caribbean experienced labor riots during the 1930s. Given the labor rebellions that occurred in Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean in 1930s, Ken Post contends that the problem for Jamaica, like the rest of the Caribbean, is “to develop a Marxist concept of political practice by showing its necessary relations to material . . . production” (*Arise Ye Starvelings* 9). Post makes an argument for a focus on the labor question, which is a way of saying focus on the class question. The conjuncture of political independence and labor conditions of high unemployment among the poor working classed in the mid twentieth century also influenced the shift in the discourse from race to class.

Walter Rodney was especially concerned with the coincidence of race as an international class problem. He states, “there is nothing with which poverty coincides so absolutely as with the color black – small or large populations, hot or cold climates, rich or poor in natural resources – poverty cuts across all of these factors in order to find black people” (19). For Rodney, like C.L. R. James, Black liberation struggles are international in scope because they are a part of an international capitalist system. James critiques the view which sees Black liberation struggles as epiphenomenal aspects of class struggles and offer instead that they are
an independent and necessary part of the socialist struggle (Negro Question 138-147; “Black Power”; see also Benn 162-3).

C.L.R James states: “the Negro struggles in the South [USA] are not merely a question of struggles of Negroes, important as those are . . . [they are also] questions of . . . the reorganization of society on socialist foundations” (Negro Question 141). James argues that the riots in various Caribbean colonies during 1937, 1938 and those in independent Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana during 1970 created conditions where issues of class and race oppression were brought to the fore and were ready for revolution; but they were missed opportunities because they lacked leadership (“Walter Rodney” 135-139; Meeks “1970 Revolution” 135).

The applicability of Marxist analysis that emphasized class over racial analysis in the Caribbean, especially during the time of decolonization, was not without critique. Obika Gray, for example, suggests that class-based anti-colonial protest in Jamaica “was an economic nationalism that did not deal with cultural questions” such as race (147-8; see also Gordon 278-81; Stone 262-3). Similarly, Rupert Lewis states that “issues of self-respect [and] racial dignity so important to the construction of personhood in postcolonial societies, tended to be ignored by the Left, and were seen as soft issues, while economic issues were the hard issues” (106) of liberation. Trevor Munroe also contends, “the Marxist Left in Jamaica has clearly failed to deal adequately with, to take up and consistently carry forward the positives of Garaveyism” (“The Left and the Question of Race” 297). In other words, the turn to the Left sought to address and reduce material inequalities that cause
dependency, but not the ideologies of inferiority based on race. According to Trevor Munroe this is a mistake made by Jamaican Left-leaning intellectuals – with the exception of Walter Rodney and Trevor Campbell (295) – because race is not an “independent variable but [is] in a relationship of dependence” with class analysis (293; see also Dupuy 121).

Obika Gray and Trevor Munroe both make the point that Walter Rodney was one Left intellectual who tried to address racial inferiority along with issues of class. According to Gray, “what distinguished Rodney’s approach was his attempt to show the contemporary significance of African history” (152) in anti-, neocolonial and class struggles. As the Rastafarians have consistently argued, racial pride is a necessary element of class-consciousness for Caribbean people (Munroe “The Left and the Question of Race” 295). The case of Walter Rodney, specifically the events surrounding the Jamaican Government’s 1968 ban of Rodney from Jamaica, demonstrates how Jamaica’s struggle against oppression and inequality took on a class analysis. Rodney was an advocate for Black liberation and after taking a job teaching in Jamaica at the University of the West Indies Mona campus in 1968, his interests brought him in close connection with Rastafarians and other poor and dispossessed groups in Jamaica, and for this he was banned from Jamaica. To be more specific, according to Horace Campbell:

Rodney’s expulsion by the Jamaican government was based on fears that his interaction with the leading figures at the grass roots could lead to the emergence of a radical political ideology taking hold

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among them [the masses] and that instability could ensue if such a political movement became an oppositional force threatening the political system of independent Jamaica that was barely six years old”.

Jamaica had only gained independence in 1962 and the government was reluctant to relinquish any of its newly found power. In other words, the Black and brown middle classes who made up the political elite wanted to maintain the status quo and keep the poor masses from questioning their power and their class position.

When the government of Jamaica banned Walter Rodney it sparked protest from all sections of Jamaican society. Rodney's university students, his middle class colleagues, – some of whom were members of the Leftist “New World Group” – Rastafarians, and various working class and unemployed groups all protested and rioted against the ban. With these various groups protesting together, the ban led to a more organized and united front in terms of race and class opposition to oppression (Gray Radicalism 161-3; Gonsalves 110-131; R. Lewis Walter Rodney, xvi, 85-90). Protesting the ban effectively brought race and class interests together.

So far, the concerns about racial exploitation, even when linked with class, have focused on the plight of Blacks, not the Indians who also populate Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. The term ‘Black Power’, used to articulate the racial struggle of Black people, was considered by Indians to be exclusionary because they did not self-identify as Black. As Walter Rodney has argued, Black power in the Caribbean is “not racially intolerant” (R. Lewis Walter Rodney 29), it encompasses all of the
groups that occupy an anti-colonial position. This however has to be reconciled with Marcus Garvey and the Rastafarians who argue that Black power is about a “break with imperialism which is historically white racist, the assumption of power by the black masses . . . [and] the cultural reconstruction of the society in the image of blacks” (R. Lewis *Walter Rodney* 28). That is to say, it is about a redistribution of wealth and power and a correction to the damage done to the Black psyche under slavery.

The various expressions of Black power have come under heavy scrutiny in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago because of the presence of the East Indians in these countries. There, the meaning of Black power is questioned in relation to the presence of Indian labor that shares a similar, though shortened, history with Black labor under colonialism. In discussing Caribbean labor Walter Rodney comments on this by saying “we can talk about the mass of the West Indian population as being black – either African or Indian” (28; see also LaGuerre Preface xvii). In other words, he does not differentiate between these two segments of the population in their role as being mostly labor supply. Some have argued that the 1970 black power movement in Trinidad and Tobago tried to be inclusive of both Blacks and Indians (Nichols 445) but this was thwarted by a legacy of fear, suspicion and distrust between the groups (Nichols 455). Before Trinidad and Tobago gained independence, C.L.R James remarks that despite the personal experiences and accounts of prejudice from both Afro and Indo Trinidadians, they need to build a unified political party to lead Trinidad into independence (“West Indians” n. pag.).
Not everyone agrees that there can be a simplified coincidence of class and race in countries with large East Indian populations like Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Alex Dupuy, for example, disagrees with Rodney’s whittling down of the complications of class to race in Trinidad and Tobago (107). John La Guerre concurs saying, “there were cultural divergences . . . between East Indians and the African-descended population” (Preface xvii, see also La Guerre “Indian Response” 278-303; Oxaal 85-89). Others argue that while African and Indian exploitation was similar during slavery and indenture, Indian oppression was not as complete as the Black population who endured slavery and its legacies. Specifically, the Indians could not understand the psychological liberation on cultural grounds that Blacks needed. The term blackness as it was used in the black power movement in Trinidad was meant to convey a reality of a common oppression under colonial rule, but in this regard Brian Meeks argues that by the end of the 1980s when most of the Caribbean colonies gained independence, the Caribbean Left had failed and the race question still remained (155-72; see also Stewart 758-63).

**Economic Enclaves and Discourses of Race**

Most of the previous discussion has focused on the Black population in relation to the White populations, but other groups – Chinese and Indians – also factor into the history of race relations in the Caribbean. In the next section I discuss the small enclave populations of Indians and Chinese that have been marginal to, or excluded from all the previous discussions. A common thread connecting the
previous sections in this chapter is the effects of the plantation economy on its inhabitants but the enclaves have not been a part of the plantation economy in the same way that Blacks or Whites have been, and they have not been a part of the anti-colonial struggle in the same way either.

Kenneth Wilson and Alejandro Portes define economic enclaves as:

immigrant minorities which remain spatially concentrated in a particular city of region. The distinctive characteristics of these groups are that they are less culturally assimilated than native ethnic minorities, tend to cling to their languages and customs, and frequently do better economically than minorities in the mainstream economy. (296)

As Wilson and Portes point out, what stands out about the enclaves is their economic success and to understand how this happens in a Caribbean context, we need to see where and how they fit within the hierarchy of plantation economy and the subsequent Caribbean society. Indian-Caribbean and Chinese-Caribbean economic enclaves seem to appear suddenly because of they did not share the same colonial and postcolonial creolization process as the White and Black populations. Given their recent addition to Caribbean society – relative to the Black population – why are the small enclave groups of Indians and Chinese in countries like Barbados and Jamaica are so economically successful?

Percy Hintzen, in “The Caribbean Race and Creole Ethnicity”, offers an explanation. He states that the consequences of being outside of plantation slavery
were experienced differently but overall they were positive in allowing Indian and Chinese groups to retain a strong sense of their diasporic culture (21). The result is East Indians and Chinese who existed on the periphery of plantation society “were able to ignore the principles of behavior and association implicated in the . . . hierarchy of creole society” and engage in petty trading with the lower social and economic class of Black populations (Hintzen 22), something the White populations would not do. Initially engaging in grocery retail and itinerant trade, the Chinese-Jamaicans, who were largely outside the plantation structure, gained economic success where the ex-slaves did not. Chinese and Indians were able to act counter to the expected creole norm of emulating English cultural, economic, and racial practices and also simultaneously combine their economic with symbolic capital derived from their light skin color “to move up in the social hierarchy” (Hintzen 22).

Using Hintzen’s argument, according to the continuum of creolization, Blacks’ desire for closeness to Englishness worked against their economic success, while the opposite holds true for the other non-White groups. In other words, by trying to gain social mobility through adopting English practices Blacks prevented themselves from achieving possible economic success.

There are also stereotypical explanations about the success of the enclave groups and the unsuccessfulness of Black businesses, but these are discredited by the more scholarly explanations. Stereotypical responses from the Black population in Barbados include views that the Indian-Caribbean populations have dishonest practices, different cultural, familial and economic practices, and exclusionary
practices that keep all their economic resources within their communities and outside the wider society (Hanoomansingh 319-324). In Jamaica popular explanations are that Chinese-Jamaicans have a wider range of products and business hours, more customers and spend frugally (Bryan 205), and that the Black population hinders itself from success due to jealousy and envy (L. Lewis 40). The enclave Chinese- and Indian-Caribbean populations offer their own explanations such as exorbitant spending by the Black community as a critique against the Black populations (Hanoomansingh 321; Ryan, Pathways xviii). The problem with these kinds of explanations, according to Linden Lewis, is they engage in victim blaming, accept uncritically stereotypes of various groups, and by extension claim opposing and binary positions for racial groups, and more importantly relegate issues of racism to a personal instead of a national agenda (40). In addition, these stereotypical explanations serve no purpose other than to be divisive.

Percy Hintzen’s explanation of how Chinese and Indians were able to gains economic mobility offers some valid insight, but his explanation fails to answer the question of why these enclave groups were able to do this. The scenario that he describes sounds too much like victim blaming, blaming the Black population for adapting through creolization to the colonial system that they found themselves in. An alternate explanation of why there is a disparity between the majority Black population and the enclaves is to be found in the way the plantation system operated. If the retention of diasporic culture has a strong positive effect on identity and Chinese and Indian groups have been able to translate this, and other things,
into economic prosperity, then the ex-slaves are at a disadvantage because they endured seasoning during colonialism; having their identity stripped from them during slavery in order to turn them into the perfect labor force. Should we not, then, also blame the slave plantation system that removed this identity instead of the attempts to forge a replacement “creole” identity? In addition, at the end of their indentured contract, some of the former indentured labor received land and or money from the colonizers, another benefit that the ex-slaves did not have.

In contrast to the writers above who offer a race-based critique of the enclaves, other studies have made the assertion that the manifested racial and ethnic conflict within the enclaves is really about class and not about race. Patrick Bryan, for example, contends that anti-Chinese sentiments in Jamaica between the 1930s and 1960s “arise less from racial antipathies than from business competition. . . [thus,) much of the economic conflict with the Chinese is expressed in racial terms” (226). According to Bryan, what appears to be an ethnic tension is really a class tension being expressed by the frustrated Black working classes (208). But the fact that all of the members within any one of the enclaves are of one racial group cannot be overlooked. Such coincidences of class and race suggest that factors of both class and race and not one over the other are at play.

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, there has been a continuous engagement with race over the long historical period from the beginning of slave society to after political
independence in the 1960s. As expected this engagement has been dynamic, changing as the understanding of race and its role in Caribbean society has changed. Racial analysis has been differentially applied to different periods of Caribbean history. I would like to borrow the concept of ‘racial formation’ from Michael Omi and Howard Winant to help explain what this chapter starts to accomplish over the long historical process. I say start because this is a daunting project and, as Chapters five and six show, racial categories in the Caribbean are continually evolving. Omi and Winant define racial formation as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (55). Here in Chapter two, I have outlined how theories of creolization, a shift in thinking about Blackness through Rastafarianism, race consciousness and positivity of Blackness have successively challenged the colonial understanding of Black bodies.

Let us take a step back and understand the scope of social changes that occurred around the time immediately preceding, and after political independence in the 1960s. By the time of political independence the Black/White binary of explaining racial oppression in the Caribbean was already changing. Changes in the perception of race from biologically based are certainly important, but so too is what happened to the population of Caribbean people around that time. At independence, people who were formerly considered to be property, not human, and having no rights were transformed into citizens who hold political control over and govern their own countries. Independence represents a significant watershed period for the Black populations of Caribbean countries. The absence of Indian
populations from the above statement is deliberate, because, as the next chapter shows, their involvement with the independence movement in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago was more challenging and they did not gain the same political power at independence that the Black populations did.
CHAPTER THREE
THE STATE OF RACE IN BARBADOS AND GUYANA

Introduction

This chapter serves two purposes; first, it details the intricacies of race in the two countries that I focus on in the dissertation. I separate Barbadian and Guyanese histories in order to understand the role that race has played in each, separately, because it is these histories that help shape the way people are responding to the immigration occurring in Barbados. Second, it continues, from the previous chapter, to tell a narrative of how race has been a key variable in defining Caribbean countries. The content of Chapter two covers the entire Anglophone Caribbean area, and as such, the points about race therein are deliberately broad in scope and applicable to the region as a whole. Chapter three advances from that broad scope because it highlights specific features of both Barbados and Guyana that are necessary foundations to help understand how and why race is emerging as a problematic issue in the immigration debate in Barbados. What I mean by this is, many people who talk about Guyanese immigrants in Barbados as problems do so by using the specific racial history of Guyana as an example – as evidence of an incompatibility of Indians and Blacks residing in a country together.
Barbados

Barbados has a majority Black population that has held political power since independence in 1966. To be clear, the issue of race in Barbados does not resemble the manifestation of the issue in the U.S. where the Black population has neither economic nor political power. The Caribbean and the southern U.S. have both experienced plantation slavery, and by all accounts, (Jay Mandle Orlando Patterson) the experiences were similar, but what occurred after the end of slavery, especially in the twentieth century was very different. The Black population in Barbados did not experience a civil rights movement because they did not have to struggle for recognition as equal citizens. At political independence in 1966, blacks took control of the government and they have governed the country since then.

The impression that Barbados, as a country, gives is that it does not have a race problem because it is rarely mentioned in any official governmental capacity. What is portrayed instead is great equality and prosperity across the country, often using economic and human development indicators. As a country that earns most of its foreign exchange from tourism, Barbados is also viewed quite generically within the international tourism industry, as an idyllic tourist destination with an abundance of sun, sea, sand and friendly people. Barbados indeed scores highly on the Human Development Index (HDI) and also has idyllic beaches but this is not all that there is to the country, and a look beneath the surface will demonstrate this. Academic sources have often written about another side to Barbados that belies the idea of Barbados as a country free of racial problems, but these are dated, and the
fact that there are no recent studies of race in Barbados since the early 1990s is indicative of the increasing silencing of race within the national discourse. The academic studies I use here have looked at race relations historically and they have demonstrated a systemic relationship between race and economic class in Barbados through an almost century-long continuation of economic dominance by a White corporate elite to the exclusion of almost any other racial group. The one other group that has made some small inroads is a small group of Indians. Although the academic studies are dated, their content is still very relevant because little has changed distribution of wealth within the country.

When viewed from the outside, and with a very broad lens, Barbados appears to be a little piece of paradise – it has beautiful white sandy beaches, a warm tropical climate and is politically stable. I am not saying that the country does not meet these standards in reality because it does, what I am saying is that there is more to the story. Barbados is heavily marketed as an international destination to European and American tourists. Growing up in Barbados I remember seeing tourism ads on television and hearing the motto that always accompanied the ads, ‘Barbados, just beyond your imagination’. This motto has been replaced by another, ‘long live life’. If you visit the Barbados Tourism Authority’s (BTA) website you will find numerous reminders of the beaches, sun, sea and rum to help you enjoy the first three. But what lies beneath this imagined paradise? Tourism is Barbados’s main foreign exchange earner, so I do not expect Barbados, or any country, to talk about the negatives it is experiencing while presenting itself to the world; this
would be self-defeating. Internally, however, I would expect some recognition of social problems and concerns to be admitted and addressed.

The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)¹ is another broad measure that is often used to assess the country. The HDI is an average measure of three basic human development three achievements – education, length and health of life and a decent standard of living (GDP) in a country. According to the UNDP.org, “Barbados’s HDI value for 2012 is 0.825 – in the very high human development category – positioning the country at 38 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 1980 and 2012, Barbados’s HDI value increased from 0.706 to 0.825, an increase of 17 percent or average annual increase of about 0.5 percent” (UNDP.org). Barbados’ HDI rank is the highest of all CARICOM and CSME countries, and the country with the second highest rank is 47 out of 187. Comparatively speaking, Barbados looks excellent using the HDI but unfortunately, no data were available for

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¹ The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) explains the HDI as follows. The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. As in the 2011 HDR a long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy. Access to knowledge is measured by: i) mean years of schooling for the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a lifetime by people aged 25 years and older; and ii) expected years of schooling for children of school-entrance age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life. Standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2005 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) rates. (n.pag.)
another index – the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) – that may have been more revealing about inequality².

Existing race relations in Barbados can be traced to a colonial history when Barbados was slave colony belonging to England; the remnants of this colonial history still strongly shape race relations there. Barbados’s population structure has also been largely shaped by British colonialism that brought together White English settlers and Black African slaves. Indigenous peoples called Arawaks and Caribs populated Barbados before colonialism but none remain today as they died from exposure to diseases brought by the Europeans. Barbados’ history is in many ways similar to that of many other colonies, but it is also very different for a number of reasons – namely the retention of a local White economic elite – which many have argued, continually shape race relations in the country. As I demonstrate in this chapter, when the issue of racism is raised in Barbados, it is often in reference to the economic relationship between this small economic elite and the large Black Barbadian population. Overall, however, racism is not a topic that is frequently discussed.

According to Barbados’ 2010 Population and Housing Census Volume 1³ the country has a relatively homogenous population comprised of 93% Black, 2.7%

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² According the UNDP “the 2010 HDR introduced the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), which takes into account inequality in all three dimensions of the HDI by ‘discounting’ each dimension’s average value according to its level of inequality. The HDI can be viewed as an index of 'potential' human development and the IHDI as an index of actual human development”. (n.pag.)
White, 1.3% East Indian, 3% mixed, and less than 1% each for Asian, Middle Eastern, Other and not stated. These figures are consistent with those in the previous 2000 population and housing census – 93% Black, 3.2% White, 2.6% mixed, 1% East-Indian, and 0.2% other (Barbados 2000 census, 30). According to their 2000 censuses, other CSME countries – Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis – that never participated to any great extent in indentured migration, have had a dominant category African/Black remain undisturbed slightly under or above 90%. The above brief population overview of the sizes of the racial groups in Barbados is useful to keep in mind as I discuss how discourses about race have become increasingly quiet while those of class have increased.

I have already established that the plantation economy model offers a straightforward and well-documented explanation for the connections between race and economic class that are to be found in Barbados and the wider Caribbean during the colonial era (see Chapter two). But what about after colonialism? Does the plantation economy model explain the connections that are found in the post-colonial Caribbean? Many writers make the point that the patterns of ownership of wealth have changed little in Barbados since the end of colonialism or even in the post independence period. Using 1980 population census statistics of 92 percent Black and 3.3 percent White in his article “The Politics of Race in Barbados”, Linden

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3 2010 Population and Housing Census Volume 1 is a report given in numbers only, not percentages. The percentages were calculated using the counted population of 226,193, not the estimated population, which is higher.
Lewis – research fellow with the Institute for Social and Economic Research in Barbados (Now Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies) – makes the comment, "the dominance of the white minority rests on their economic strength and their social and political influence way beyond what one might expect from so small a segment of the population" (38). Lewis is saying that although the White population is small, they are dominant economically, and their political influence helps them to maintain their wealth. He asks his readers to think of race in economic and not emotional terms because, “when the emotive layers of the discourse are peeled away it becomes obvious that the discourse on race in Barbados is simultaneously an economic discourse which raises the crucial questions about classes and the exercise of power in the country” (43).

Despite a history steeped in colonial racism, discourses of race have been largely absent from Barbados’ national agenda in the post-independence era. Yet, ownership of economic resources in Barbados continues to coincide strongly with race; the Black majority owns few economic resources and the White and Indian minorities own a lot. Studies of race and business practices in Barbados from the 1970s to as recent as 1990 suggest that the longstanding stability, which is perceived as being free of racial tension, actually belies an existing racism that is made invisible through economic business practices.

Barbados has a White-Barbadian economic enclave that has been historically dominant since colonialism but this correlation between race and economic domination is rarely mentioned in political, economic or everyday discourse. But
there are some who have taken issue with the retention of a strong race and economic class correlation, for example, historian Cecelia Karch perhaps best explains how the contemporary White corporate elite in Barbados emerged and then became entrenched in the economy. Her study, “The Growth of Corporate Economy in Barbados: Class/Race Factors 1890-1977”, portrays “the color/class configuration that existed in the following periods: 1890s-1937 – the period of corporate growth and the marriage of commercial and agricultural capital; and 1946-1977 – the period of corporate consolidation and the emergence of conglomerates with expansion into new sectors” (215). She argues that locally-residing White Barbadian capitalists were able to purchase sugar plantations during the sugar crises of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries and by 1917 and 1920 they were able to form the companies Plantations Limited and the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company (B.S. & T.) respectively. By 1934 these two competing companies had consolidated their directorship and started a process that would eventually lead to their merger as the B.S.&T. (217, see also Drayton 4).

As a result of purchasing plantations the White corporate elite had direct control over the livelihoods of the Black majority population up to the mid twentieth century, when, according to Cecelia Karch and Hilary Beckles, most Black Barbadians were employed in agriculture. Between 1946 and 1977 the government enacted economic development policies to diversify the economy beyond the monoculture of only sugar and into tourism and manufacturing. Karch notes that, even here too, the white corporate elite benefitted more then the Black population.
Tourism opened the economy to foreign investors, and the majority of the industry is comprised of large foreign companies owning hotels, but there are also local elites, for example the conglomerate B.S. & T., who own some. B.S.& T. and individual white families also own the many of the ancillary services such as construction companies that build the hotels, car rental services, travel agencies and tour companies (Karch 229). Karch concluded, "it is the white section of the population that has benefitted from diversification in much the same manner that the transformation to the corporate plantation economy favored them earlier in the century. Considering the continuing relative decline of Whites in the population, the lack of significant numbers of black businessmen in tourism reflects a continuing White bias in the control and ownership of the major capital resources of the island" (231).

In 1990, education professor Anthony Layne published a study "to examine whether there has been any marked change in the distribution of economic power between Whites and Blacks in Barbados since 1970" (46). In answer to his research question, if racial inequality in access to directorships in the private sector is still as great in 1990 as it was at 1960s-70s, he notes that he cannot say definitively because there have been no up-to-date studies on this, and also because the census data on managerial and director positions by race is no longer collected (54). He uses instead national development plans put forward by the government to determine whether the issue of "racial injustice in the distribution of economic power" (54) was ever placed on the country's development and economic agenda.
The closest, he argues, came in the 1983-88 development plan entitled “Change Plus Growth” because it acknowledged that development has a social dimension. Consequently it highlights aspects such as gainful employment, social welfare, cultural expression and social services (housing, education, training, health and transportation) (55-56), but it nevertheless falls short of addressing the economic injustices in society. Layne concludes his study by stating, “while there has been some upward mobility for individual Blacks, there has been no qualitative or structural change in the distribution of top positions such as those at the level of director” (59). In other words, Black Barbadians enjoyed upward mobility through access to jobs in the civil service, as teachers, nurses and other professions such as doctors and lawyers, but they have not made any significant strides in high-level business management or ownership.

Hilary Beckles, in Corporate Power in Barbados: The Mutual Affair, characterizes the dominance of economically successful white Barbadians as a function of “institutional racism”, which creates corporate bottlenecks favoring the numerically small White commercial elite over the vast majority of the Black population (17, 101-2). According to Beckles, the issue between these two groups isn’t competition for resources, but rather an institutional system that negates competition, and the exclusion of the majority population from accessing or having a claim to economic resources. Beckles’ main concern isn’t a race ideology, but is instead the institutional practices that limit economic democracy in Barbados. He uses the case study of the Barbados Mutual Life Assurance Society – the largest life
assurance society in the Eastern Caribbean – to argue that White corporate businesses in Barbados practice “anti-black racism” (21) by “kidnap[ping] the State and us[ing] it to discredit, alienate, and remove potential and actual critics of their dominance” (20), a point which other such as Cecelia Karch, Anthony Lane, Michael Howard, Christine Barrow and John Edward Green, Kathleen Drayton, and Linden Lewis agree with. The result is that the state-sanctioned corporate elite continually “place its ideology of ethnic solidarity and exclusiveness before the principle of democratic nationalism” (Beckles 24).

Beckles, Drayton, Karch and L. Lewis discuss how challenges to the race-class nexus by Barbados’ Black population gets rearticulated by the private sector and the state as being overtly racist, while business practices are labeled as just business. In other words, the ideology of racial solidarity in the economic domain circulates and silences the racism in society. Racism is made invisible through a process of economic business practice. Beckles argues that a solution to the problem in Barbados must begin with economic democracy in which “democratic consciousness [moves] into the market place . . . to ensure that the economic and social rules in the corporate world do not discriminate against the majority” (115-126). But this is not easy, as Kathleen Drayton says in “Racism in Barbados”. She sees some difficulty with such a solution because “the process of capital accumulation by the whites left a dispossessed black wage-earning class . . . [that uses education to achieve social mobility, but education] does not provide capital” (4). Drayton demonstrates the difficulty of Caribbean masses achieving economic
democracy through civic participation in education and the political process, primarily because neither case generates the capital needed to compete with local capitalists. Black-Barbadians live in a society in which they have very little economic control.

When Cecelia Karch looks at the impact of capitalism and imperialism on Barbados’s race and class structure, she finds that “black Barbadians have not been able to take advantage of the capitalist diversification programme embarked on by government since World War II” (233). Meaning, they were specifically excluded from doing so. Instead they occupy the same class position they traditionally held, which is laborers under White owners and entrepreneurs (225). Karch points out the extent to which issues of race and class are connected in Barbados, and more importantly, how, because of that connection, race often gets sidelined in favor of discussing class.

There is also a distinction between the economic resource ownership between Indian and Black populations. Peter Hanoomansingh, writing on Black working class and East Indian conflict in Barbados, argues that the “apparent rapid rise in [Indian-Barbadian] business has created some cause for friction” (274) from the Black population because of their [Black] inability to break into the top economic ladder (281; 319). In other words, the very small less than 1 percent of the population has been able to carve out a successful economic niche, while the Black population has been unable to do so.
Guyana

Guyana has a more mixed population demographic descended from African slaves, Indian indentured laborers and indigenous populations. The two largest groups, Blacks and Indians, have been engaged in political contest for control over the state and its resources since independence, and as a result Guyana has often been characterized as a country with racial ‘problems’. In this section I examine the state of race in Guyana. Although Guyana is the focus I draw on studies of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), because the scenario in T&T at or around independence typifies the situation in Guyana. I use the example of T&T to supplement the scholarship that has been written on Guyana, and also, to help to shed light on Guyana.

Population distribution by race in Guyana is diverse. The 2002 National Census Report Guyana revealed the population was distributed accordingly, 43% East Indian, 30% Black, 17% mixed, 9% Amerindian, and the remaining Portuguese, Chinese and Whites constitute less than 1% of the population (National Census Report Guyana, 2002, 25-6). Mid twentieth-century population distribution by race looks similar to the 2002 figures. Judaman Seecoomar reports that “in 1953 the racial distribution was 35% African, 4% Amerindian, 46, 2% European and Chinese, and 11% mixed race” (24), and Colin Palmer reports similar figures for 1964. Guyana’s diversity comes from having a large component of indentured East Indian labor and a large African slave labor during colonialism, as well as still having some of the pre-colonial population of Amerindian. Blacks and East Indians are the two largest groups and the relationships between them account for the racial conflicts in
Guyana. Despite the diversity of Guyana’s population, studies of race in the country have focused almost exclusively on relations between the two largest groups – Blacks and East Indians.

The history of problems between Blacks and Indians can be traced back to their coexistence as labor on the colonial plantations. After the end of slavery, in those countries with vast amounts of land, some of the ex-slaves moved away from the plantations. Indian and Chinese labor was imported into Guyana to work on the plantations alongside and also as a replacement for the ex-slaves. The colonial tactic of ‘divide and rule’ prevented a peaceful coexistence on the plantation between Indian and black labor. The tactic of ‘divide and rule’ used by colonizers promoted Guyana’s race problems during colonization, and even after formal colonialism ended, the seeds that were planted continued to generate conflicts between the racial groups. Judaman Seecoomar comments on the purpose of ‘divide and rule’ saying:

> British colonial policy supported the notion that competing races ensured the safety of the white minority and so in promoting that competition, the seeds of suspicion, resentment and fear were deliberately pursued as principles of good governance. The ‘divide and rule’ culture was buttressed by that other dictum which proclaimed that social order demanded that the ruling group enforce its control ruthlessly. 17
Colonial ‘divide and rule’ tactics deliberately kept black and East Indian workers in competition with each other, and as a result, kept them from forming close affiliations with each other that could potentially challenge the colonial rulers.

How Blacks and Indians ended up working on the plantations differs – Blacks were originally forced slave labor while the Indians were indentured contract laborers – and this affected how each group adapted to the plantation and beyond its boundaries. In other words, according to Malcolm Cross, in Guyana, “East Indians are the true inheritors of slavery but they were never its victims. For this reason they were able to succeed on the land, but this very success forced the Africans into the cities and thus into those areas where the future power was to lie” (East Indians 3). East Indians never experienced slave conditions, and importantly, never endured efforts to remove the cultural identity that they came to the plantation with. This one difference, according to many writers, has played a major role in how they have adapted to conditions on the plantation.

Promoting competition for the work available on the plantation is one example of a ‘divide and rule’ tactic. Rosemarijn Hoefte describes how this occurred in Suriname. She writes that the white planter class in Suriname “attempted to increase divisions among their subordinates by encouraging labor competition between free and contract laborers, emphasizing religious [and] housing differences . . . and employing psychological tactics [such as] preferential treatment, cooption, and racial stereotyping” (“Usual Barbarity”139). Divisions between the different laboring groups were advantageous for the planters because it allowed them to play
one against the other and force labor prices down. Malcolm Cross also comments that planters used stereotypes of each group in their tactics. For example, the stereotypes of the lazy African and hard working Indian labor. According to Cross, the White planters “were delighted at the adaptability of the Indian, and were only too eager to praise his thrift and hard work” (Cross 4) over the stereotypical laziness of the ex-slaves. Cross and Hoefte both describe a situation where cheaper Indian labor was used to undercut the African paid labor, which was at the time trying to gain access to land, higher wages and better working conditions. Plantation tactics to maximize their profit through stimulating competition between the two laboring groups had the side effect of creating an impetus for racial conflict.

Blacks and Indians in Guyana were divided in other ways as well. In her study of police violence in Guyana, Joan R. Mars comments that racial division was employed when deciding who could constitute the police force. She writes that in the twentieth century, when more Guyanese than non-Guyanese were recruited to the police force, “Blacks were given preference in the selection process, and the force was predominantly Black” (99). Mars quotes a 1965 study by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in Geneva Switzerland, which found the police force was 75 percent Black, 18 percent Indian and 5 percent mixed (101). Mars further notes, even though Indian-Guyanese were and are the numerical majority, this was not reflected in their numbers in the police force. She explains that this was a deliberate attempt to prevent Indians from having to police and quell disturbances among the
workers on the plantations, who were largely Indian (99). The fear of colonial officials was that Indians would be reluctant to police their own.

Competition between the two groups continued after the end of formal colonialism even after the deliberate ‘divide and rule’ tactic had ended. That is to say, although the Guyana was an independent country, its Black and Indian population continued to compete with each other over access to resources. The significance of this is that although formal colonialism ended, the processes of colonialism didn’t; they have continued under imperialism. According to Judaman Seecoomar, “by the time Guyanese independence came [in 1966], the doctrine of competing races had hardened into a politics based on the struggle between the parties supported by African and Indian Guyanese for the control of the State, its resources and its status distributions” (17). Blacks and Indians never overcame the distrust, rifts and fear of each other that developed during colonialism.

The racial conflict between Black and Indian Guyanese continued after independence, but it is also important to note that the conflict intensified in the move to independence itself. The problem arose because at independence, Caribbean countries like Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, with large Indian and even some indigenous Amerindian populations, did not define their nation states commensurate with the diversity of their populations. Black populations felt that they should lead because they had contributed and suffered the most, and Indian populations felt that they had also contributed enough to lead. The Black populations rejected the claim made by the Indian-population that they should lead
because Indians had helped to build Guyana during indenture. Indigenous peoples and other population groups were largely ignored.

According to Kean Gibson in *The Cycle of Racial Oppression in Guyana*, the arguments Blacks and Indians made to support their fitness to lead Guyana into independence is as follows:

The Africans saw themselves as most deserving to assume the reins of power when the European elites relinquished control since they made the most fundamental contribution to the development of Guyana. It was their labor as slaves that moved 100 million tons of clay to reclaim the coastal strip and to establish the plantation economy. The East Indians placed themselves on top of the hierarchy since it was the emancipated Africans’ refusal to work regularly and their unreasonable wage demands that brought the colony to near ruin. It was the labor of East Indian immigrants that brought the plantation system back from ruin and lead to the expansion of the system and the economy. (17-18)

Both groups legitimize their claim in the extent of their contribution to the plantation economy. In other words, the economy of Guyana exists because of their labor and they wanted to be recognized accordingly.

During the process of gaining political independence in Guyana there has been racial conflict over material and non-material resources. Specifically, these conflicts are about the establishment of independent country in two main ways. The
first is having a state that culturally and symbolically includes and represents all racial and ethnic population groups in the national imagining. Discussing the lead up to the 1962 Trinidad and Tobago independence Selwyn Ryan argues, “the pivotal issue on the [independence] agenda was which of the descendants of the plantation experience would take Trinidad and Tobago into independence” (Pathways 21). In other words, would it be Indian or African descendants who managed independent Trinidad and Tobago. Control of the state at independence appears to be a zero-sum experience instead of a relationship of shared stakeholders. Racially mixed middle classes (primarily European and African) who were tasked to lead the independence movements never included groups who weren’t Black or White. The national image is of the Black and mixed White and Black populations since they typify British customs and cultures. The Indians, Asians and indigenous populations largely maladapted to the British culture, were not immediately factored into the national imaginings. That came much later in both countries.

The Indian populations were excluded despite the rhetoric of national mottos that speak of national cohesion. Guyana’s motto or “One People, One Nation, One Destiny”, and Trinidad and Tobago’s “Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve”, portray a language of inclusion and cohesion, but other practices undermine and contradict these mottos. For example, Joshua Jelly-Schapiro contrasts the independence rhetoric “that acknowledged the cultural contributions of all peoples of the Trinidadian mélange” (25) with the reality that “for nearly three decades almost all components of the nation-building project were dominated by Afro-
Trinbagonians” (25; see also H.P. Singh 4-5; Maharaj 9-10; Dew “Trouble” 2; Jackson 93; Alleyne 194; Premdas 92-109).

The following two examples demonstrate the complexity of having both Indian and black culture represented in Trinidad and Tobago’s national imagining. Although the below examples are about Trinidad and Tobago, they highlight an overwhelming acceptance of English culture in the form of Christianity over Indian culture in the form of Hinduism. They also demonstrate that aspects of black culture have been given ascendancy over Indian culture. In the first example, Christian and not Hindu religious symbols have been used on state owned buildings and this became a point of contention. For example, a Hindu Jhandi flag was erected at the government-operated petroleum company, Pertotrin. There were calls for the flag to be removed but there were no such requests made for the removal of Christian symbols erected at other national buildings; the Christian symbols went uncontested (Maharaj 2-5). Between 1969 and 2006, Trinidad and Tobago’s highest national award was the trinity cross, a symbol of Christian association which attracted the ire of non-Christians who have continually asked for its renaming to a non-denominational term to no avail (Maharaj 35-37; Ryan Pathways 469-73). The trinity cross still exists, but the order of the republic of Trinidad and Tobago, with non-religious connotations, is now the highest national award.

Another differentiations drawn between black and Indian labor is how ‘Caribbean’, meaning English, each group was. It was felt that the group that was most closely English was more suited to lead the country after independence. Shona
Jackson explains that East Indian indenture contracts allowed them to return to India and thus "India remained a home in [their] imagination" (93), but no similar possibility existed for ex-slaves. In addition, as previously discussed in Chapter two, consider also that the Black slave population, unlike the indentured Indian population, endured a seasoning process that stripped away their African cultural and identity markers. The sole purpose of this process was to make the slaves more submissive to and controllable by the colonizer. Slaves and their descendants adjusted to seasoning by adopting English ideals. East Indians endured very little of this process, and as a result were able to retain many of their cultural practices from their homeland. As a result, the Black population felt that they should take over leadership, and not the Indians. Amerindians were excluded because they always existed on the fringe of society living in the hinterland and jungles, and they were never colonial subjects in the way that Blacks were.

Directly related to the above is that idea that indentured labor was not as authentically Caribbean as the Black labor. Authenticity, defined as the length of time in, and the strength of connections to the Caribbean, has been used to determine who should lead the newly forming independent countries. The longer and closer to the colonial struggle a population was, the more authentic their history and claim to being 'true' Caribbean people. This means that the history of African-descended populations is recognized more than the histories of the East Indian-descended populations who were never enslaved (Misir, Introduction xxii). This aspect of authenticity continually causes racial tension between these groups.
because the vast majority of the East Indians who arrived as indentured labor remained in the Caribbean.

Ralph Premdas and Percy Hintzen (10-18) both explain authenticity in relation to how creolized the different groups are, meaning, how much they have adopted English ideals and used them to replace those from their ancestral homes. The point they make is that the more Black and East Indian populations have adopted English ideal, values and culture, the more they are considered acculturated and assimilated to the Caribbean. According to Premdas, “the ascendancy of Africans to positions of dominance in the Guyanese governmental bureaucracy was substantially due to their adoption of British cultural patterns” (Ethnic Conflict 12). Black Guyanese and Black Trinidadian political, economic and social power in this regard is attached to their acquisition of European values and cultural patterns, and their ability to use old colonial divide and rule tactics (Premdas “Trinidad” 32-34; Ethnic Conflict 5).

Disagreements over whose culture is more authentic and recognized have continued well past independence. According to Selwyn Ryan, East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago “claim their culture is always treated as inauthentic, invalid and illegitimate Caribbean culture, while black Caribbean culture is the opposite” (Pathways xxvi), despite the independence constitution granting equal citizenship to all colonial residents. In Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, competition between Black and East Indians has occurred in the non-material realm over cultural recognition of the Indian heritage. Writing on the processes of nation building in
independent Guyana, Anton Allahar argues that the independence struggles and their aftermaths bring no end to the contests for recognition and cultural identification, but instead, independence presents a “so-called harmony of ethno-racial interests [which] may well mask serious class divisions within the ethno-racial group”, especially those have developed after independence (Allahar, “Ethnic Nationalism” 22; see also Ryan, “Pathways” 127; La Guerre, Preface xvii-xviii).

We have already discussed the politics of race in colonial Guyana and also, in Guyana through the independence movement in 1966. Beyond this period, racial politics have continued to plague the country, this time in the political arena with electoral politics. The second way in which Indians and Blacks contest material and non-material resources in Guyana is through economic and political control of the state and its resources. Electoral politics in Guyana tells a story of racial disunity and disharmony. Writing on Guyana, Ralph Premdas notes, “it was with the coming of universal adult suffrage and modern party politics that ethnic differences were exploited for communalistic and personal political ends” (“Race and Ethnic Relations” 40-41). National elections are the terrain upon which contests for control of the state its bureaucracy and its power gets played out as different racial groups exert their claims of national belonging and strengthen their ethnic group identity as a part of the nation.

The problem with electoral politics in Guyana is that people vote according to race, and by extension, political parties are organized along racial lines. This means that there are political parties whose support base does not cross racial lines.
Guyana’s three leading political parties since the 1950s and 60s are the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) and the People’s National Congress (PNC), and the United Force (UF). According to Joan Mars, the PPP’s leadership and base is East Indian, the PNC’s is Black, and the UF’s (when it existed) was Portuguese and mixed (104). Although we are primarily concerned with the former two, it is useful to understand the long-established pattern of race-based electoral politics, and also to understand that it has not only Blacks and Indians to engage in such. Nevertheless, since our concern is with Blacks and Indians, the two largest population groups, we will focus only on the politics of race in the PPP and the PNC.

The scenario in Guyana is one in which electoral politics maintains the rift between Blacks and Indians that existed since colonialism. According to Ralph Premdas in “Race and Ethnic Relations in Burnhamite Guyana”, the electoral contest in such a system is “not only over jobs and government allocations, but more significantly over ethnic domination” (51). Instead of uniting the various racial groups, electoral politics in the post-independence period divided them. Kean Gibson has also commented on the racism that exists in Guyana and she explains it as a cycle of oppression in which the winners and losers have shifted over time. She says, “there has been European oppression, African oppression and currently East Indian oppression. It has been a cycle of oppression motivated by the desire to obtain and retain power, avariciousness and the emotion of fear – fear of losing life, power and wealth” (4). The desire of each racial group to retain power, to be the dominant racial group, has been a feature of Guyanese society. As Gibson writes, this
feature began with colonialism but it has continued into post-independence period largely through the electoral politics.

Since Guyana’s independence, power has shifted between the Black led and supported PNC and the Indian led and supported PPP, but the shifts in power have not been numerous or frequent. In other words, one party has maintained power for decades at a time. According to Judaman Seecoomar, “the first phase of independence, dominated by one political party and one ethnic group, (The People’s National Congress (PNC) and its mainly African support base) ended in 1992 (17). This means that the PNC was in political control of Guyana for twenty-eight years from independence in 1966 until elections in 1992. The PPP, with its Indian leadership and base, then, led the government for twenty-three years from 1992 until elections in 2015.

But decades long control of the government is only one part of the problem, the other part is the control and allocation of state resources, which typically follows racial lines. A result of race-based voting is that whenever either of the two major political parties wins an election, only members of its support base enjoys any political patronage. ‘Client patronage’, the practice of dispensing benefits for electoral political support, exists in many Caribbean countries and Carl Stone and Edward Dew have written about the experiences in Jamaica and Suriname respectively. According to Carl Stone in Democracy and Clientelism in Jamaica the nationalist struggles in many Caribbean countries led to the formation of ethnically based political parties that dispatched client patronage based on party loyalty.
Edward Dew writes that in Suriname, the dominant political parties direct “their election appeal and clientage services exclusively to members of their ethnic constituencies” (“Trouble” 2).

In Guyana, client patronage results in a furtherance of the already existing racial tension because political parties are organized along racial lines. What happens is a kind of national politics in which the winners tend to be of one racial identity and they control all the resources to the exclusion of all others. Kean Gibson writes about numerous examples of the attempts to remove Blacks from government positions and to replace them with Indians following 1992, 1997 and 2001 PPP election victories. In other words, according to Gibson, after gaining political power, the Indian-based PPP tried to increase the number of Indian workers in the civil service by removing and replacing Black workers. Gibson writes:

President Jagdeo, as Junior Minister of Finance, stated at a PPP meeting at Freedom House (the PPP headquarters) in 1994, that the Public Service was dominated by Black people and he encouraged the mainly East Indian audience to take up positions in the Public service. He mentioned at the time that Public Service salaries were very low, but that the government would not raise salaries until it was satisfied that East Indians were dominant in the Public Service. The changes in the racial composition of the Public Service is being done by firing African workers without cause or squeezing them out and replacing
them by East Indians who are very often not as qualified as the people
who have been dismissed. (45)

Although the skewed distribution of power is a cause for concern, we have to
balance that concern with the fact that for twenty-eight years prior, the Black-based
PNC controlled government and during its tenure, Blacks were disproportionally
represented in the public service. What I’m saying then, is that both Blacks and
Indians have practiced client patronage to the exclusion and detriment of the other
racial group, and both groups have sought to dominate the other through the
political process.

**Conclusion**

As we see in this chapter, in both Barbados and Guyana issues of race are not
just historical colonial concerns. In both countries, politics of race exist that and get
played out, but in different ways. Racial issues in Guyana are stark, obvious and a
constant topic of conversation in the local, regional and even international arenas.
Because they are directly connected to electoral politics, they remain constantly
visible and get stirred up and heightened every 4-5 years. As Kean Gibson writes,
racial politics in Guyana appears to be cyclical and because we are talking about
only two major groups, Indians and Blacks, there are back and forth attempts by
each group to have and maintain power by oppressing and controlling the other.

In contrast, racial politics are more subtle in Barbados. Market forces render
the economic inequalities between Blacks, Indians and Whites largely invisible and
also silent, as race is not usually a topic of conversation. Social indicators such as
differentiation in access to and quality of education, housing, and jobs do not reveal
the economic inequality because the gap is between a very small and very rich
White elite, an even smaller Indian elite and the rest of the population – mostly
Black, but with some White and Indian as well.

It is these two groups of people, Barbadians and Guyanese, as well as their
situated contexts – how they have come to understand their place in society – that
are coming together as a result of the increasing Guyanese immigration into
Barbados. And as we see in Chapters five and six, the debates about this immigration
frequently refer back to what has been described here. However, before we examine
the ways in which Barbadians are responding to Guyanese immigration, we turn in
the next chapter to immigration, specifically, what it is, what it means in relation to
Guyanese immigration into Barbados and why it is happening.
CHAPTER FOUR
WHY REGIONAL INTEGRATION?

Introduction

I have mentioned CARICOM and the CSME numerous times throughout this dissertation and I have also made the claim that they provide necessary context from which to make sense of, and also to critique, the problematizing Guyanese immigration into Barbados. In this chapter I lay out in detail the reasons why I make such claims. I do three things in this chapter. One, I explain exactly what the CSME is, paying specific attention to the components that are relevant to the free movement of people. Within the lengthy treaty that sets out what the CSME is, I focus only on the provisions that relate directly to the migration of people between member countries. This is deliberately narrow in scope with regard to all that the CSME is, but at the same time it allows me to put aside the components of the CSME that are not relevant to the dissertation. Two, some history of regional integration in the Caribbean is necessary in order to understand the CSME, and I discuss this before I write specifically about the CSME. These precursors to the CSME are different types of regional integration and put together, they all demonstrate a decades long effort to form a sort of community between and within the Caribbean countries.
Three, I explain why the Caribbean has had, and continues to have, these various types of regional integration. At the most basic level there is an economic reasoning of economic dependence behind regional integration, regional integration is perceived as a strategy for economic development. Every country wants to achieve this goal, but the reality is that most, including former colonies, struggle to do so. Country classifications such as first world and third world, developed and developing countries, most developed, developing and least developing are some of the most familiar groupings used since the mid twentieth century, and while the terms may have changed, the countries that constitute each group has changed little. Economic power largely determines where a country stands in this hierarchy, and all of the CARICOM member countries, with little economic power, stand very low. Part of the reason for this limited economic power is the economic legacy of the plantation economy.

The Evolution of Regional Integration

Before CARICOM: The Federation and CARIFTA

I am primarily concerned with the CSME, specifically, the provision that allows for the movement of people, but I cannot talk about the CSME without also talking about the history of regional integration that came before. The CSME is the most recent effort at regional integration but the first took place decades earlier. This first effort to form regional integration in the English-speaking Caribbean was the Federation. The Federation came into being in 1958, during a time of widespread anti-colonial struggles by the colonized, and at a time when
decolonization was on the agenda for many colonies. Colonies around the world were moving towards political independence in the mid-20th century when the Federation existed. The Federation was initiated by the British government as part of an initiative to move the colonies towards a modified self-government that would enhance their chances to survive on their own when they were granted full independence. Britain, economically weakened after World War II, was granting independence to many of its colonies, and at the same time removing much of the administrative responsibility it had towards them.

The Federation, which was established by the British Caribbean Federation Act of 1956, was to achieve a political union in the form of a federal government among its members – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. Members were all British self-governing colonies with an elected Premier ruling from each territory instead of an appointed British Governor. Even though the Queen of England is effectively the head of state⁴, each territory managed itself. According to Caricom.org, the Federation was comprised of an Executive Governor-General appointed by Britain at the head, a Prime Minister elected from among and by the members of the House of Representatives, an 11-member cabinet with the Prime Minister and 10 elected Members chosen by him, a

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⁴ Independent countries of the Anglophone Caribbean who are members of the British commonwealth still have the Queen as the head of state. A Governor-General, who is appointed by the Prime Minister, acts as her local representative. Political power resides in the Prime Minister and Parliament and the Governor General is a merely a ceremonial figure.
forty-five member House of Representatives elected from within the colonial territories, and a 19 member Senate nominated by the Executive Governor General. In this configuration, political power was to be shared between the federation and the national government and it is this sharing of power that, in part, led to its demise.

During its brief time the Federation was unable to achieve its goal of a political union (Caricom.org). It faced problems, especially the reluctance of the member territories to concede their national power to a Federal government, and a widespread disagreement on how federal taxes should be levied in the territories. The structure of the Federation meant that some power held by national leaders would be removed and placed it in the hands of the federal government. The insularity of each member state, and the fragmentation of countries that had lingered from colonial times, resulted in the unwillingness of national governments to reduce their power while increasing that of the federal government. The ultimate demise of the Federation came in 1961 as Jamaica withdrew after a national referendum showed majority support for moving away from the Federation and moving towards independence from Britain. With the exit of Jamaica the Federation crumbled and by 1962 it had ended. That same year Jamaica gained political independence. Trinidad and Tobago also gained independence in 1962, followed by many of the other Federation members during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The second attempt at integration was the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA), which was established in 1965 with Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados,
Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines became members in 1968 and Belize (then British Honduras) in 1971. CARIFTA was an economic union intended to encourage balanced development of the region, and its main focus was economic improvement through increasing, diversifying and liberalizing trade in goods among its members (Caricom.org). CARIFTA was short lived because by 1973 it was no more and there was the third attempt at regional integration. The ideas of CARIFTA did not end but instead continued with the development of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 1973.

**Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**

According to Caricom.org, On 4 July 1973, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago signed the Treaty of Chaguaramas that established CARICOM. By July 1974, they were joined by all other CARIFTA members and by The Bahamas in 1983. In 1995 and 2002 Suriname and Haiti became full members respectively, while five other countries have associate membership. Article 4 of the *Treaty of Chaguaramus* outlines the objectives of CARICOM as:

(a) the economic integration of the Member States by the establishment of a common market regime (hereinafter referred to as "the Common Market");
(i) the strengthening, coordination and regulation of the economic and trade relations among Member States in order to promote their accelerated harmonious and balanced development;

(ii) the sustained expansion and continuing integration of economic activities, the benefits of which shall be equitably shared taking into account the need to provide special opportunities for the Less Developed Countries;

(iii) the achievement of a greater measure of economic independence and effectiveness of its member states in dealing with states; groups of states and entities of whatever description;

(b) the coordination of the foreign policies of Member States; and

(c) functional cooperation, including -

(i) the efficient operation of certain common services and activities for the benefit of its peoples;

(ii) the promotion of greater understanding among its peoples and the advancement of their social, cultural and technological development.

CARICOM, then, has three pillars; the common market, coordinated foreign policy, and functional cooperation. One of the goals of CARICOM was to form is a self-reliant group of countries. This approach tries to mitigate some of the colonial history experienced in the Caribbean, and also some of its geographical realities of smallness by pooling its collective economic strength. CARICOM countries are located close to each other within the Caribbean basin and they are all small in
physical and population size when compared with other countries. They also share a common colonial history and language and a relationship of dependent development with their former colonizer.

The formation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was the third attempt at regional integration, but it was the second to make economics its primary concern. In *West Indian Nationhood and Caribbean Integration* economist and Caribbean regionalist William Demas argues that Caribbean countries need economic regional integration for three major reasons: “to create a wider [and more] adequately protected market” that could facilitate industrialization, to provide a framework to pool and coordinate natural resources and developmental plans, and to become more powerful in an international arena through sheer size, which is to be achieved by pooling their bargaining strength together under coordinated foreign policies (Demas 5-6). Demas considered this latter issue of power to be of extreme importance because power itself is vital to global politics, and also because of the plantation history of the Caribbean, which has left individual Caribbean countries more powerless than powerful in the global economy (*West Indian Nationhood* 6).

The power that really mattered to Demas was connected to what he termed “effective sovereignty” (*West Indian Nationhood* 6), which he defines as “the ability to change the state of dependence” (*West Indian Nationhood* 8) in which Caribbean counties have continually existed into one of true independence. In a very real sense what I discuss about economic dependence in the latter parts of this chapter are the
circumstances that have lead to the formation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). To become more competitive and economically successful in the global arena, to overcome the problems of small size by banding together and as Demas reminds us, to move away from economic dependence are the reasons why CARICOM exists.

When the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) came into being in 1973 these very small countries were now facing a world economy characterized by international trading blocs, multinational corporations (MNCs), and by regional integration emerging in Europe. By 1957 Europe already had the European Economic Community (EEC), which became one of the cornerstones of the EU when it formed later. The EU became a model for Caribbean countries to follow.

CARICOM expanded its mandate and proposed a revision to its treaty in 1989 to include the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and by 2001 the various member countries has signed the revised treaty and established the legal framework for documented immigration throughout the CSME. With the revised 2001 treaty, CARICOM now stands for Caribbean Community and Common Market.

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)

Articles 45 and 46 of the revised Treaty of Chaguramus sets out the provision to establish the CSME, which proposes to combine the economic spaces of its member countries to form one single market and one economy. This means that the
Caribbean region is moving towards becoming a single space that allows free movement of goods, services, capital and persons within its domain.

Articles 45 of the revised Treaty of Chaguramus states the expected commitment from member states for the free movement of people saying, “Member states commit themselves to the goal of free movement of their nationals within the Community” (n.pag.). Article 46 of the same treaty on the other hand goes on to explain in detail the provisions for the free movement of people. Part one lists five categories of people who have been selected as a first step towards achieving full movement, namely, “university graduates, media workers, sports persons, artistes and musicians”, who are duly recognized by the receiving country as being legitimate members of any of the above categories. Persons who fit into any one of these five categories are to be the first to benefit from the freedom of movement provision of the CSME. Part 4 of Article 46 also states that these initial five categories will be expanded over time.

Article 46 further explains:

2. Member states shall establish appropriate legislative, administrative and procedural arrangements to:

(a) facilitate the movement of skills within the contemplation of this article;

(b) provide for movement of Community nationals into and within their jurisdictions without harassment, or the imposition of impediments, including:
(i) the elimination of the need for passports for Community nationals traveling to their jurisdictions;

(ii) the elimination of the need for work permits for Community nationals seeking approved employment in their jurisdictions;

(iii) establishment of mechanisms for certifying and establishing equivalency of degrees and for accrediting institutions;

(iv) harmonizing the transferability of social security benefits.

3. Nothing in the Treaty shall be construed as inhibiting Member States from according community nationals unrestricted access to, and movement within, their jurisdictions subject to such conditions as the public interest may require.

The intent of the CSME as laid out in articles 45 and 46 is to have a scenario in which people from any member country can move unencumbered to another. To be clear, the member countries remain separate countries, but like the Schengen zone in the E.U. members countries are seeking to abolish passport and other border control measures for persons moving for work. Most of the CSME member countries are islands, – Guyana, Suriname, Haiti and Belize being the exception – consequently, movement between most countries involves travelling by plane. The five initial worker categories mentioned about is limited, but the intent is to expand towards full movement of people between members.

It is against this background of the CSME, especially what it intends to do and when it came into being, that the issue of labelling Guyanese migrants who come to Barbados as unwanted and as problems takes on a significant meaning. The
coincidence of the timeline, of implementing articles 45 and 46 of the CSME and Guyanese migrants in Barbados being perceived as problems cannot be ignored. Both scenarios were occurring simultaneously, and in fact, some countries had already begun allowing persons from the five approved skills categories to move freely. While this was happening, other migrants from CSME countries who did not meet the skills criteria were being rejected as undesirable.

What is noticeably absent from the Federation, CARIFTA and the first treaty establishing CARICOM is the planning to integrate the people of the Caribbean, to plan for both the movement of goods and services, and also for the movement of people across the Caribbean. Some Caribbean leaders have commented on this absence asking for it to be rectified. For example, in a lecture given to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of CARICOM in 2003, Prime Minister (P.M.) of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ralph Gonsalves states, “one of the central problems of regional integration efforts in the Caribbean has been their tendency to integrate states systems, not people or the civilization” (Gonsalves 34).

P.M. Ralph Gonsalves goes to say that that while Caribbean countries have been planning their economic integration along the lines of trade liberalization, various states have also been simultaneously erecting barriers to make entry by their Caribbean neighbors more difficult. He notes that Caribbean citizens are largely looked upon with suspicion and as strangers at regional ports of entry while “Americans and Canadians are welcomed with open arms” (35). If American, Canadian or European visitors receive a warm welcome why would Caribbean
visitors not get the same? This attitude of suspicion does not augur well for the CSME, which includes the free movement of people between member states as part of its mandate.

The plans to integrate the people of the CARICOM member states began with the CSME. As a single market and economy there is free movement of people as well as goods within the CSME. But there is a caveat because only specified categories of persons qualify for this free movement. So, although the CSME is fundamentally different from the previous version of CARICOM in this regard, in its current form, it only allows free movement of skilled persons and often, persons who fit within these permissible categories are of the middle not working classes. As a development strategy, the CSME has, at this time, a built in class marginalization.

With the exception of the class differentiation in skills, the language that the CSME and all the other integration policies have used to talk about the Caribbean peoples is one of universality. There is no acknowledgement of marginalization in the populations based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, or any other social differentiations that exist in each member country. Instead, there is an assumption that all groups have the same chances of benefitting from integration, and also, that people from different CSME countries coming together would be unproblematic. Even before the implementation of the CSME some Caribbean academics have been critical of the fact that integration and its potential benefits appear to be universally applied to the Caribbean people, and that, “the people” themselves appear as one homogenous group. Writing on the role of ideology in Caribbean integration
sociologist Ian Boxill, in *Ideology and Caribbean Integration*, argues, “there is little consideration of the role of class and other sectional interests and how these groups relate to the integration movement . . . concerns with values, attitudes and ideology remain peripheral to the discussions” (21).

As previously discussed, Caribbean states share a common economic and colonial history of dependency which integration is intended to overcome, but this same colonial history has also differentiated these populations. One of the rationales used to validate CARICOM is the shared colonial culture and identity, which is supposed to make regional integration a more feasible strategy (Arthur 7; Gonsalves 17; Hettne 229; Farrell 8-9; Demas, “Consolidation” 75; Payne and Sutton 175-176). Yet, no attention is paid to how extremely nuance these so-called common identities are; how they differ between countries and between similar groups in different countries.

In many respects Caribbean people who will take advantage of the CSME are being imagined as a homogenous community despite the colonial history that has divided them. Now that the integration of these people is a possibility, one question to ask is: Have the CSME member states overcome the historic racial differentiation enough for it not to matter in the twenty-first CSME immigration? This is the question that I examine in the next two chapters. As I look at immigration between CSME member countries in action, I am guided by the question, to what extent is the social embeddedness of colonial racial understanding still present?
The CSME is economic in nature as evidenced by the CSME’s main purpose, which is to “benefit the people of the [r]egion by providing more and better opportunities to produce and sell our goods and services and to attract investment. It will create one large market among the participating member states” (Caricom Secretariat). According to economist Norman Girvan, the CSME’s “single vision is for sustainable development . . . encompass[ing] economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions” (Girvan, “Single Development” 2). Economically, the CSME aims to facilitating greater economic competition in international markets and increasing intra-regional trade by overcoming the problems of small size and market scale that each Caribbean country has on its own (Arthur 13; Tewarie 5; Demas, “Consolidating” 53-54, 58-59; Brewster and Thomas 112-115; Mlachila et. al 311-318; Bernal 101-118). The hope is that the CSME will afford Caribbean countries a solution to the structural dependency they have historically faced in the international economy (Brewster and Thomas 119-122).

The CSME was developed with the assumption that its member countries can benefit economically from globalization (Tewaire 45; Wickham 12-14; Gonsalves 28; Jessen and Rodríguez Céspedes 44-54), and it is also a response to the deteriorating economic conditions Caribbean countries face in the global arena (Gonsalves 28), especially the loss of the Lome’ preferential agreement. In discussing the impact of globalization on Caribbean regional integration, regional political pollster Peter Wickham states, “given the effects of globalization have been greatest in trade, the ideological bias and structural adjustment, . . . policies towards
regionalism are therefore motivated by and framed around reactions to global trends instead of evolving based on local demands” (12-14). In other words, what is happening at the global levels have been dictating the advancements in regional integration more than the demands of Caribbean people.

**A Narrative of Regional Integration and Economic Dependence**

The discussion below on the connections between regional integration and economic dependence serve two purposes. One, it shows why Caribbean countries have needed regional integration. One of the legacies of the colonial plantation economy is economy stagnation, something that Caribbean countries are still dealing with. Two, it highlight some of the real reasons behind the immigration into Barbados. It has been the economic dependence legacy inherited from colonialism that helps explain why migrants are moving, and also, why the CSME has a free movement of labor component. Migration for economic reasons is prominent globally as economically dispossessed people move in search of better labor opportunities, and the situation in the Caribbean is no different. Of course the story about why Guyanese migrants are moving to Barbados is much more nuanced than simply saying there is a history of Caribbean dependence on external economic forces. Management of Caribbean economies, and specifically, Guyana’s economy, also plays an important role.

Like the social effects on race relations, the plantation economy has also had lasting economic effects on Caribbean countries and it is these effects that regional
economic integration has sought to address. It is important to understand the role that the plantation economy has played in shaping Caribbean economies because these countries have been plantation economies longer than they have been anything else. Additionally, some economists have argued that Caribbean economies are, in fact, still plantation economies in the way they are structured even though colonialism has ended, in effect, making a claim for some continuity between colonialism, post-colonialism and globalization as stages of development. Economic development, and also breaking the chain of dependency that has held Caribbean countries since they were colonies, is a recurring long-term goal of all the forms of regional integration that the countries in the Caribbean have undertaken. The forms of integration vary, as do their objectives and the methods taken to achieve them, but economic development has remained a constant goal.

Some economists writing about Caribbean plantation economics maintain that after slavery had ended the economic relationship between the former colonies and their former colonizers changed little; they maintain that a structural economic dependence remains from plantation slavery. In other words, they have argued that the economic exploitation of former colonies has continued and this is largely attributed to the position that these countries have in the global economy. For example, Lloyd Best (see also Kari Levitt and Lloyd Best) identifies five institutional frameworks that connect Caribbean and metropole/European colonizer economies (283-284), and result in a dependent relationship for Caribbean economies. According to Best’s frameworks, Caribbean plantation economies produce raw
materials to be traded with England only using English currency and transported to England only in English-owned vessels, demonstrating the total influence England has over its colonial interests. In all cases, these frameworks maximize the development potential for the European colonizer while they simultaneously keep the developing economy in a state of underdevelopment (Beckford 210-11).

As I discuss below, some of these frameworks, for example raw material production and trade with mainly the former colonizer, have continued after political independence period. George Beckford explains how the structural relationship has been able to continue. He writes that each individual plantation and its inhabitants exist in isolation from the others (53) but trades with England directly, resulting in structural dependence (183) on England that limits development in any Caribbean colony, or later independent country. Beckford argues that “the traditions, values, beliefs, and attitudes which have become established . . . are for the most part inimical to development” (206) because the descendants of the former colonized are trapped in economic and psychological dependent relationships.

Lloyd Best also argues that the “plantation economy” can be divided into three distinct phases: the pure plantation economy 1600-1838 – the period of slavery, plantation economy modified 1838–1950s, and plantation economy further modified 1950s – the present. Best’s phases cover the periods of slavery, its abolition, political independence and beyond all of which have taken place over 400 years, but it is the plantation economy that has remained constant. This is not to say
that nothing has changed about the plantation economy, but rather, that it is a key structural feature of Caribbean economies. According to Kari Levitt, following Best’s periodization, we can think about the connections between the plantation economy and globalization. In Reclaiming Development Kari Levitt argues that the plantation economy model establishes a structural and ideological continuity between the various stages of capitalism beginning with colonialism (1-34). She states, “Best’s institutional framework reveals continuities which are perhaps more recognizable since globalization has entered out vocabulary” (8) and that “many features of . . . [Lloyd] Best’s five rules of the game persist in the contemporary world of globalization” (45).

The above arguments made by Levitt and Best fit within a larger debate on economic development. Is globalization a continuation of northern modernity in a new guise? Or, does it signal the end of imperialism and its associated inequalities and marginalizations? People like Levitt and Best, who make the former claim, argue that globalization cannot be divorced from its larger project of modernity in colonialism, imperialism, and post-colonialism (see also Giddens; Ballibar and Wallerstein; Quijano; Mattelart, Shohat; Hoogvelt; During). They emphasize the continuity between the myriad stages of development in modernity, while maintaining diversity in the epiphenomenal experiences in each stage.

Those who argue for continuity say that while globalization claims to be a new lens through which to understand society since the late twentieth century, the similarities between the material and political economic realities of the past with
those of the present cannot be ignored. For example, Walter Mignolo connects modernity to colonialism saying, “there is no modernity without coloniality” (42). Advocates of the globalization as a continuation of northern imperialism argue that colonialism and post-colonialism are structural processes of northern modernity and that they must be understood within a political economy framework of capitalism. The above-mentioned theorists agree that globalization is a part of capitalism that began much earlier than the twentieth century. They argue that globalization is not new; it is instead a re-articulation and strengthening of capitalism as a systemic force that depends on inequality.

The continuation of the plantation economy, then, means the persistence of colonizing practices, not the persistence of the stage of development called colonialism. Having said that, the problem of economic stagnation in plantation economies was, and still is, in part caused by the type of production they undertook – monoculture – the production of one type of crop only, the result of which is little to no economic diversity. During colonization the plantation economies were geared towards the production of one major crop, first cotton and then sugar cane, and bananas in some cases, and according to Lloyd Best and Kari Levitt, this production led to a relationship of dependent development between the colonies and their colonizer.

Colonial plantations produced only the raw materials, that is, unprocessed cotton and sugar. In the case of sugar, for example, colonies exported to Europe coarse brown sugar with high molasses content and this sugar was in turn
processed into refined white sugar and various confectionaries, which was then imported into the colonies for sale. In this exchange the refined white sugar made a complete circle as it journeyed from the colonies to Britain and back to the colonies. Through this journey, the value added to the raw materials as they were refined and made into various textiles and confectionaries accumulated in Britain not in the colonies. Colonies produced wealth, but rarely did that wealth remain in their territories. People working on the colonies remained largely impoverished despite the wealth that their labor generated. The important distinction is that the processing of these raw materials into finished products – where added value occurs – happened in Europe, not in the colonies. Producing raw material is cheap, but when those materials are turned into other goods – as in the case of coffee beans to coffee, cotton to textiles, sugar to confectionaries etc. – they cost much more.

For example, a piece of clothing made from cotton costs more than the unprocessed cotton and a cup of coffee is exponentially more expensive than the cost of the beans to make it. Colonial countries were used to produce raw materials and not to process them and as a result they never developed much knowledge and skills beyond raw material production. It is this agricultural monoculture, and more importantly the stagnating effect it had on the Caribbean economies, that Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) and the later (Caribbean Community) CARICOM, especially, trade diversification, sought to redress. I have been discussing in this section the legacies of the plantation economy and so far I have focused on the
colonial period, but in the next two sections I look at how the economic stagnation of Caribbean economies has also continued after political independence.

**Continued Economic Dependence through Preferential Trading Agreements**

Political independence brought the end of England’s formal ownership and control of colonial economies, but not to the economic connections between the two groups. To facilitate economic and social development after independence, Caribbean countries relied heavily on trade concessions granted to them under preferential agreements with the European Community (EC), many of whom were former colonizers. The Lome’ Convention (1975-2000), which is a trade and aid agreement between the (EC) and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, is one such agreement. In other words, Lome’ granted ACP countries preferential access to the European markets for their goods through a guaranteed quota (Marshall 68). The Lome’ Convention, then, provided an avenue for the newly independent countries to continue to trade exclusively with European countries in much the same way that they did as colonies.

As former colonies, ACP countries had and still have relatively weak economies and those in the Anglophone Caribbean were also contending with their very small geographical and economic size. Europe was always the market for the goods from their colonies, and Lome’ facilitated the continuation of this flow. With a guaranteed quota Caribbean countries could count on continual foreign income from their agricultural monoculture practices, but it was risky to rely on preferential
treatment to secure a market for their goods, and also to rely on mono crop production to earn foreign income. Trade diversification as envisioned by CARIFTA, and later by CARICOM, could help to solve the latter problem and maybe also move Caribbean countries away from the need for preferential treatment.

Lome’ was beneficial to Caribbean economies, but over time it became a bottleneck for them because the character of trade was changing and becoming more globally organized through the World Trade Organization (WTO). Reciprocity was one of the mandated rules of global trade set out by (WTO) and there was neither room for preferential treatment through the Lome’ agreement nor for smallness of economy or geographical size to be mitigating factors in global trade.

Recounting the experiences of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) – a group of nine Caribbean countries – in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Patsy Lewis makes a note of “a reluctance among [WTO] member states, particularly the United States, to accept smallness as a modifying condition” (191) within the FTAA and the WTO. Size no longer mattered, instead, all countries should be treated the same regardless of size. U.S. banana-producing companies Dole, Del Monte and Chiquita, who brought the Lome’ preferential trade agreement before the WTO as a discriminatory policy, exemplify this reluctance (Wiley 157-160).

Given that the international climate does not consider small size a condition for special consideration within the global arena, regional integration in the form of CARICOM sought to redress this issue. By the time Lome’ ended in 2000 because of the formation of the European Union (EU) and also because of the United States’
appeal to the WTO that Lome’ was violating WTO rules, many Caribbean countries had begun to rely less on agriculture and more on alternative sources of foreign income including tourism, offshore banking, export processing zones and manufacturing industries. The end of Lome’ meant that the Caribbean countries could no longer rely (i.e. depend) on trade and economic policies with their former colonizers for economic advancement.

**Continued Economic Dependence through Neoliberal Economic Policies**

The dependence that Caribbean countries have had on the developed world was made worse through some economic policies, namely through having to adopt International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment policies to service debt, and through setting up of export processing zones (EPZs) to attract foreign investors. The period of Caribbean political independence beginning in the early 1960s coincides with the consolidation of U.S. hegemony, and its related neoliberal economic paradigm. The newly independent Caribbean countries sought to find their place in the rapidly changing world and for many, their development options have been tied U.S. economic policies. Despite Jamaica’s, Grenada’s, and Guyana’s brief experiments with state-led socialism in the 1970s, the Anglophone Caribbean as a whole continually follows a U.S.-led capitalist path to development.

International organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other international financial organizations (IFIs), the World Trade
Organization (WTO), multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations are the major players in this US-led economic expansion.

U.S. multinational (MNCs) and transnational (TNCs) companies entered the Caribbean from the late 19th and early 20th century in agriculture, banking, manufacturing under the development strategy “industrialization by invitation”, and later from the 1970s under structural adjustment. Many people have written about the ways in which the IMF’s structural adjustment programs exacerbate the imbalances that exist in independent Caribbean countries (Tom Barry et al.; Deere et al.; Kathy McAfee; Michael Manley; John LaGuerre; Ramesh Ramsaran; Cheryl Payer; Clive Thomas; and Delilse Worrell). The principle behind structural adjustment is “liberalization of exchange and import controls” (Payer 40). The assumption is that having open markets will increase exports and yield increasing foreign income that can then service the high debt bills that recipient countries have (McAfee 67). Beyond debt servicing the program is geared to stimulate development through economic growth, the results of which should trickle down to benefit the entire economy and society.

The application of structural adjustment principles involves conditions that recipient countries must meet in order to qualify for a loan. The conditions are extensive and deserve full mention here. In The Debt Trap, Sheryl Payer identifies them as:

Abolition or liberalization of foreign exchange and import controls;
devaluation of the exchange rate; domestic anti-inflationary
programs, including controls of bank credit, higher interest rates . . . 
control of the government deficit, curbs on spending, increases in 
taxes and in prices charged by public enterprises, abolition of 
consumer subsidies; control of wage rises; . . . dismantling of price 
controls; and greater hospitality to foreign investment. (33)

These standard measures are meted out to all countries irrespective of their individual circumstances, and are supposed to solve the balance of payment problems of any country under an IMF program. The measures are supposed to be neutral and ideology free, but they in fact follow the ideology of laissez-faire economic liberalism. Structural adjustment programs have been criticized as both “a means to support a government and [to] ensure its obedient behavior at the same time” (Payer 31). In other words, IMF assistance comes at a price exacted in monetary and non-monetary, often ideological, terms.

IMF assistance also highlights contradictions within the structural adjustment policy itself and also between the policy and the economic development aim of the Caribbean countries (Payer 33-38; Harvey 25-29, 45-6, 65; Manley 176-81). Within the policy, structural adjustment adheres to a neoliberal ideology that operates differently in practice than theory. According to David Harvey in *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, while structural adjustment claims to be democratic, promote competition and individual freedoms, and support public aims, it in fact is anti-democratic. It increases the consolidation of monopoly power in few MNCs representing a collective dominant class (28-9).
Jamaica’s experience with the IMF from 1977 exemplifies the experience of other Caribbean countries that have undergone IMF treatment – Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda – and it demonstrates how the contradiction between structural adjustment and economic development works. During the 1980s former Prime Minister of Jamaica, and economist, Michael Manley identified five points that were needed for Jamaica’s development in *Up the Down Escalator: psychological awareness of the meaning of being from the third world; effective political process that accommodates the population’s needs and wants; effective institutional capacity to undertake the directions from the political process; efficient organization, distribution and exchange of prosperity, and the ability to distribute economic prosperity to human well-being in social development* (218-222). Given Jamaica’s colonial history of caste-like stratification and limited access to resources, Manley perceives development as a process that must address change in psychological, political and institutional participation, and resource distribution.

Structural adjustment however is the antithesis of this approach to development. The free market ideology upon which the structural adjustment programs are based erodes all five of the above aspects. Structural adjustment adds no historicity to its treatment of ailing economies, thereby ignoring the peculiarities informing how developing economies incur some of their debt. Barry et al. argue that structural adjustment also ignores “external causes of third world debt and balance-of-payment crises such as high oil prices, declining terms of trade, rising
interest rates, inflation in the industrial nations and world recession” (140-1). In other words, structural adjustment blames and penalizes Caribbean and other developing countries for economic factors beyond their control.

By supporting only pro-capitalist and especially pro-U.S. economic interests, and by promoting privatization of almost all institutions, structural adjustment effectively quashes many working class movements, unions, and civil participation. Privatizing local government businesses removes much of the institutional capacity that governments use to provide for the needs of their citizens. Promoting and supporting foreign TNCs who repatriate their profits and reinvestment little or no money in the host country means that money leaves the host country and does not circulate internally for the citizens’ benefits (Barry et al. 23). And, by insisting on decreased public spending on social services, like health and education for example, structural adjustment does not facilitate many connections between economic prosperity of a country and the social wellbeing of its people.

In Storm Signals, Kathy McAfee discusses the contradictions within structural adjustment as it relates to development saying, “the actual effect of structural adjustment is to deepen the dependency, poverty, and debt of Caribbean countries . . . [it] . . . transfer[s] more funds from impoverished debtor nations into the coffers of the Northern governments . . . [and] commercial banks” (7). Structural adjustment, then, does not help to alleviate the pressures of economic dependency and poverty that Caribbean countries experience, but, rather, they often worsen these conditions. As a major component for incorporating developing countries into the
neoliberal economic path, the IMF “produced a rapid economic expansion in the U.S. in the 1990s” (Harvey 32). McAfee, Harvey and Payer all claim that instead of promoting economic growth and development for the recipient countries, structural adjustment aids the growth of primarily U.S. TNCs.

This is not to deny that TNCs do create jobs in the process of setting up businesses, but let us not forget that most structural adjustment programs have other conditions that often negate some of the benefit of having these jobs, which are usually low-paying and low-skilled. Conditions such as no union activity allowed for the jobs provided by the TNCs. In addition, governments often have to limit spending by implementing cuts on social services and subsidies and firing public service workers. And also, at the same time, the effects of these cuts are made worse by the increasing prices of most goods and services. The poor often feel these cuts more than the rich or even middle classes. The net effect is that the kind of development that is stimulated by structural adjustment policies is not equitable, instead it results in the already rich – usually White capitalists – getting richer and poor – usually non-White – getting poorer. Like Enrique Carrasco says in “Critical Race Theory and Post-Colonial Development: Radically Monitoring the World Bank and the IMF”, the purpose of the critique here is not to accuse structural adjustment policies of being “evil or useless”, only of having a result of inequitable development (Carrasco 370).

David Harvey uses the twin terms accumulation and dispossession (42-68) in *Spaces of Global Capitalism* to characterize the polarization of capital and wealth to
TNCs and their owning countries and the subsequent impoverishment of host countries in the neoliberal paradigm. He argues that privatization, financialization, and the debt trap are the most egregious operations of these processes. Of interest is that structural adjustment is supposed to correct foreign exchange imbalances in order to help countries service foreign debt, but it also exacerbates the debt problem because Caribbean countries incur more debt under each successive loan negotiation just to repay existing debt interest.

Companies that set up business in the Caribbean under the IMF programs and those that set up offshore in export processing zones (EPZs) have consistently demonstrated a reliance on monoculture manufacturing practices, and as previously discussed, these practices do not facilitate economic diversity but instead fit within the ambit of Harvey’s accumulation for the MNCs and dispossession for the host country. And also, monoculture often leads to economic stagnation. Relying only on one major product for foreign exchange puts Caribbean countries in a precarious position of having few options to compete and negotiate with on the world market. Competition from cheaper and/or alternate sources of the same product – whether it is sugar, bauxite, tourism, bananas, or cheaper labor from other developing countries – can under sell the Caribbean product and ruin an entire economy. For example, the U.S. company Chiquita grows bananas in central and south America cheaper than Caribbean countries do.

The concessions offered to foreign TNCs operating in export processing zones (EPZs) further illustrate the depth of accumulation and dispossession.
Caribbean countries, like the rest of the developing world, supply cheap labor to the various TNCs in the EPZs. In discussing EPZs in the Caribbean Kathy McAfee (82, 83-4) identifies concessions of tax holidays of up to 20 years, insurance of no trade union activity by workers within the zone, profit repatriation, free or low cost factory shells to house the business and exemption from import duties. In other words, companies get decades of not paying taxes, are assured that they won’t be bothered by local trade union bargaining, are given free office space and are also allowed to take away all of their profits. The concessions filter money away from the national economy in multiple ways. The little money earned during the tax holidays and exemptions is compounded by the fact that it is the host governments that fund the factory shells, and profits are repatriated without reinvestment. Dispossession also occurs at the level of labor because restricted trade union activity means that many of the rights won through workers struggles have been eroded (Harvey 45). In developing countries many TNC workers are women (McAfee 85) who are running households alone on the minimum wages they are paid, as the case of garment and textile operations in Barbados and Jamaica illustrate (McAfee 82-91; Black).

With the bonanza of concessions that are offered to foreign companies in export processing zones, Don Marshall argues that foreign companies occupying the EPZs are likely to continue motivating “workers to increase their sewing-related and textile-making tasks with cash inducements instead of transferring aspects of their parent assembly process to the region” (74). Marshall’s comment touches on two important points. One, the kind of low-skilled work that often occurs in these
factories; and two, that the type of work is akin to raw material production, because the finished product is rarely ever assembled in these factories. Workers in the EPZs usually produce only one small component of whatever the finished product is. They may produce the sleeves of a shirt or a particular microchip for a computer but never the entire shirt or computer.

I have already discussed that this kind of raw material production with little value added is precisely what Caribbean economies have inherited from the plantation economy and what they have been trying to move away from, but, as developing countries, they find themselves in similar positions as before. In the face of these various economic realities Caribbean countries have looked to economic regional integration as one way to overcome their limitations.

**Conclusion**

All four forms of regional integration discussed above have been implemented in a top down approach that assumes the benefits from regional integration will filter down to the populations. In other words, they have been designed, planned and implemented by and through the will of academics and statesmen and women who envisioned Caribbean regional integration in economic developmental terms. The people of the region are the intended beneficiaries, but they were not put at the forefront of these developmental strategies. Instead, they were rendered secondary to, and invisible within the more macro economic policies that comprised the integration policies. Although one of the aims and objectives was
to reduce the levels of poverty and to improve the living standards of Caribbean populations, focus remained on economic trade with the assumption that benefits from such would filter down to the populations and improve their social conditions. Macroeconomic policies of states, and not people, were the units of measurement for the success of regional integration.

The wide applicability of what is written above about economic dependence makes it unnecessary to single out any one Caribbean. However, it is useful to note that although all Caribbean countries exhibit some form of economic dependence there is great variation between them. Some countries have relatively stable economies as a result of tourism, or oil, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago. Guyana, is not one of these countries, its economy is one of the poorest in the region. Like many migrants worldwide, Guyanese migrants move largely because they are economically dispossessed.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESPONSES MIGRATION: BARBADOS AS PARADISE

Introduction

In late 2003 or early 2004 the then Prime Minister (PM) of Barbados, Owen Arthur, hired Guyanese migrants to help renovate his private home. His actions sparked a conversation within Barbados about migrant labor, especially Guyanese, being afforded an opportunity to work before Barbadian workers. The incident is not without irony because it occurred while CARICOM countries were preparing for the implementing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), including the component that allows for the free movement of labor between member countries. Also ironic is the fact that the CARICOM portfolio managed by the PM of Barbados includes responsibility for the CSME. As the PM, then, Owen Arthur was acting within the spirit of the CSME even though it had not yet been implemented. In a lecture delivered for the 30th anniversary of CARICOM in April 2004, PM Arthur noted that the CSME should be made relevant for all the citizens of member countries by extending the free movement of labor provision to “wage-earning and other artisan groups” (37). He reiterated this point – while making reference to the above incident when he hired Guyanese workers to work on his home and the criticism it garnered – by saying, “a Guyanese carpenter should be made to feel that
he can build the cupboards at the residence of the Prime Minister of Barbados without it being regarded as an odious and criminal act” (Arthur 37).

The incident of a Prime Minister using Guyanese labor was not forgotten when the discussion on CARICOM immigration in Barbados started four years later, and some persons commented on it in a blog post. In a reply to the Barbados Free Press (BFP) blog post “Rickey Singh on Immigration & Free Trade: Witch-Hunting Atmosphere in Barbados” the commenter named ‘oh come on.’ reminds the reader that the former PM of Barbados has also used undocumented labor in the past. ‘oh come on.’ says, “lets not forget our previous prime minister hired pure illegal immigrant labor to renovate his property, this was during government’s push of BUY 100% bajan campaign . . . oh how we forget” [sic]. According to ‘oh come on.’, the PM had hired the workers during the time when there was a campaign to encourage Barbadians to purchase locally-made or produced goods over imported goods. The buy local campaign was an attempt to both reduce the high import bill and also to encourage support for local businesses. By referencing the former PM’s actions with the buy local campaign, ‘oh come on.’ is suggesting that the PM’s action of hiring Guyanese labor was in breach of this campaign, that he should have hired Barbadian workers instead of Guyanese ones.

The above anecdote about the Prime Minister was one of the first incidents to ignite a conversation about the CSME and migration together, but it was not the last. Was the public outcry against PM Arthur because he could and should have used Barbadian workers instead of Guyanese migrant labor? This is probable, but the
outray against Guyanese migrants in Barbados has not been restricted to this one event, nor has it always been about labor disputes. Additional outcries against Guyanese immigrants have happened since 2004 and they have involved much wider social implications about the differing cultures, histories and economies of Guyana and Barbados, and also, the perceived differences about the people from Barbados and Guyana.

In Barbados, between 2008 and 2010, the so-called “immigration problem” was again raised and hotly debated by the Barbadian public. With few exceptions, historically, immigration had never really been a major discussion topic in Barbados so it is important to understand why it seemed to matter more during the 2008-2010 period. In other words, what was happening at this juncture to make Guyanese immigration into Barbados capture public attention? The answer is five-fold: one, the implementation of the CSME in 2006; two, the CARICOM nationals amnesty offered by the Government of Barbados in 2009; three, the proposed 2009 Green Paper on Immigration Reform in Barbados; four, multiple daily news and discussion blogs that have been used as a forum for debates on the topical issues including the CSME, CARICOM and immigration, and five, the global economic recession, which resulted in slow down of Barbados’ economy. CARICOM migration was a topic that was a part of the national discourse in Barbados between 2008-2010 because of a convergence of regional and national legislative policies on immigration. This convergence helps us to understand why there was an increasing interest in CARICOM migrants in Barbados during the time that I examine.
By the end of January 2006 Barbados had made legislative and administrative provisions that would allow it to be in compliance with the mandate of the free movement of skilled labor as set out in article 45 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramus. The provision that makes possible the movement of skilled labor – university graduates, media persons, artists, musicians and sports persons – is the first phase of what is supposed to be free movement of all labor between CSME member states. Successive phases and any additional categories of labor permitted to move have not yet been scheduled. Prior to this date movement of people between CARICOM countries had not been a part of regional integration, but by 2008-2010 when the discussions on Barbados’ ‘immigration problem’ started, movement of skilled CARICOM nationals had already begun.

In 2009, the Government of Barbados offered amnesty to the estimated 30,000 undocumented CARICOM nationals in Barbados. In January 2009 the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) government won national elections in Barbados after being in opposition for fourteen years. This DLP Government raised concern about what it called an unacceptably large number of undocumented CARICOM migrants in Barbados. There actual number of undocumented CARICOM migrants in Barbados is unknown, but the Minister responsible for immigration quoted the number at around 30,000. The government offered amnesty to CARICOM migrants to regularize their status or face deportation.
As previously discussed in Chapter 1, Barbados has historically been over populated to the point where it exported labor to other countries. As a result, most of the country’s immigration control policies have been geared toward this goal. However, during the period that I examine the governmental opinion is that for the first time Barbados has too many immigrants within its borders. These regional and national political actions were the impetus for the debates about CARICOM immigration among Barbados’ population. So, to reiterate, what was occurring was a convergence of regional and national political policies on immigration and the conversations people were having about them.

While the intent of the CSME treaty and its subsequent implementation was to increase unity between the countries in the union, the actual result was the opposite. Instead of unity my research has shown open animosity and racist tendencies towards Indian Guyanese migrants in particular, which is an unintended consequence of the regional integration and also the CARICOM nationals amnesty policy. In this chapter, I examine how Barbadians have responded to the so-called ‘immigration problem’ and I have found that race, that is, perceived racial differences between Barbadians, especially Black Barbadians and some CARICOM immigrants plays an important part in the responses.

In the methods section in Chapter I discuss the fact that I use blogs as one of my major sources of data and I offer a justification and a critique of using these kinds of data. One of the issues that must be considered when using internet-based discussion forums as a source of research data is the extent to which they actually
inform public opinion on one hand, and influence or affect change on another. As it pertains to CARICOM and the CSME, we are talking about the ways in which these regional policies have been crafted and who has had input into the decision-making processes.

The way in which I use blog discussions in the next two chapters is as a forum of rational critical debate, to add another level of input towards crafting the regional and national policies of CARICOM, CSME, and of course their member countries. In addition, the blog discussions also give much needed insight into how receptive Barbados, as a member country of the CSME is. Given the already top-down approach of CARICOM and the CSME, the open and public nature of blog discussions adds a dimension of opinions and agents that represent various interests from within Barbados – interests from individuals, and groups representing civil society. Of course, organized uses of the blog discussions are needed to affect state processes. In order to be heard as serious criticism that is a part of a critical debate and not just noise, the discussions points needs to be synthesized, analyzed and engaged by the relevant stakeholders. As Habermas notes, one important component of the public sphere is rational critical debate. The strength of the blog discussions is in their contribution to a public sphere where there can be debate, collective action, and an expression of the will of the people.

A look at the three most important organs of CARICOM, as set out in the 2001 Revised Treaty of Chaguaramus, gives some insight into who are the major stakeholders responsible for the decision making within CARICOM, and also, why
more than these stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making processes. First, the Conference of Heads of Government (CHOG), the collection of which forms a quasi-cabinet that is the principal institution responsible carrying out the mission and mandates of CARICOM. The CHOG is the most powerful of all of CARICOM’s institutions with a responsibility for determining policy direction. Among other things, it has the power to resolve disputes between member countries and to establish organizations to achieve the objectives of CARICOM. Also important is the fact that it self regulates its own procedures, and as such it has no oversight committee to monitor it.

Within the CHOG, leaders of the full member countries are responsible for overseeing the management of a particular area of interest within CARICOM. For example, The Bahamas has responsibility for tourism, Barbados for the CSME, Jamaica for external trade negotiations, Guyana for agriculture, agricultural diversification and food security, Suriname for community development and cultural cooperation, and Trinidad and Tobago for energy and security (drugs and illicit arms) (Caricom.org). Many of these portfolios are assigned based on a level of expertise that each country has. Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, is rich in oil, and has a thriving oil industry, thus, it’s portfolio is energy, and the Bahamas has a thriving tourist industry while Guyana has an abundance of land that may be used for agricultural development.

The second highest organ in CARICOM is the Community Council of Ministers (CCM), which consists ministers of government from member countries who are
responsible for various affairs of the CARICOM community. The community council, like the CHOG, makes no specific allowance for members of the opposition political parties, or any other special or interest groups to be represented on them. There is no design for bipartisanship, but instead, only members from the ruling political party in any member country represent the interests of their country at the highest levels of CARICOM. According to Caricom.org the four other secondary organs within the CARICOM organizational structure, the council for finance and planning (COFAP), the council for foreign and community relations (COFCOR), the council for human and social development (COHSOD), and the council for trade and economic development (COTED) are also comprised mainly by ministers of government.

Third, the chief administrative institution of CARICOM, the CARICOM secretariat located in Georgetown Guyana manages the work of the CHOG, the CCM, and all the other CARICOM bodies and institutions. According to Caricom.org, its main functions are to facilitate the work of the community organs and member states. Nowhere in the Secretariat’s list of functions is there any mention of providing services to the populace, or to special interest groups. It speaks only of the major institutional player, the member states and their representatives. The type of community that this language calls to mind is one comprising of states and states systems, rather than people.

What is missing from the above structure of governance is input from non-governmental actors. CSME integration should also focus on full and meaningful participation of the people and civil society, rather than the state systems alone
(Gonsalves 33-36; Wickham 28-31; Duncan, “Anglophone Caribbean” 52-56; Munroe 66-69; Boxill, “Sovereignty” 23-25). In other words, planning, development and implementation of the CSME should proceed from multiple spheres of involvement and decision-making instead of the current state-centered approach. But this lack of an integrated approach to the implementation of CARICOM and the CSME is a larger function of a similar lack in Caribbean societies, that is, a lack of both lobbyists and civil society who try to influence Government policy. There is a great need for decision-making in CARICOM member countries to include more non-governmental and non-business stakeholders in policy decisions. To do so would result in a more horizontal decision- and policy-making structure in contrast to the existing vertical one.

The CSME needs to be formed from the bottom up from the people who inhabit the space, as much as from the top down through its treaties and laws. In this way, citizens the member countries are involved in integration formation, making the process a more democratic one. Given the discussion in Chapters five and six, using blog discussions or developing any public sphere towards discussing regional integration would likely result in multiple forms of social solidarities and social imaginaries, but these kinds of associations are precisely what need to be brought to the fore in order to have a serious consideration of regional unity.
The End of Paradise: The Destructive Immigrant

The idea that Barbados is a paradise under threat from immigration is a theme that has been mentioned numerous times on the blogs. One blog post that appeared on Barbados Free Press (BFP) on April 9 2010 describes how Barbados has deteriorated by the year 2035. In chapter one I describe the BFP blog as one that is intolerant of racist comments. It’s policies section states that while it wants to encourage discussion, it also moderates the comments it receives to filter those that are overtly racist and hateful. As I read Kammie Holder’s post, it is definitely not laced with overt racist language that is easily recognized as such, and yet, the racist undertones seem obvious and appear frequently. The fact that this blog submission was still posted on BFP despite the racist undertones speaks to how well racist dialogue can be subtly coded in ways that make it appear to not be about race at all, but rather to be about something else entirely. In addition, it also reminds us that the kind of racist language can be subtly coded to denote issue not related to race, many get a pass as being an acceptable way of speaking in society. In other words, it may not get recognized as being a part of a racist discourse.

The writer, Kammie Holder, tells his story as a dream scenario, more specifically, a nightmare that he experiences upon his return to Barbados after being absent for three decades. ‘Kammie Holder’, who wrote the post “Kammie Holder predicts a Barbados you don’t recognize – but the signs are already here”, describes how, upon his return to Barbados after 30 years abroad, almost everything he sees and experiences is different from, and worse than, what he left. He offers the reader
a justification for his post when he says, “Bajans are not demanding the level of
governance necessary for us not to be a failed state. Bajans receive free education,
then get a mortgage, buy and expensive car and forget about the plight of the lesser
fortunate . . . What about protecting the legacy that was passed to us by persons like
my grandmother who toiled on a plantation for cents?” This post, then, is written as
a caution of what can happen if Barbadians do not secure their legacy, and also
demand that their politicians act accordingly and do the same – (I will say more on
this legacy in the Chapter six).

Before landing at the airport he flies over the length of western side of the
island and he notices differences from his vantage point. He states, “as the aircraft
descends towards the airport, I see a coastal perimeter of buildings encircling my
tropical paradise. From an aerial view it appears [that] sugar cane fields have been
replaced by quarries and clusters of housing/townships”. ‘Kammie Holder’
mentions that Barbados has lost its green space of sugar cane fields and trees, which
have been replaced by overcrowding housing conditions. Local newspapers, he says,
display headlines saying, “Barbados has run out of Land Space”. In addition to the
housing conditions he also mentions an “absence of trees” and recreational spaces,
and high unemployment among youth. He does not directly say that immigration is
bad but he references an increase in immigration and associates it with the
overcrowding he sees, the “graffiti covered walls”, a lost of green space and the
existence of more prisons. His taxi driver informs him that there are now three
prisons in Barbados instead of the one that it had when he left in 2005. The absence
of green spaces from the landscape and its replacement with grey concrete symbolizes a Barbados that is in decay. On appearance alone, the natural environment in Barbados seems to be ill.

‘Kamie Holder’ continues this theme of loss by noting that locals no longer have access to beaches, because they have now become private. He states that as he was strolling along a beach a security guard cautioned him to be careful because “beaches are now private and I may be charged with trespassing. Seabathing and strolling along the beach is now confined to the hotel in which you stay. I wonder where the locals bathe”? This loss of beach access would be particularly difficult to come to terms with because Barbados has always had public beaches, and hotels and other tourist accommodation that are located on beachfront property must provide a public access to the beach. Barbados earns most of its foreign exchange from tourism and in the early 1980s there had been attempts to make beaches private. Faced with this proposal, and competing Caribbean markets that do have private beaches for tourists to enjoy undisturbed by locals, – such as Jamaica – Barbados has been adamant that its beaches will always be public. Access to the beach is something that Barbadians have demanded and come to expect. In ‘Kammie Holder’s’ vision of a future Barbados this right of access to any beach, a right that was enjoyed by anyone in Barbados in 2005 when he left, is gone and the beaches are now only available to tourists. A historically cherished part of the natural beauty of Barbados no longer belongs to Barbadians, and is also no longer available for them to enjoy.
In the midst of his descriptions of the degradation of Barbados ‘Kammie Holder’ mentions the race of the people he meets at the airport. On three separate occasions he finds it necessary to describe the race of the first future Barbadians he interacts with. As he goes through the immigration and customs protocol in the airport he is “greeted by a pleasant Asian-looking immigration officer with a strong Bajan accent”, and the customs officer “tells me his parents are from India.” He also mentions the “indigenous native negro redcap” who helps him bring his bags to a waiting taxi. Over the course of thirty years, then, according to ‘Kammie Holder’s’ nightmarish vision, Indian-Barbadians – “with strong Bajan accents”, which indicate that they have been in Barbados for a long time – are the racial demographic that is first encountered upon arrival in Barbados. What Holder does in his blog post is cast suspicion on immigrants in general but more specifically those of Indian origin, such as those who may immigrate to Barbados from Guyana or Trinidad and Tobago.

The language that ‘Kammie Holder’ uses to describe these first three workers he meets in the airport cannot be overlooked as it is loaded with inferences of who are the dominant and subordinate people in Barbados. What he does not say explicitly is that when he left Barbados in 2005, it would have been very unlikely to see any person other than a Black Barbadian performing any of the three jobs he mentions. He differentiates between the type of work performed by Indian-Barbadians – immigration and customs officer – and the person he calls the “indigenous native negro redcap” who carries the luggage of arriving passengers. The jobs of immigration and customs officers have always been salary-earning, they
have more prestige and more security while the job of a redcap has been that of a wage earner working for tips from their customers. Based solely on the first Barbadians he meets in the airport, Holder presents a scenario where Indian-Barbadians have more prestigious and secure jobs in the public service than Black Barbadians who earn their money based on the tips they receive from people travelling to Barbados. In his nightmare of a future Barbados, it is Indian-Barbadians who hold better job security and based on this alone appear to be more dominant in society.

Throughout history, the term indigenous population has rarely been used in reference to immigration in positive ways. What I mean by this is that, when we think of various populations that are referred to as indigenous – American Indians, tribes living in the Amazon, Amerindians in Guyana, Kalinago (formerly known as Caribs) in Dominica, and even those who had populated Barbados before European colonialism but who no longer exist because they died as a result of contact with the colonials – we tend to think of populations that are on the decline and on the fringe of society in their respective countries, or in the worst case scenario have died out. This is certainly the case of American Indians throughout most of the Americas. The usual course of events when we talk about indigenous populations is that, over time, migrants who settle in their countries have squeezed them out to the point where they no longer occupy dominant positions in society. This seems to be the point that ‘Kammie Holder’ is making when he refers to the black worker he meets at the airport as an “indigenous native negro redcap”. Looking at this history, the example
of indigenous peoples provides a context for what Black Barbadians are trying to protect.

Although Kammie Holder’s comment of the “indigenous native negro” can be interpreted to refer to the declining position of Black Barbadian workers, it could also be read as making a statement about who should be seen as ‘true’ Barbadians. In his descriptions of the people working in the airport, ‘Kammie Holder’ also hints at the idea of the kind of person who really belongs in Barbados, or who really is a Barbadian. By referring to the redcap as “indigenous native negro” he sets a justification for why the Black Barbadian redcap should be in Barbados. He reminds the reader that it is the Black population, and not Indian, who have had a long history of living in Barbados. The redcap is indigenous, native and a negro, and when Holder moved from Barbados in 2005 those three characteristics, along with qualifications, would have afforded anyone the access and the opportunity to have a job as an immigration or customs officer, but in 2035 they are likely insufficient. At 2005 it certainly would have been customary to see Black people working as redcaps at the airport, but it would also have been customary to see Black immigration and customs officers. But by 2035 Holder seems to be suggesting that Blacks now only work as redcaps, not in the more secure and stable jobs.

The idea of competition for jobs between Barbadians and immigrant groups is expressed as a concern many times in various blog posts. For example on the Barbados Underground (BU) blog, ‘General Lee’ responds to the post “Town Hall Meetings to Discuss Green Paper on Immigration” saying, "every morning as
Barbadian artisans make the trek to the unemployment office to register or renew a claim non-nationals are heading to their jobs at various construction sites around the island”. He explains that the above scenario happens because of, “the practice of construction companies subcontracting work to non-nationals, who then employ other non-nationals instead of Bajans”. His solution is to have jobs filled in the order of “Barbadians first, regional next and extra-regional last”.

Similarly, in response to the same post another person ‘Anonymous’ writes of his disdain when he observed “what appears to be an Indian woman with what sounds like a Trinidadian (possibly Guyanese) accent working the reception desk in the Barbadian consulate in Miami”. His concern is that this woman who does not sound like a Barbadian has a job, and at a Barbados consulate no less, while, according to him, the government of Barbados “won’t try to find a Bajan to work as a receptionist”. In a twist of irony, persons like ‘Kammie Holder’, ‘Anonymous’ and ‘General Lee’ often make their racialized comments about Indian immigrants from neighboring Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago because they believe that the immigrants will, themselves, use racist hiring practices once they are in Barbados.

If we follow the point that ‘General Lee’ is making, we see a scenario in which Barbadians are unemployed and non-nationals are employed, and this is a fear that has been repeated in both of the two blogs. The fear of competition over jobs has also been expressed as a displacement of the two racial groups where the demographics of Barbados change and there are now large numbers of Indian-Barbadians who also work in the public service. One poster, in his reply to the BU
blog post “Open Letter to Norman Faria Honorary Counsul to Barbados”, says, “Guyanese are even applying for jobs in our public service”. While this post expresses a concern over Guyanese working in the public service in Barbados, other posts, like those written by ‘Kammie Holder’ and ‘Anonymous’, have already envisioned this group working in the public service.

At the end of his blog post ‘Kammie Holder’ states that he “is in tears to think that all the politicians and decision-makers did not exercise wisdom and common sense. They are all dead and cannot be tried in the court of ignorance for the destruction of my beloved country”. But what exactly is the common sense that the decision-makers should have had? Is it that undocumented immigration is destructive, or that a specific group of them is, as Holder alludes to in his post? ‘Kammie Holder’ wrote his post in April 2010 at the time when concern over undocumented CARICOM immigrants residing in Barbados was being debated and considered by some to be a problem. One country in particular, Guyana, has been identified on the two blogs as the source of most of these immigrants and this country has a large Indian population. Given this, we have to interpret Holder’s comments within the context of the concerns over the undocumented CARICOM migrants.

Without mentioning Guyana, Holder however hints at this country as being the source of Barbados’ future destruction. By including “the signs are already here” in the title of his blog post and mentioning the Indian-Barbadian customs and immigration officers, he subtly points a finger at the Guyanese immigrants already
in Barbados. Holder’s pain over his vision of Barbados in 2035 seems to come not only from the destruction that he imagines will happen, but also from the fact that it could have been avoided if only decision-makers had acted to stop it. Kammie Holder’s post received twenty-seven comments from twelve different persons including Holder himself. Eight of the twelve people who responded to Holder’s post agreed with him that undocumented immigration will destroy Barbados and they all seem to present this idea as taken-for-granted and common sense.

But there is a real danger in making racial claims based on perceived common sense, because this common sense knowledge is usually nothing more than normalized and everyday racist assumptions that are deeply embedded in the social structure (Omi and Winant 59). The danger of assuming a common sense approach to issues of racism is that too often, as writers on critical race theory remind us, when race gets talked about this way we fail to see just how socially embedded racial formations are (Omi and Winant; Obach). Take for example the ideas that Barbados in 2005 was a place of paradise at risk from destructive immigrants. What exactly does this mean?

Let us take a moment and problematize the idea that Barbados at 2005, the time that Kamie Holder was writing about, represents a paradise. I have already described what the country looks like on the surface, but what about beneath that surface layer. Some important questions to ask would be: who inhabits this paradise? What positions do they occupy in it? Who benefits from it? No country is a paradise to all of its citizens or residents because all countries are stratified in some
ways – race, class, gender, and/or sexuality to name a few. Prefiguring Barbados as a paradise glosses over how the interests of different groups are represented in the country. To unpack the perception of Barbados as paradise we need to look at precisely these different interests. Given that this dissertation addresses race and racism, I will focus on racial interests.

The point that I want to make here is that in a real sense, the figure of Barbados as a paradise is a created marketing product – marketed to tourists. Understandably, as a tourism product, it is an image created solely on Barbados’ best public face. Who benefits from such an image of Barbados varies greatly. Tourists of course get to enjoy the experience of being in Barbados and the country benefits economically by having them there, but as discussed in Chapter three, the ways in which the different groups of Barbados’ population benefit differ.

The predominantly Black population occupies positions as labor in the tourism industry, while the owners, both foreign and local White Barbadian, secure financial gains. To be clear, maintaining an image of Barbados as a paradise results in a lot more economic gains to Barbados’ White population (as owners of hotels, luxury villas and ancillary tourism products and services) than it does for its Black population who are largely employed in the services sector of the tourism industry. Labeling immigrants as destructive to Barbados’ paradise, then, says much more about a possible destruction to White corporate interests in tourism than it does about any potential relationship between immigrants and the Black population.
Despite this, Kamie Holder’s nightmare scenario does not mention the White population at all.

Kamie Holder focused on the jobs that Black Barbadians would lose to immigrants, the changing racial composition, social and physical landscape of the country, but in doing so, he, like many other persons who commented to the blogs, have written only about Black and Indian groups that inhabit (or may inhabit) Barbados. This omission, of course, gives the impression that these are the only two racial groups in the country. This ability of Barbados’ White population to go mostly unmentioned in most of the narratives that were aired about race and CARICOM immigration goes to show just how invisible this group operates in society. I am not suggesting that Barbadians are unaware of the fact that there is a White economic elite, but rather, that this position has not been openly or consistently subject to discussion or critique. As a result of this lack of engagement with this inequality the racial formations and social embeddedness that have put and kept them in this position has been left mostly uncontested.

**Who is the Destructive Immigrant?**

Like ‘Kammie Holder’s’ comments on the future decay of Barbados, many other remarks on other blog posts refer to Indian immigrants in Barbados in completely negative and destructive terms. But of course Indians have been and will not be the only people immigrating to Barbados. And yet, they have been singled out as unwanted in the immigration debate, and this begs the question, why? According
to the Barbados 2010 census, Guyanese make up the largest group of people that have been migrating to Barbados. This may help us to better understand why Guyanese are bearing the brunt of the ridicule in the immigration debate, but it does not get us much closer to understanding why Indians, especially Guyanese Indians, are being singled out as much as they have been. Table 2 does not offer a justification for the ways in which Indian migrants are being perceived and talked about on the blogs, what I offer here is only an explanation of what countries CARICOM and other migrants are coming from.
Table 2 Population by Country of Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total All Countries</td>
<td>226,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Barbados</td>
<td>193,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Countries</td>
<td>32,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CARICOM Countries</td>
<td>14,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual CARICOM Countries</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>321</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>6,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
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<td>Suriname</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Other Foreign Countries</td>
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<td>Individual Other Foreign Countries</td>
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<td>U.S.A.</td>
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<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries Unknown</td>
<td>12,164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from *2010 Barbados Census Vol. 1* Table 04.01 Population by Country of Birth, Sex and Age Group

Table 2 shows that most of the CARICOM foreign-born population in Barbados recorded on the 2010 census come from Guyana. In fact, Guyana is responsible for approximately 42 percent of all the CARICOM foreign-born
population. What these figures do not indicate is whether the persons are Indian or black Guyanese, and they also do not tell us the immigrant status of the people, naturalized Barbadian, or immigrant. Table 2 also shows that, with the exception of unknown foreign countries, Guyanese foreign-born is the largest group of any country, CARICOM or non-CARICOM. These figures alone suggest that there are more persons in Barbados of Guyanese origin than any other foreign nationality.

In addition to the almost single-minded focus on Guyanese, and Indian Guyanese in particular that we see on the blogs, the Government of Barbados has labeled CARICOM migrants in general as a concern based on the number of them that are in Barbados. One and a half years after winning control of the government in January 2008, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) announced its intention to manage immigration into Barbados. The Democratic Labor Party (DLP) had only won elections in January 2008, and had taken power from the Barbados Labor Party (BLP), which had been in power for 14 years. According to the Ministerial Statement on a New and Comprehensive Immigration Policy for Barbados, delivered by then Prime Minister David Thompson on July 1, 2009, the newly elected Democratic Labor Party (DLP) first began its effort to manage immigration into Barbados on June 26 2008 when Cabinet agreed to establish “a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Immigration” (Thompson n.pag.).

Prime Minister (PM) Thompsons names three reasons for proposing immigration reform: one, “the need to achieve an improved level of border security as the Immigration Department responds to the challenges posed by the freer
movement of people, the globalization of terrorism, human trafficking, organized crime and drug trafficking”; two, “the need to honor regional, hemispheric and international commitments with regard to the movement of capital and people which is critical to the effective promotion and strengthening of the services industry”; and three, “the need to address and remove inconsistencies in the legislative framework governing immigration” (Thompson n.pag.). One of the reasons, then, was concern over border security when freer movement of people occurred under the CSME.

The sub-committee also focused on the level of undocumented immigrants that were already in Barbados and concluded that the number was “unacceptably high” (Thompson n.pag.). The statement from the Prime Minister gives no specific number, but according to Linden Lewis, on July 5 2009, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Senator Maxine McClean, “indicated that the number of CARICOM immigrants who entered Barbados in the last eight years or so and did not leave exceeded 30,000” (Lewis, L “Cost-Benefit-Analysis” n. pag.). The nature of undocumented immigration makes it is nearly impossible to corroborate this number of 30 thousand undocumented CARICOM migrants. Even without corroboration, the intention of the Government of Barbados to manage this particular group of undocumented migrants indicates that CARICOM migrants were being perceived as a cause for concern.

Unlike the wider focus on CARICOM that the government has adopted, blog discussions on migration focused largely on Guyanese migrants. Many of the blog
comments that appear on both BFP and BU say that Guyanese immigrants in particular are unwelcomed because they are accused of bringing with them some of the social problems, including crime and racial conflict, that exists in their country of origin into Barbados. There is a fear of these problems being transferred to Barbados. As I have already discussed in Chapter three, Guyana has a long history of racial conflict between the Black and Indian populations over material and non-material resources, while Barbados lacks a large Indian population and is comprised of mostly a Black population. Race is hardly ever used in contemporary Barbados to explain social stratification and racial tensions are largely thought to be non-existent, but as I argue throughout this dissertation, this is a false perception.

The perception that migrants bring social problems with them is based largely on the race relations observed in the immigrants’ country of origin. It is the background of Guyana, representing a negative example of diversity that many bloggers use to inform their opinions of Guyanese immigrants in Barbados. Indian-Guyanese have largely borne the brunt of the blame for any imagined social decay that happens or will happen in Barbados, but Jamaica has also been repeatedly singled out as being incompatible with Barbados because of its high crime rate. Comments on Jamaica rarely address race, they instead focus on cultural differences defined largely in terms of crime rates.

A blogger named ‘Yakuba’ submitted a discussion topic to Barbados Underground on July 2 2009 entitled “The fear of the Growing Ethnic Factor, Real or Imagined?” This blog post, which generated three hundred and twenty-nine
comments over eight days, comes two months after the Government of Barbados announced that it was offering an amnesty program for undocumented CARICOM migrants already in Barbados. Immigration, and more specifically the opportunity for CARICOM migrants to regularize and make their stay in Barbados more permanent, was already on the national agenda.

‘Yakuba’ introduced the discussion saying, “while we must be a tolerant society, Bajans must understand that Hindu\(^5\) immigrants, with their high fertility rates, and their dislike of miscegenation with the Negro, have already destroyed the social cohesion of two Caribbean territories—Guyana and Trinidad. Now they are invading Barbados”. ‘Yakuba’ continues his submission saying, “A single labor market for the Caribbean will, over a historical period, lead to the political, social, and cultural subordination of the Negro in the entire Eastern Caribbean. Our politicians, businessmen and academics must be persuaded to abandon this ruinous project”. The blogger makes specific reference to the CSME when he talks about a single labor market, and according to him, the CSME will be ruinous for not only Black Barbadians, but also for those residing in entire Eastern Caribbean. Here again we see countries like Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, which have large Indian populations, being are used as negative examples of what happens when Indians and Blacks coexist in a society.

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\(^5\) The terms Hindu and Indian-Guyanese appear interchangeably throughout the blogs, and there has been no differentiation made between the different types of Hindus. There has also been no consideration that Indian-Guyanese may practice a different religion. According to the National Census Report Guyana, 2002 Hindus are the largest single religious group with 28.4 percent of the population (30).
It is the Indian population that continuously gets blamed for any social ills or decay that are present in the countries that they share with Black populations. In the above post the blogger blames the CSME – which allows for limited freedom of movement of people between member states – for what he calls an invasion of Indians into Barbados, and he foresees that such immigration will end in a subordination of Black populations. When the post was written in 2009 the CSME was not fully functioning – it only allowed (and continues to allow) a small and limited select group of people to move freely between member countries. The blogger extrapolates that an increasing Indian presence in more Caribbean countries would inevitably lead to similar divisions anywhere they immigrate to.

But why should increased diversity bring ruin and especially to one group, the Black population? The above comment refer to the history of racial conflict that exists between the Indian and Black populations in countries such as Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. A conflict, which the blogger claims the immigrants will bring with them to Barbados. As we know from chapter 3, like Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) has a large Indian population, but unlike Guyana, there is no major migration from T&T into Barbados or any other CARICOM country because of T&T’s stable and successful oil-based economy. In other words, according to the blogger, the introduction of a large number of Indian-Guyanese will eventually lead to similar problems developing in Barbados, for example race-based voting. The race-based voting patterns at national elections that exist in Guyana do not exist in
Barbados due to the different population demographics in Barbados. But some bloggers comment that increasing Indian-Guyanese may change this.

Many of the three hundred and twenty-nine comments made in reply to the post entitled “The Fear of the Growing Ethnic Factor, Real or Imagined?” agree with it. One person commented, “the article is right on. The island states in caricom must defend themselves from these south american invaders (sic). They cause strife, destruction, and mayhem. Cohesiveness does not exist in their vocabulary. Deport them now!”. The poster displays a certain lack of knowledge by saying that CARICOM must be defended from South American Indian-Guyanese. It is true that geographically Guyana is a South American country, but it is also equally true that it is a member of CARICOM, and has been since CARICOM’s inception. Most of the CARICOM member states are in fact islands, with Guyana being one of the few continental members. And Guyana is not the only non-island member, Suriname and Belize also are.

It is uncertain why the comment separates the island states in CARICOM from the non-island states; it may be simply a limited understanding of what countries are members of CARICOM. It may also have been said in an effort to differentiate and cast the Indian-Guyanese population as ‘Other’, considering that most of the population from CARICOM member countries is Black. This latter explanation seems logical because the blogger also refers to Indian-Guyanese as “South American invaders”, implying that they are outsiders. The term invader is also telling for another reason, it is the kind of language that suggests malicious
intent. Invasion is usually done with the intent of taking over, replacing, dominating and even destroying. To use such language to describe Indian Guyanese, then, casts them in a villainous role vis-à-vis the good Black population of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

Another of the three hundred and twenty-nine replies states, “until they [Indians] achieve their aim of taking-over, which with their skill and agility at doing, will be a snitch!! (sic). Meanwhile, the Bajan will keep skinning e white teet til, one day, much too late, they realize that Bim [Barbados] is n’t (sic) theirs any more”. In Barbadian dialect, the term ‘teet’ refers to teeth. And the term “skinning e teet” or “skinning teet” is a way of saying smiling, being jovial or laughing. The poster is saying that the Barbadian public is taking the immigration issue too lightly and that they are still too unconcerned with it. The other side of this point is that if immigration is not being considered as something to be concerned about, then it likely is not being managed.

In addition, the comment says much more than Barbados should be concerned about immigration. Like many others previously discussed, it expresses a fear of Indian immigration, a conviction that Indian and Black populations cannot coexist harmoniously where neither group is seeking to dominate the other, and also, a conviction that Indian migrants will undoubtedly want to take over Barbados. According to the blogger, Indian immigration into Barbados is something to be

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6 Emphasis added
7 Bim is a colloquial term for Barbados.
feared, especially when, as suggested in the post, it will lead to the subordination of the Black population. The above comment, like many previously mentioned, discuss Barbados’ destruction, and an Indian ‘take over’ as a foregone conclusion of Indian immigration.

The above discussion highlights the perception, held by some of the people who post to the blogs, that immigrants bring problems with them into Barbados, and that Indian-Guyanese immigrants are not only a threat to Barbados, but are equally a threat to the Black population of Barbados. As a result, some bloggers have suggested that Barbados should practice a stringent policy of managed migration. The reason usually given is in order to keep the Black Barbadian population as the majority population. For example, we can look at the comments from blogger X-MAN’, whose comment appears on blog post “Open Letter to Norman Faria Honorary Counsul to Barbados” on the BU blog on 19 September 2009. According to X-MAN, “Barbados faces many threats, however, your greatest current threat emanates from a rapidly growing minority who ultimately would like to displace and topple those descendants who [have] shed their blood for this island [Barbados]. There are some foolish, liberal, Afro-Bajans who believe that they can live peaceably and in unity with this group”.

X-MAN continues:

I believe that the only path left open to Barbados is to commence with the immediate expulsion of all those of Indian descent. Yes I know this may sound draconian; however by taking such action, I believe that
Barbados will rid itself of a problem that will ultimately manifest itself as a major problem thirty to fifty years from now. . . . my concern is not for today's Afro-Bajan but for tomorrow's Afro-Bajan"[sic].

There have been many imagined manifestations of the displacement or destruction which the Black Barbadians will face, but the ultimate one is that Indian Guyanese “want to take this country [Barbados] and turn it into some Hinduvata state and then chase us all out of Barbados, they don't want to share and live peacefully with black people” (Open Letter to Norman Faria Honorary Counsul to Barbados). The blogger does not identify who ‘us’ refers to specifically, but, "Us’ could mean all Barbadians or it could mean only Black Barbadians – or as the poster refers to them, Afro-Bajans.

Despite the perceptions that Indian-Guyanese are out to take over Barbados from the Black population, these perceptions need to be tempered with the social position of the Black population. If there is going to be a conversation about displacement of the Black Barbadian population, a part of that conversation needs to be on what position this group occupies in society. And this can only take place when this positioning is relational – meaning relative to the others in society. This component has been consistently absent from the narratives on CARICOM immigration. Black Barbadians occupy middle and lower class positions, and of course it is possible for them to experience downward mobility from these positions. So, in other words, what is it that Black Barbadians have that they fear losing to Indian Guyanese immigrants? I discuss this in more detail in Chapter six. I
also want to also problematize the fact that Black Barbadians always position themselves as losers vis-à-vis immigrants. Why is this? Experiences from colonial history and also the continual subordinate position of most Black populations in almost any country they inhabit may help us understand why bloggers express Black loss as the expected outcome whenever Blacks are competing with another racial group.

Many of the discussion posts on both the BU and BFP blogs often characterize Barbados as idyllic, peaceful and largely free of racial tensions. The posters who comment on the blogs are also desirous of keeping Barbados this way, and according to their arguments managing immigration either by limiting or keeping Indian immigrants out would accomplish this goal. After all, if the perception is that Indian immigrants bring social problems with them, then, without Indian immigrants, there should be limited social problems, or at least, only those that usually occur in Barbados. The danger from Indian Guyanese immigrants, according to these bloggers, is the threat to what some call the ‘Bajan brand’.

Various bloggers have identified the Bajan brand as good governance, a stable political and social climate, a good electoral system, and good social capital. In the 3 November 2009 BU blog post entitled “Defending the Bajan Brand” blog host ‘David’ notes:

whe[n] we talk about Bajan brand we are talking about the reputational capital the country has developed over the years because of its governance system and models which have served us well . . .
our teachers, nurses and policemen\textsuperscript{8} which have been sought after, our solid infrastructure, i.e. telecommunications, standards of restaurants etc. [sic].

What ‘David’ refers to is the reputation of stability that Barbados can trade on, for example in attracting tourism, investment and aid. Some of the fear expressed over Guyanese immigrants is that their presence would somehow tarnish this branded image. Specifically, many of the bloggers have talk about the fear of racial voting and electoral politics, and the violence that has accompanied this type of voting in Guyana. Similar political behavior in Barbados would damage the current image of a peaceful and stable society. Such fear about losing the ‘Bajan brand’ is about the destruction that the bloggers are envisioning will occur.

According to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, “racism involves a double movement of aggression and narcissism; the insult to the accused is doubled by a compliment to the accuser” (18). We see this process operating in the discourse about migrants coming into Barbados. For example, the language used to describe migrants accuses them of performing some malady to Barbados, mostly that they will destroy Barbados in a variety of ways. Occurring simultaneously with this are compliments to Barbados and Barbadians for being economically and politically stable.

\\textsuperscript{8} Barbadian teachers, nurses and policemen have often been recruited to work in many other CARICOM countries, and also in England.
In contrast to the blog posts that interpret Barbados’ stability as something to be celebrated and maintained, I argue instead that there are some components of the stability that need to be challenged. Most notably, the very stable and unchanging racial and economic stratification that exists in Barbados, which has White wealth at the top and Black labor in the bottom and middle economic strata. Having such an unchanging social climate may be a positive for the tourism industry that generates foreign income for the Government of Barbados, but it is detrimental to the redistribution of economic resources and/or the creation of avenues for equal economic advancement between White Barbadians and the rest of the population. There is a price to pay for that kind of peace, and it has been exacted from the majority Black population. Linden Lewis in “The Contestation of Race in Barbadian Society and the Camouflage of Conservatism” makes the point that it is difficult to challenge Barbados’ status quo because Barbados’ “racial order is protected by the state and is maintained and reproduced by the vested interests of the white ruling fraction” (“Contestation of Race”, 158).

Lewis gives an example of an attempt to redress this problem and its failure. According to Lewis, in 1988 a government contract to work on a highway in Barbados was awarded to a small Black-owned construction company instead of a large White-owned one despite the supposed lower bid of the latter company. This was apparently done as a way of affirmative action – although there have never been any policies of affirmative action in Barbados – to deliberately redress economic imbalances between the few Black-owned small businesses and the much
larger White-owned ones. Of interest, the said White-owned company had previously been the recipient of many government contracts. When it lost the bid in question it responded by taking the Government of Barbados to court on the grounds of reverse racism and unfair business practices. The case went all the way to the Privy Council in London, the final court of appeals, where finally, the White-owned company won, and in the end the government settled the case ("Contestation of Race", 166-68). According to Lewis, “After three years of serious negotiations, the Government of Barbados agreed to pay C.O. Williams Construction – the White-owned company – approximately $1.3million to settle in full the court action which began in 1988. The government also agreed to pay all of the firm’s estimated $400,000 in legal fees” ("Contestation of Race", 168).

It is problematic when the bloggers, who are discussing what they perceive as futuristic changes to the social and economic structure of Barbados – albeit in the context of immigration – fail to problematize the kind of stability that exemplifies Barbados’ racial and economic stratification. Instead of contesting it and making it a part of the debates about immigration, it has been upheld as normative, unproblematicized and unmentioned as if it is not in need of change. Such failures to act may be symptomatic of a lack of or too little power to affect change in the social system. And as the above example recounted by Linden Lewis shows, even when action is taken, White power reaches far to maintain itself. In the context of the debates on immigration, the desire to maintain Barbados’ stability as it is may have
had an unintended consequence of helping to keep the existing racial and economic stratification intact.

**Conclusion**

In the above chapter we see various opinions that refer to Indian Guyanese immigrants in particular as destructive, villainous, and invasive. It shows that although the immigration debate, certainly that initiated by the Government of Barbados in their amnesty program, was CARICOM wide in its scope, a lot of the discussion on the blogs was much more narrow and focused almost exclusively on Indian Guyanese. The fact that, according to the 2010 Barbados census report, there are more immigrants from Guyana than any other country, CARICOM or non-CARICOM, may help us understand why people have singled out Guyana, but it does not explain the overwhelming critique of Indian Guyanese. Let us not forget that Guyana also has an equally large black population as well as an indigenous population but these groups have rarely been discussed in reference to the so-called immigration problem.

The ‘problem’ then, appears to be the type, or rather, the race of Guyanese and not Guyanese in general. Explanations for this focus rely solely on common sense knowledge that has been borrowed and exported from the experiences between blacks and Indians in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Even though we are talking about race relations between two groups, bloggers have blamed only Indian Guyanese for the problems that exist between these two groups in Guyana.
There is very little consideration of the history of the racial conflict between Blacks and Indians in Guyana. For example, the fact that colonials deliberately began it to incite tensions between two different laboring groups, or the fact that colonials used ‘divide and rule’ tactics to help maintain their control over labor. But then, part of the problem with racial thinking is that it is ahistorcal. As discussed in Chapter one, Shohat and Robert Stam, for example, argue that “racist thinking is also essentializing, ahistorical, and metaphysical, projecting difference across historical time: “They are all that way, and they will always be that way” (18). Re-using the colonial narrative that describes Indian indentured labor as hating Black people, and also by arguing that Black and Indian populations cannot peaceably coexist, demonstrates the above point. Approximately a century has passed since these discourses began circulation in the Caribbean, but they still have sufficient currency that Black Barbadians can adopt them from Guyana, for example, and use them in Barbados.

A more recent example, that Indians were not included as much as Blacks were in defining independent Guyana, and that their journey towards gaining political power in Guyana took almost thirty years, during which time Blacks maintained political control. This is not to ignore the violence or campaigns to economically dispossess the Black population once Indian-led political parties gained power. The point I am making is, Black-Indian race relations in Guyana must be historicized in order to help understand how and why it came about, and this is something that the people who comment on the blogs have not done. In *The Cycle of*
Racial Oppression in Guyana Kean Gibson tells us there were three different and distinct cycles of racial oppressions in Guyana, white colonial, Black and then Indian. Indians alone, then, cannot be blamed for the problem of racial oppression in Guyana. Such historical considerations may help to dispel the common sense ideas about Indians that have been so often used – beliefs that Indian Guyanese are invaders who want nothing more than to destroy and take over Barbados.

Barbados’ own racial history as well as its current racial stratification also needs to be included as a part of the discussion. Doing this would help complicate the ideal of a Barbadian paradise that is supposedly lost because of Indian-Guyanese immigrants. It would help shed light on the different meanings that paradise can have to the different segments of the population, and the fact that for most of Barbados’ Black population, paradise may have already been lost or unattainable because of the class positions they occupy.
CHAPTER SIX
DENYING RACE: ASSERTING REASON, NATIONALISM AND CULTURE

Introduction

In 1975, some more than thirty years before the CSME stated being implemented, Shridath Ramphal issued a caution in thinking that unity is the natural state between Caribbean countries. He states:

A history of colonialism and the geography of a scattered archipelago deny its [unity] validity. The natural state of our Caribbean is fragmentation; without constant effort, without unrelenting perseverance and discipline in suppressing instincts born of tradition and environment it is to our natural state of disunity that we shall return". (Ramphal 7)

He reminds us that far from unity, fragmentation is what has defined relations between Caribbean countries before they began efforts to form an economic union.

In the above quote, Shridath Ramphal shares his views on the existence of regional unity, a component that is very important to regional integration. He argues that in the Caribbean, regional unity is neither naturally present nor easily attained because of two unavoidable reasons: one, colonialism and two, fragmented and scattered island countries. Colonies in the Caribbean were managed independently
from each other, even though they were all British colonies, and the fact that each country was separated from the others by the Caribbean Sea made any other arrangement difficult. Fast forward to July 1975, when Shridath Ramphal is writing. Colonialism has ended for most of the countries – but as I argue throughout the dissertation its effects can still be felt today – but the geographical divisions between the countries, caused by their separation as islands within the Caribbean Sea, will always remain. According to Shridath Ramphal, part of the goal of regional integration, then, is to foster the development of a Caribbean ethos of unity because it has not been historically part of Caribbean society.

Some of the early writings on CARICOM understood the importance of focusing on the social and cultural dynamics of regional integration, that is, on the people who inhabit CARICOM countries because their reception of CARICOM will strongly affect its success. Pat Robinson, in “The Sociology of Caribbean Integration”, for example, makes the point that cultural similarity between countries may be insufficient for them to have successful regional integration. He states, “in addition to looking at cultural patterns one needs to ask how do people perceive themselves” (Robinson 35). The presence of a regional identity, in addition to a national one is important for successful integration. With few exceptions – most notably in support for West Indies Cricket team – this regional identity does not exist, or rarely gets manifested.

According to Pat Robinson, what exists instead is the geographical boundary of each island is as far as feelings of community and belonging go. In other words,
there has always been strong national unity but limited regional unity. Robinson states, “for the individual, the geographical limits of his island society (and in the case of geographical isolation Guyana too is an island society), set the limits in his imagination to the feeling of community, of belonging together. The feeling of community was limited to the natural boundary of the island” (Robinson 38). The development of a regional identity, then, gets stuck at the borders of each island that makes up CARICOM.

If we take Ramphal's 1975 claim to be true – that the Caribbean region as a whole is characterized by disunity rather than unity – then a logical question to ask is: Is it still true almost forty years later? Do the explanations given for the disunity still hold? Do the people who inhabit each CSME member country still cling more strongly to a national identity than a regional one? The history of colonialism and the geographical separations are not easily overcome. Mitigation of the geographical separation has occurred to some extent because air travel has significantly reduced the relative distance between most places, and it is possible to travel quickly between the islands. But has this made much difference in how united Caribbean countries are? Evidence from the debates on immigration in Barbados suggests that there is still no ethos of unity, and also, that the history of colonialism is in part, still to blame for this. Evidence presented in this chapter from the blogs that I have examined demonstrates that in the face of the CSME becoming a reality and a lived experience for some people, instead of regional unity there is a reassertion of national unity – a strengthening of island-specific associations.
**Reality: Size Matters**

Many of the people who comment to various blog posts, on *BU* especially, state that their advocacy for Black Barbadians does not make them racists. Their objections are based on realistic, nationalist, and/or cultural reason of national security. The claim of realism is because of the limitation of Barbados’ size – being only 166 square miles Barbados is indeed small. It also has no natural resources except for its white sandy beaches and very little natural gas. The realistic reason is, well, real, it exists and can hardly be refuted. The very small size of Barbados at 166 square miles precludes anyone from ignoring that whoever immigrates into Barbados – irrespective of race – will be competing for the country’s limited resources.

In contrast to Barbados’ 166 square miles, Guyana is 83,000 square miles and has a river, the Essiquibo, with an island in it that is larger than Barbados. So, not only is Guyana much bigger than Barbados, the country also has rivers that Barbados can fit into. Despite its size and its vast natural resources of diamonds, gold and bauxite, Guyana is one of the least developed of the CARICOM countries, second only to Haiti, while Barbados is one of the more developed in the region. Thus, the flow of migration is occurring from Guyana towards Barbados, but not in the reverse.

Barbados is already one of the most heavily populated countries in the Caribbean and it is also quite small, a point that is not lost on many people who post comments to the blogs. In the February 21 2008 *BFP* blog post entitled “Control
Over Uncontrolled Immigration To Barbados: Reasonable or Racist?” many people express concern over whether Barbados can accommodate a large number of immigrants. The twenty-nine replies to the post all say the concerns over immigration are well founded, especially because of Barbados’ small size. According to many, concerns over immigration are not based on racism but are instead about the geographical limitations of Barbados. Commenter ‘Leon’, for example, says, “I don’t think it is necessarily racism to be concerned about uncontrolled immigration on an island the size of Barbados” [sic].

Another person, ‘deb thomas’ replies to the post saying, “Barbadian apprehension of an influx of outsiders is quite natural and well justified. We are a small island with limited resources. Every newcomer, whether they be white Brits buying a villa in Westmoreland, or a gardener from St. Lucia, puts more pressure on the nearly 300,000 of us looking for a modest piece of the Rock for ourselves [sic]”. ‘deb Thomas’ continues saying, “There is as much of a threat to our overcrowding from small island blacks as there is from the Indo-Guyanese who come here as artisans in our building boom”. In her comment, ‘deb thomas’ reminds the reader that Barbados’ size and limited resources may become over utilized irrespective of the race and class of the person who is immigrating. Westmoreland is an upscale community of luxury villas that are marketed to the super rich – usually non-nationals – and ‘deb Thomas’ sees no difference between rich a migrant and a working class one, such as a gardener; they will both use the same resources. Many
of the other replies to the post also make a similar argument that the concerns over space transcend any issues of the race of the immigrant.

‘deb Thomas’ also tells the reader that part of the concern over immigration is the potential for increased competition for the ownership of land. The act of owning land, or as ‘deb Thomas’ and other refer to it, ‘owning apiece of the rock’, is a deeply rooted aspiration for most Barbadians. Historically mostly Black Barbadians were farm labor but never owned the land they worked on. Land ownership, even almost fifty years since independence from colonialism, must still be understood within this context. Many of the bloggers have stated that large-scale immigration will limit how much land is available for them to own because a large number of immigrants will increase the demand for and price of land or accommodation. Non-nationals can own land and property in Barbados, so available land in Barbados can potentially be owned by documented migrants.

Of the 166 square miles most of the beachfront has been put into accommodation for tourism. Some land is used for sugar cane growing and other agriculture, golf courses – of which there are six – and very little has been made into forest or parkland preserve. Historically, most of the land in Barbados had belonged to the plantations and as I’ve already discussed in Chapter three, a small group of White Barbadians have retained the vast majority of this land. Due to its relatively scarcity, when land sells for residential purposes it is usually at a premium price averaging between Barbados $25-30 per square foot, the equivalent of $U.S. 12.50-15 per square foot. It would be difficult for undocumented immigrants to purchase
land, but the concern of ‘deb thomas’ and many other people who post to the blogs is what may happen in the future when undocumented immigrants gain legal status.

Concern for the future of Barbados is a theme that has repeatedly emerged in many of the blog posts. Many of the comments claim that the full effects of a large influx of undocumented immigrants will only be evident over the course of a generation. In this regard, economist Lindsay Holder considers the amnesty program proposed by the Government of Barbados a wrong decision. In 2009, the government of Barbados proposed amnesty of six months for undocumented CARICOM immigrants to begin the process of legalizing their status. The amnesty took effect beginning June 1, 2009 and ended on December 31 2009. According to then Prime Minister, David Thompson, persons who “entered Barbados prior to December 31 2005, and remained undocumented for a period of eight years or more” qualify for the amnesty (Thompson, n. pag.). Immigrants are cautioned that after December 31, 2009, the government will deport anyone remaining in Barbados who has not started to regularize their status, or who does not qualify for the amnesty (Thompson, n.pag).

Lindsay Holder based his assessment of the amnesty on a cost-benefit-analysis of the supposed thirty thousand undocumented immigrants in Barbados. He considers both short and long-term costs and concludes, “the costs, or the burdens, or the potential problems associated with the . . . undocumented immigrants . . . being resident in the island are unacceptable” (Cost Benefit Analysis, n.pag.). He identifies short-term costs such as job displacement, – where immigrants
would take jobs that Barbadians could perform – social fall out from both children not being in schools and from adults being un- or under-employed or engaged in criminal activities, increased demand on public health care services, which the government would have to fund, and the indirect cost of increasing housing due to the increased demand (Cost Benefit Analysis, n.pag.). In addition, he calculates that over a period of about 10 years the above factors would only worsen matters for Barbadians.

According to Holder, legalizing the status of the immigrants is not a solution because:

significant capital and recurrent costs would have to be incurred to provide education and health services for those individuals and the children that some of them would produce. Formal and now legalized competition for jobs and housing could pose problems for bona fide Barbadians, and the competition for housing could result in increases in the price of land. (Cost Benefit Analysis, n.pag.)

Holder is concerned with what Barbadians may lose in the event that many of the undocumented CARICOM migrants make use of the amnesty. He is also concerned about what happens if nothing is done to address the current immigrants already resident in Barbados, or to control a future increase. His solution, then, is threefold: Restrict, remove and monitor. First, establish “a contract labor program for immigrants to work in the construction and agriculture sectors” and restrict their right to move freely between jobs”. Second, remove “undocumented immigrants
who are not contributing to society or who are competing with Barbadians for jobs”. His third solution is to “implement a system with clear guidelines that prohibits entry of immigrants who are likely to overstay and, that tracks and removes those who have overstayed” (“Cost Benefit Analysis”, n.pag.).

Holder does not factor race into his analysis, he presents his findings based on economic projections of what undocumented immigrants take from or use up in Barbados, versus what they contribute. He surmises that undocumented immigrants are mostly unemployed or under employed – giving little to Barbados and her citizens – and they also place burdens on the social as well as economic systems. In effect, According to Holder’s assessment, they take much and give little. Barbados then, has little to gain from CARICOM migrants.

**Problems with Reality**

There are many problems with the above arguments made in defense of limiting immigration because of Barbados’ small size. Barbados’ small size is indeed a valid issue to consider if and whenever there is large-scale immigration, and if this were the only issue being discussed in reference to immigration, I would have a lot less to say about it. However, as I have shown in Chapter five and continue to argue in this chapter, the debates about immigration have focused on a lot more than size. Furthermore, the combined issues of Barbados’ small size, uncontrolled immigration and the increasing limited availability of land for citizens to purchase have not been adequately unpacked. What I mean by this is that the discourse of
immigrants competing with citizens for land leaves unaddressed and uncontested the issue of who owns most of the land in Barbados and how such land has been developed and used in the past. As I have shown in Chapter three, Barbados’ small White population own most of Barbados’ land, and as a result, there is already limited land for the majority Black population.

As I discussed in Chapter three, the White population accounts for less than three percent of the population but have been the corporate elite in the country for generations. Some of the land that they own has been used to provide tourist accommodation in the form of hotels and luxury villas, which are marketed to the super rich. While one blogger, ‘deb Thomas’, does mention that the class position of the immigrant is irrelevant because whoever immigrates to Barbados will be using its resources including land, I argue instead that immigrants’ social class has mattered and continues to do so. The fact is that there is already a group of immigrants – the super rich who own vacation homes – who have been purchasing land and real estate in Barbados and they have not been subjected to the same ridicule and criticism as Guyanese undocumented immigrations. Another fact is, much of Barbados’ land, and especially what is considered premium land – beachfront and ocean view – has been developed for tourism.

Barbados’ White economic elite as well as super rich migrants who purchase luxury tourism accommodation, then, get passed over in the conversations about immigration and resource use and poor CARICOM immigrants, especially Indian Guyanese, have become the focus in such conversations. What we are talking about
here is a bias that favors Whiteness and wealth, both of which continue to align neatly in Barbados. I am not saying that these two factors also align with regard to those who purchase luxury tourism accommodations, but we do know that they are at least wealthy enough to own a vacation home. Their temporary migration to Barbados is not for survival but rather for pleasure. On the other hand the migrants that have come under scrutiny from both the Government of Barbados and the blog discussions – the undocumented CARICOM migrants in general and Indian Guyanese migrants in particular – are not wealthy but are instead poor and working class people seeking a better life for themselves and their families. For example, Barbados’ approach to immigration reform has only addressed CARICOM undocumented immigrants to the exclusion of all others.

For Barbados’ small size and limited availability of land to be truly valid arguments for managing migration, then all types of migrants would have to be included in the conversation, but this has not been the case. In addition, it would also be necessary to critique the government policy that allows non-nationals to own land, but again, this has not been the case. To do such would mean looking into who benefits the most from this policy and it may also result in a conversation about the unequal distribution of land ownership in Barbados. In other words, it means historicizing land ownership, which would show very little change in the ownership pattern over centuries. Certainly, land ownership has increased among the majority Black population but this is restricted to small residential lots, and this land too was owned by the White economic elite prior to housing development.
Genuine dissatisfaction with limited availability of land to Black Barbadians means asking questions about land ownership patterns over time, not only futuristic projections. And when projections are being made, all of the stakeholders must be considered. This is essentially the problem with the narrative about Barbados’ size, migrants and land availability, it is a narrative that does not talk about the majority stakeholders – Barbados’ White economic elite, wealthy non-nationals, and the government that upholds the policy allowing non-nationals to own land. Instead, it talks about a group of migrants who, because of their economic class position, are unlikely to be able to afford land or real estate in Barbados. Meaning, undocumented CARICOM migrants are presently merely tangential to the real problems of land availability and ownership in Barbados. The problem with this narrative demonstrates two things, both of which critical race theory aims to address: One, that racism is a part of a structural system and to understand how racism continues we need to address the underlying structure of society and two; that it is possible for aspects of racism to become normalized to the point that they also become invisible.

What I have been discussing above about the bias that favors Whiteness and wealth must be situated within a colonial system that operated on precisely this bias. As discussed in Chapter two, colonialism has structured the racial color and even class stratification that we have come to know in Caribbean societies, and Barbados is no exception. Colonialism determined the rigidly defined relationships between race and economic class, and there were few avenues for mobility outside
of one’s class position because class was strongly tied to race. And so, whiteness and wealth were joint just as non-whiteness and non-wealth, even poverty, were also joint. Fast-forward to the beginning of the twenty-first century and the discussions that say Barbados cannot accommodate a large number of CARICOM migrants because of its small size. But in addition to Barbados’ small size overall, we have to also recognize that the land available to the Black population is even much smaller than what is in Barbados on the whole. Within this discussion about Barbados’ size and land availability, whiteness is still being treated in a privileged position because it has been left out of the discussion, as if White Barbadians are outside of the racial landscape of the country. In addition, it appears as though the association of whiteness and wealth in Barbados has become so normalized that it has gone unnoticed.

**Nationalism**

The nationalist rationale for rejecting immigrants is the unapologetic idea that Barbados belongs to Barbadians, but primarily to Black Barbadians because they are the people who have endured and survived slavery and colonialism in Barbados. Those who make the claim of Black nationalism employ a limited view of nationalism because they apply it only to the Black population. In many respects there is an equivalency between being Black and Barbados, which implies that anyone who is not Black is not Barbadian or should not benefit from whatever Barbados has to offer. But as I have been saying, this equivalence is problematic
because Barbados has a White population that has been the major economic beneficiaries in Barbados, and it is also a group that is rarely ever talked about.

Many of the blog comments that I examine say that the Black Barbadian population has a right to occupy and thrive in Barbados, rights that they also say Indian Guyanese do not automatically have. There are many comments that make the claim that Barbados belongs to the Black Barbadian. For example, the response from ‘The Peoples Democratic Congress’ (PDC) to the 9 March 2010 BU blog post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity”. According to the ‘PDC’, they oppose immigration because it is “against the national strategic developmental interests of Barbados”. The ‘PDC’ claims that the threat to national interests come when “too many Indians, Arabs, Chinese and such like and their cultural norms and practices” come into Barbados. The reason given is because these groups “have far-reaching terrible repercussions for the greater material and spiritual growth, stability, harmony and peace” of Barbados. PDC claim that they fear the economic marginalization of the Black Barbadian population if immigrant groups end up owning more businesses and the Black population has to work for them. Following from the ‘PDC’s comments is the idea that the national development interests of Barbados must coincide with those of its majority Black population.

The ‘PDC’ do not mention the interests of the other population groups who also reside in Barbados – the White-Barbadians and the Indian-Barbadians. In fact, none of the people who commented to the post expressed any concern for these groups. The fear over immigration has continually been expressed as a concern over
the risk to the Black Barbadian population. For example, ‘Gadfly’ also commented in “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” saying, “I am confident that this island will be taken away from the black people who built it”. And another commenter, ‘Hants’, says, “Barbados should be continually evolving into a Black dominated society based on the fact that 80% of Barbadians are black. . . . The cultural norms of Barbados should be determined by the majority”. One of the concerns of the above posters is that with a large number of Indian-Guyanese immigrants, the percentage of persons from Indian ancestry in Barbados would increase, and if this happens Barbados may no longer have a critical majority of black population.

The idea that Black Barbadians will lose if CARICOM immigrants of Indian descent move to Barbados in large numbers appears in multiple blog posts. In general, posters say that Barbadians will lose an economic right of inheritance based on the suffering their ancestors endured as slaves, employment and cultural dominance – the ability to continue to shape Barbados’ cultural institutions. In the post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” “The Scout’, for example, argues that “ALL the hard work my ancestors have put into this country to make it what it is, will now be taken over by these parasites. . . . We have an obligation to our children to protect our lands”[sic]. ‘The Scout’ goes on to say that if Indian Guyanese immigrate in large numbers into Barbados, they will “ROB us of our heritage, a heritage that was left for us by our foreparent and we will be failing our offspring” [sic]. Unfortunately, ‘The Scout’ does not say what he means by heritage but the
predominant fear that the Black population may lose to Indian immigrants may give some insight into what the heritage is, namely, Black heritage.

Others blog posts and comments have identified what is meant by the heritage that may be lost if too many immigrants enter Barbados. In a reply to the March 26 2010 BU blog post “Town Hall Meetings to Discuss Green Paper on Immigration” commenter ‘X-MAN’, who identifies himself as “an overseas citizen of Bajan black parentage”, says, “I am only interested in the black Bajan/Diaspora whose ancestors had to shed much blood, sweat and tears to have earned their piece of this tiny rock”. The ancestors of the Black Bajan/Diaspora that ‘X-MAN’ refers to are the slave and their descendants who had to work on the plantations. It is also the descendents of these slaves who have taken political leadership of Barbados since political independence. According to X-MAN, heritage, then, is a Black slave colonial experience because that is the labor group that has suffered the most on Barbadian soil, and, because of this suffering, the descendants of slaves have earned a right to inherit Barbados.

One statement that explains the heritage that Black Barbadians should inherit is a comment made by ‘Yardbroom’ in his response to the BU blog post “Bajan Right To Speak MUST Be Protected”. This post, which generated one hundred and thirty-nine comments in less than one month, is about claims made on BFP – the other blog that I examine – that BU is inciting and encouraging racism in its conversations about immigration into Barbados. ‘Yardbroom’ states his support of BU as a forum for free speech and tells the readers, “I have no hate in my heart for
any race on earth, but that does not preclude me from wanting black Barbadians to have success and a place where they and their children can live in peace and happiness”. He continues, with what can be interpreted as a justification for his position, saying:

    Many, many, years ago my great great great grand father stood barefooted and calloused in a muddy cane field in Barbados. ‘With his face turned to the heavens in pouring rain he asked: ‘God never let my grand children have to suffer like this’. . . Now it falls to us to face other challenges, to ensure our grand children do not have to suffer because of who they are, in a place where they were born [sic].

‘Yardbroom’ reminds the reader that he is situating Barbadian heritage in a history of hard labor in the sugar cane fields, and, in the case of Barbados, the only group that has endured this labor is the slave population and their descendants. He mentions that as his great, great, grand father labored, he wished for an improvement in the working conditions of future generations, and in 2010 when ‘Yardbroom’ is writing, he sees these future generations under threat from immigrants.

The discussion on heritage speaks to the question of whether any one group can claim that Barbados belongs to them. To whom does Barbados belong? Or more specifically, to whom do the bloggers believe that Barbados belongs? The issue here is who they perceive as the “rightful” inheritors of Barbados. The perception given by some of the bloggers is that belonging in Barbados means being inheritors of the
colonial plantation history. They specifically refer to the descendants of the slaves, the Black population, as those who have ‘rightfully inherited’ Barbados. Those who make this claim of Black nationalism employ a limited view of nationalism because they apply it only to the Black population to the exclusion of the other racial groups that make up Barbados’ population. Even though the assertion of a Black nationalism makes distinctions based on race, the people who make these comments are adamant that their position is not a racist one, it is simply a nationalist one and they are acting in the nations’, who they deem as Black Barbadians, best interest.

What is troubling about this discourse about heritage and belonging is that it does not consider the nuances of the different people who resided on colonial plantation. Specifically, it does not take into consideration that other groups besides slaves were part of the plantation experience. So, then, what about the Whites who also inhabited the colonial plantation, and who also have descendants that are still living in Barbados? Do they also have a claim to be rightful inheritors of Barbados? Does the argument of nationalism extend to them? This is impossible to answer from the blog discussions because the topic of White Barbadians was hardly ever a conversation topic on the blogs during the 2008-10 period that I examined.

This absence of concern for this demographic may be a reflection of the race of those who read and post comments on the blogs. It may also be simply a matter of numbers; after all, according to the 2010 census, the White population is under three percent of the population. Whatever the reason, the absence of concern for
any group except Black Barbadians tells us that the nationalist concerns made by blog posters does not apply across all groups. And it also confirms what many of the posts have said explicitly; nationalist concerns refer to Black nationalism.

On the few occasions that Barbados’ White population was discussed on the blogs it was not in the context of immigration, but rather in reference to economic control of the country (see Chapter three). Considering the arguments that have been made about belonging in Barbados it is surprising that the role of Barbados’ White population in the economy has also not been talked about in the context of immigration. I have already discussed the historical connections between whiteness and economic control in Barbados in Chapter three, and while there have not been recent academic studies on this topic, it is interesting to see that the topic of whiteness and economic dominance is still being mentioned in public forums.

On November 28 2006 the Barbados Free Press (BFP) blog posted a comment made by former Barbados Ambassador to the U.S., Sir Courtney Blackman, which had been printed earlier in the daily Nation News newspaper on November 28, 2006. The blog post appeared two days before Barbados’ fortieth independence anniversary, under the heading “Former Barbados Ambassador to the USA: Whites Are not in Charge of Barbados’ Economy, Whites get Too Much Credit”. BFP moderators report Blackman’s comments as:

I Don’t know why people keep saying Whites control the economy, it simply isn’t true. If Whites were controlling the economy then we would have to give credit to them for the economy doing so well over
the last 40 years. I believe we have done well because successive administrations have followed policies, which have benefitted the vast majority of Barbadians, and the vast majority of Barbadians are black. I would give credit to successive administrations and not a few white people.

The “40 years” mentioned above refers to the number of years that Barbados had been an independent country in 2006. When we look at the previously discussed academic studies on race and economics in Barbados in Chapter three and the “40 years” mentioned above, we have to recognize that the scope of some of those studies cover some of those “40 years”. Certainly the studies cover up to 1990, some 24 years after gaining independence. In addition, those studies discussed in Chapter 3 all make the point that there is in fact White control of Barbados’ corporate economy.

Twenty-nine responses were posted on this topic over the next month with more people agreeing than disagreeing with the claim that Whites do not control Barbados’ economy. Those agreeing with it argue that it is better to adopt a limited historicity of economic development because what happened in the distant past, i.e. during colonial times, no longer still shapes Barbados. For them what happened in the past does not now affect the economic advancements achieved by Black Barbadians. For example, ‘Rumplestilskin’ comments that in reality “all persons of all ethnicit[ies] have contributed to Bim [Barbados]. We can get into semantics, but
there comes a time to move forward and develop. We cannot do that looking at the past. We are one, despite those who wish otherwise”.

‘Rumplestiltskin’s perception is that the racial and class divisions from the past no longer impede development for individual Barbadians of any race or color. Saying it is time to move forward and stop looking at the past is a failure to acknowledge the level of stasis in Barbados’ race-class relations. In reality, Barbados has changed little in its racial configuration. This is not to suggest the absence of positive advancement for the Black majority population because advancements have happened in many ways. But if we look beyond the piecemeal incremental advancements we see the underlying race-class hierarchy has changed little. ‘His idea of moving forward and onward is shared by the first two people who commented on the post. According to bloggers ‘John’ and ‘Passin’ thru’ “our own people divide us”, meaning that Barbadians are usually the ones to see division between their fellow citizens even when there is none actually there. Their comments speak to a larger practice of blaming the person who discusses race as the cause of the race problem, but the result of doing this is to perpetuate the invisibility of racial issues in Barbados.

The bloggers who agreed with the statement were more concerned with separately quantifying the financial assets of Black and White Barbadians. Poster ‘naïve’ says, “there are certainly plenty of black millionaires around us and in the tourist industry a lot of black employees”. ‘naïve’ is correct that the tourism industry is indeed populated by black employees as maids, bellhops, chefs and other service-
oriented jobs, but it is a stretch to call any of them millionaires. Another poster, ‘Hants’, comments, “I am willing to accept that the assets of the 80 percent Black bajans [Barbadians] adds up to more than the assets of the 10 percent white bajans but I bet the whites have more cash in the banks”[sic]. ‘Hants’ population statistics of 80 percent African-Barbadians and 10 percent White Barbadians are inaccurate; the accurate numbers according to the 2010 census are 93% and approximately 3% respectively.

The larger point that both ‘Hants’ and ‘naïve’ make is that not all Black Barbadians are impoverished or from the lower economic classes, and some of them may have assets comparable to some White Barbadians. It is true that Barbadians have made strides in creating a middle class, when, historically under colonial times one did not exist. The questions to ask are, how big is the middle class? And, what kind of assets are they referring to? Houses, cars, land, companies are all assets but they do not all appreciate in value the same way. Cars – which many middle and lower income households have at least one of – actually depreciate annually. Land, companies and houses however largely appreciate and the distribution of these among the various classes and races is very uneven. For example, as Chapter three shows, there are many more White-owned than Black owned companies, and Whites own more land than Blacks.

Those bloggers who disagree with the post make the counter argument that historicity is important, and also, that the old history keeps repeating itself. The two bloggers who disagree with the post make points similar to those made by the
academic studies mentioned earlier in Chapter three. Blogger, ‘Adrian’, for example, asks rhetorically, “my guess is that the Mutual Affair – the same one that university professors Hilary Beckles and Anthony Layne write about – did not happen? … My guess is that the concept of old money is not real?” ‘Denzil’, another blogger, disputes the huge economic gains acquired by the Black population from tourism. He says, money from tourism that stays in the local economy “stays within the hands of [a] small white circle”. He makes the point that in the tourism industry, local ancillary tourism businesses such as pleasure cruises, car rentals, tour companies, and restaurants are predominantly White not Black owned, a point that Cecelia Karch points out in her study of Barbados’ corporate economy.

In making the nationalist argument that Barbados belongs to Black Barbadians, the people who post to the blogs seem to have forgotten that there are non-Black groups who are also citizens, and who, importantly, have also been through the colonial experience. The White population in Barbados has not experienced colonialism in the same way that the Black group has, they are the descendents of people who owned and managed slaves. The idea that Barbados somehow ‘belongs’ to the Black population can be juxtaposed with the reality that most of a small group of White Barbadians own most of the wealth in Barbados (see Chapter 3).

What does it mean, then, when Indian Guyanese immigrants are perceived as being destructive and incompatible with the Black Barbadians and their heritage but the existence of a small group of White Barbadians who own most of the wealth in
the country is hardly debated? The fact that the uneven wealth distribution is uncontested, or worst, thought not to exist, speaks to the extent to which it has been normalized. The wealth and economic control that the White population has is treated as nothing more than ‘normal’ and yet, at the same time Indian Guyanese immigrants are perceived as a ‘threat’ and dangerous competition to the Black population. The fact that the so-called ‘immigration problem’ has been a dominant discussion topic on the blogs for more than two years, but there is very little conversation about the retention of wealth among White Barbadians demonstrates how skewed the recent conversation on race in Barbados is. Race seems to matter only when it refers to one group of people, Indians.

If the arguments about heritage being linked to belonging are to be believed, then why is the time spent by indentured Indians as colonial plantation labors not validated? Descendants of Indian indentured laborers also toiled on colonial plantations, though not as slaves and not for as long a time as slaves. Barbados did not have any indentured labor, but if the definition of belonging to Barbados is defined vis-à-vis a colonial experience, then should the descendants of indentured workers not also have such a claim? The skewed definition of citizenship in relation to the length of colonial suffering and struggle sheds some light on why there is such a strong assertion of Barbados belonging to the Black population.

The idea that Barbados belongs to the Black population – the descendants of slave labor – is new to Barbados. Barbados is populated by a majority Black population and because of this, and the fact that no other group has been in
competition for political power, there has, historically, never been a question of ‘who rightfully belongs in Barbados’. And there has also never any question about who has a right to lead and benefit economically or socially from the country. At independence, Blacks took political leadership and have done so ever since, and there has never been a challenge to this leadership from any other racial group. The emergence in Barbados of this narrative of who Barbados belongs to is interesting because of its newness to Barbados, but also because this same narrative has been discussed before in reference to Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

As discussed in Chapter three, at independence, the argument was made in Guyana that because indentured Indian labor suffered less and for a shorter time during colonialism than slaves, this made them less suited take over leadership of Caribbean countries. In part, the extent and duration of colonial suffering is what has established the ‘right to inherit’ and lead the newly independent countries, but this narrative never applied to Barbados’ independence. And yet almost 50 years after independence this old narrative about competition between Black and Indians has made its way into Barbados. What has been appearing on the blog discussions between 2008-2010 is a re-telling of the old narrative that asks: Of the two sources of colonial labor – African slaves or Indian indentured – whose descendants should inherit the country at independence?

Reusing the narrative of privileging colonial suffering on one hand and the adoption of Englishness – English norms and customs – on the other, also demonstrates how strong Eurocentrism continues to operate in Barbados. In this
instance, Eurocentric ideals are held as a badge of honor and those who have adopted them are privileged in society. Conversely, those who have not – largely the Indian populations – were considered less desirable and able to lead an independent country, and are still considered undesirable migrants for similar reasons. This speaks to the larger assumptions and representations of differences between European as civilized, developed and democratic, and non-Europeans as backward.

Fast-forward to the first decade of the twentieth century and we are no longer talking about independence, but instead migration. Immigration is not the same as political independence, and there is no country to take leadership of but the similarity of the narrative that embraces Black national identity while simultaneously rejecting Indians cannot be denied. Almost fifty years after Barbados’ independence in 1966, the bloggers are making a statement that says the Black population should still be the only inheritors of Barbados. The 1960s debate over who should lead independence in Guyana, and why, appears remarkably similar to the discussion in Barbados about who is a suitable migrant, and why. Denying that race has anything to do with the rejection of Indian immigrants and asserting nationalism in its place seem contradictory because the nationalism argument itself is based on race and the Black heritage of Barbados.
Problems with Black Nationalism

Even though the claim of black nationalism makes distinctions between undesirable immigrants and Barbadians based on race, the people who make this claim are adamant that their position is not a racist one, it is simply a nationalist one and they are acting in the Barbados’ best interest. Using a Black nationalist identity category, then, would mean that Black Guyanese are also deserving of inheriting Barbados, after all, they too are descended from African slave labor. In addition, as I point out in Chapter one, George Roberts has chronicled extensive immigration of Black Barbadian labor immigrating to Guyana in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. Some of Guyana’s Black population, then, has ancestors in Barbados. But in most of the immigration debates, Black-Guyanese, non-Indian Guyanese, and migrants who are not Guyanese or even Caribbean, have been left out of the discussion. Such an omission suggests that while Indian-Guyanese migrants were being problematized, the presence of non-Indian Guyanese migrants was being perceived as unproblematic. In other words, there is a system of hierarchical arrangements of migrants ranging from suitable to unsuitable.

The Black nationalism argument does not take into consideration that other groups besides slaves were part of the colonial plantation experience – for example, what about the Whites who also inhabited the colonial plantation, and who also have descendants that are still living in Barbados? Do they also have a claim to be rightful inheritors of Barbados? And in fact, as I discuss in Chapter three, research on race in Barbados has almost exclusively focused on the economic dominance of a
small group of White Barbadians who have maintained that control since the colonial era. This group was a part of the slave plantation experience as owners and managers, and so, in theory, using a slave plantation experience as justification for inheriting from Barbados also includes this group. As I have said in multiple places in this dissertation, of all the people who were a part of the colonial plantation, it is only White Barbadians who have truly inherited what Barbados has to offer. And yet, this group and the fact of their economic dominance, has remained largely outside the scope of the discussion. Although this group is the economically dominant group in Barbados, they have managed to remain invisible during discourses in the same country that talk directly about achieving economic dominance.

At the risk of sounding as if I am offering a justification for the racist perspectives used to make the Black nationalism argument, I want to offer an explanation of where such an argument is coming from. To be clear, the Black nationalism argument is deeply flawed because it is laced with racism. The blog responses demonstrate an expressed interest in having and keeping Barbados’ Black in population in a dominant position over Indian Guyanese. However, having said that, it is still important to understand the larger social and historical context within which such an argument exists and also, to understand why such an argument would emerge in the context of Barbados. To make sense of the Black nationalist argument that has emerged as a theme from the blog discussions it is vital to situate the immigration debates within the larger racializing structures of
colonialism, and also, to understand that colonial structures did not disappear with the formal end of colonialism at independence.

Under colonialism, Black labor occupied a position that was defined by processes of erasure of their history, language, personhood and freedom. Colonialism in general dehistoricized African civilization and labeled it backward, undeveloped and primitive. African slave labor was treated accordingly, as beasts of burden who had to be civilized by being taught Christianity and given Western names. As I point out in Chapter two, anti-and post-colonial challenges to the perceived Black inferiority and corresponding White superiority have been long and arduous, and they are still continuing. The Black nationalism argument can be interpreted from this history of erasures and also from the struggles that the Black population have fought for equality and economic wellbeing. We can begin to make sense of the Black nationalism argument, then, by situating it within a context of fear, specifically, a fear that the Black Barbadian population has of losing what they have achieved. For example, their achievements in political leadership, provisions of universal health coverage and education, working and middle class positions that can afford them items such as cars, land and homes.

As I have continually made clear throughout the dissertation, having a fear of Indian-Guyanese moving into Barbados and advancing economically faster than the Black population, however, does not account for other racial groups that also need to be included in any narrative on the economic positioning of the Black population in Barbados. To put it differently, the concern over Indian-Guyanese immigrants,
and not over the continued dominance of Barbados’ White economic elite, or over the loss of land and real estate to the super rich who continually purchase and own such in Barbados is a displacement of fear. The continual perfect correlation between whiteness and wealth in Barbados must also be scrutinized, because it is more of an obstacle to Barbados’ Black population advancing economically than Indian-Guyanese immigrants. But it is difficult to closely scrutinize or better yet challenge this dominance because of the racial power that is inscribed on whiteness and the social class power attributed to wealth. It is far easier to attack poor Indian-Guyanese migrants than it is to attempt to confront the racially-structured system in Barbados that favors whiteness.

**Cultural**

The cultural reasons given for why Indian-Guyanese immigrants should be excluded from Barbados are differences in religion, political voting based on race and a perceived hatred that Indians have for Black people. Many people on the blogs who argue there are cultural differences between Indian Guyanese and Barbados in general, and Black Barbadians in particular, use Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago as negative examples of multiculturalism to support their point. Some blog posts have been direct in accusing Caribbean people of Indian descent of malicious and destructive intent.

On March 9, 2010 the blog post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” appeared on *Barbados Underground* (BU) and over the course of nine days it
generated one hundred and eight comments. The post, submitted by the blog host ‘David’, is in response to a newspaper article which claimed that Hindus want the government of Barbados to grant national holidays for the observance of Hindu festivals. Blog host, ‘David’, rejects the suggestion because Barbados’ population has a predominantly Black population and a very small Hindu population and also, because he thinks that the multi-racial composition of a population brings trouble. Using Trinidad and Tobago as an example of failed multiracial composition, he states, “it seems like only yesterday when a similar conversation started in Trinidad . . . to this day T&T continues to be challenged by the multi-racial composition of its population”.

Later in the discussion ‘David’ tells the reader that “the gist of this blog [BU] . . . is to remind Barbadians WE have to determine the type of society WE want to build” [sic]. He also says in another comment, “BU’s position is nothing personal, it is about a nation planning the kind of society it wants”. The type of society that ‘David,’ and others refer to is a Christian one. ‘David’ does not say explicitly what or how Barbadians will be threatened by multi-racial composition but he is adamant that it will happen if Barbados does not manage its immigration.

In the blog post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” – as well as in others, for example, “Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Green Paper On Immigration” – blog host ‘David’ repeatedly states that his concern with the immigration of Indian Guyanese is not about racism but rather managing minority groups. In his reply to a comment that asks the people who read and post to the BU blog not to perpetuate
racism because they have experienced it personally, ‘David’ says, “The issue for BU has nothing to do with not liking Indo Guyanese. BU’s position has always been about managing different ethnic groups in a host population which is predominantly Black” (Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Green Paper On Immigration”). To support his position that Barbados should have a policy of managed migration ‘David’ makes the claim that Barbadians can see the evidence of failing to manage ethnic or minority groups in neighboring countries.

Other posters agree with ‘David’ and have identified Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana as examples of countries that have experienced discord between their Black and Indian populations. For example, in the same post “Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Green Paper On Immigration” ‘JC’ states:

I vehemently refuse to be an ass to the reality of Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and YES I SAID IT RACIST GUYANA. Too many of their black natives are crying out for racism for it not to be a reality . . . you think when these people come here to Barbados in droves that they will not bring their beliefs cultures and oh yeah THEIR HATRED OF BLACKS [sic].

The above scenarios give the impression that the Indians who live among other racial group are the sole ‘cause’ of racism in these countries. According to ‘JC’ and ‘David’, the perception of Indian immigrants is that they customarily practice racism and cause racial disharmony within any country that they live. Racism, then, is considered to be an inherent part of Indian Guyanese culture. Put differently, the
perception is that to be Indian Guyanese, Indian Trinidadian or even Indian Fijian, is then, to be automatically racist.

In the post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” ‘David’ calls the problem “multi-racial composition”, but what he really is talking about is religion, specifically the practice and national recognition of a non-Christian religion which he argues will damage the Christian “traditional value set” in Barbados. Continuing in the same post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” ‘David’, uses religion as an example to demonstrate an incompatibility between Black Barbadians and Indian CARICOM immigrants, and also to create the impression of a difference between what is normal – Christianity – and what is the ‘Other’ – Hinduism.

But the concerns over religion are not only about Christianity or non-Christianity, they are also about what some of the bloggers consider to the social and cultural practices associated with the religion. For example, some people question whether the peace that Barbados is accustomed to would continue with a larger population of Hindus. In his reply to the post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” ‘gadfly’ for example says:

I may be in my grave, but I am confident that this island will be taken away from the black people who built it. We are going to be re-enslaved by this manipulative race. We are allowing these Indo-Guyanese and Indo-Trinis to buy their way into Barbados, while the Afro-Guyanese are being deported every day. Can Hindus and Muslims teach anyone in Barbados about peace and prosperity? A
cursory look at Guyana would give the lie to this statement. Does any Afro-Barbadian engage in honour killings if a female member of the family marries someone who does not belong to his religion or race? Everyone, except the greedy politicians knows that Indo-Guyanese marry for race and not love. Go back to Guyana if you want to enjoy your religious festivals. Barbados is a Christian society [sic].

‘gadfly’ introduces a number of points in his post including one about practices that are permissible in Indian Guyanese culture, but not in Barbadian culture. He notes that while it is not customary to practice honor killings of female family members in Barbados, it is in Guyana, and this is an example of the cultural practices that he does not want in Barbados.

Another poster, ‘Miles Davis’ also comments on the lack of cultural assimilation that he fears may happen. He says:

I was waiting for this to happen. We let these aliens into our country and they want to dictate the way they want to live. I am amazed by the arrogance of these people who leave their own country and come to Barbados which have a completely different culture to theirs – and expect to have their local norms and customs respected by the host country. Barbados is a christian country if want to practice your norms and customs go back to wherever you come and do it [t]here. We do not want you here [sic].
Here again we see the strong assertion that Barbados is a Christian society and a desire to keep it so out of fear of different religious practices. ‘Miles Davis’ seems to be conflating showing a respect for immigrant culture, and the fact that immigrant groups may want to retain aspects of their culture, with migrant group wanting to take over their newly adopted country because of such retention. He also suggests that once an immigrant enters a new country they have given up any rights to choose how they want to live, they must instead subject themselves to choices made for them by their adopted country.

But why should assimilation be a requirement for migrants? Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic make the point that as critical race theory develops and moves forward, it will have to engage in issues such as societies requiring migrant assimilation as a condition for access to jobs and services (132). Beyond this, in the context of Barbados, critical race theory will also have to address the opposite, the assumption that there will be no immigrant assimilation, and that the fear that the host society will have to change to accommodate immigrants.

Other posters comment on what they consider to be a malicious intent of Indian immigrants to change the social and cultural practices in Barbados instead of assimilating into existing Barbadian culture. Some people have argued that with sufficient numbers immigrant populations will continually try to change the various social institutions, not just religious ones. While commenting on the post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” ‘Visus’, says, “the next thing they will ask for are radio and television licences, and Hindu schools which government must subsidize. When
they numbers grow enough they will start to form their own political party” [sic]. In other words, a large Indian Guyanese presence will affect the way the current social institutions look – there may be schools and political parties, for example, which cater exclusively to Indians in Barbados.

Of course there are also posters who are less critical of having a multicultural society, including multiple religions. Poster ‘Christopher Halsall’, for example responds directly to blog owner ‘David’ in the post “Hindus in Barbados Show Insensitivity” saying:

For the record, I find this article quite possibly the most disgusting thing you have ever published. It is one thing for a commenter to speak in such biased terms (no matter how much facilitated), it quite another thing for the Blog owner to do so. IMHO [in my humble opinion], tolerance and acceptance are key to the ***Human*** race’s continuation. What you, David, have communicated loud and clear is that you have no intention nor desire of either [sic].

Christopher Halsall’s response to the post rejects both the people who leave comments on the BU blog and the blog owner himself for promoting intolerance, but ‘David’ is adamant in his position that Barbadians have a responsibility to be vigilant about immigration. In his reply to ‘Christopher Halsall’ he says, [y]our answer highlights the problem Barbados faces as we sit and watch the weeds take root in our lawn . . . In other words, while the pacifist like yourself defend your agenda the pragmatist among us must find solutions to ensure survival”. Again, like in Chapter
five and the previous discussion in this chapter, bloggers suggest that the survival of Barbados’ Black population is one of the main issues regarding immigration. In addition, it also comes back to a theme of thinking about immigrants in terms of us versus them.

It is interesting to see the configuration of who constitutes ‘us’ versus ‘them’ during the debates on CARICOM immigration. Considering the already established and functioning CSME, Indian Guyanese, who are very much a part of CARICOM, were excluded from the definition of “us”. What this small study of Barbados’ experience with CARICOM immigration suggests is that a Caribbean history of shared colonialism may be an insufficient to inspire unity between different groups of people in the Caribbean. Ironically, the configuration of ‘us’ is also equally surprising. By omission, by not calling attention to the race-class nexus that exists in Barbados, many of the bloggers have – whether knowingly or not – aligned themselves with and perpetuated the maintenance of White economic power in Barbados. And by putting what they call ‘national’ interest ahead of class interests they have done the same thing. Put differently, there are no class alignments between the working and middle classes of Barbados and the working classes of the Indian Guyanese immigrants. In this regard, based on the discussions on the blogs ‘us’ is essentially Barbadians, including Whites Barbadians.

A desire to protect the cultural heritage of Barbados makes sense when we consider the ways in which Black history and culture have been erased and dehistoricized through colonialism. This is not to offer an explanation for the overt
racism leveled at Indian-Guyanese immigrants or to make excuses for the ways in which Indian-Guyanese cultural expressions and institutions have been negatively cast, but rather to help situate the discourse of cultural retention and protection. As discussed in Chapter two, processes of colonialism effectively stripped Black slaves of most of their African cultural heritage. The framework of this history sheds some light on why the black population in Barbados may express a desire to protect what they hold as their Black cultural expressions.

What is ironic is that posters like ‘David’, the host of the BU blog, deny racism as a motive for their position on Indian Guyanese or any other Indian immigrants coming into Barbados, but the language that they use to talk about this immigrant group is often racist. Even when the comments are coded as ‘nationalist’ or ‘cultural’ they still work to differentiate Indian Guyanese from Black Barbadians, and also to cast Indian Guyanese as ‘Other’ to the normative Black Barbadian.

One of the most apropos examples of the irony comes from the poster ‘VOR’ in his reply to “Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Green Paper On Immigration. ‘VOR’ says:

I am not racist. I have Indian friends, but, I love Barbados and would not like to see such a beautiful country destroyed by racial tensions. If this [unmanaged immigration] continues, you will wake up one morning to Indian music on the radio, flags painted in the yards, Indian towns, Indian political parties, Indian wants, Indian needs . . . then chaos.
As ‘VOR’ is justifying why he is not a racist, he simultaneously writes that the mere presence of Indian immigrants will cause chaos, result in racial tensions, change and destroy Barbados. ‘VOR’ also resorts to the often-used claim that says I am not racist because I have friends who look different from me, but fails to realize that he is differentiating that group of people from himself, and is also using that differentiation to deny the group equality with him. ‘VOR’ does not like that he may one day ‘hear Indian music on the radio’, but this in no way automatically leads to racial ‘chaos’ as he insinuates.

Like many other comments about immigration on the blogs, after making the claim that he is not racist, and his concerns are only for Barbados not being destroyed by Indian immigrants, ‘VOR’ goes on to say that Barbados rightfully belongs to Barbadians. He ends his comment by saying, “let us stand up for what is rightfully ours! Barbados is our country, and wanting to preserve our lifestyle for our future generations in our right” (“Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Green Paper On Immigration”). ‘VOR’, then, is making the point that many others have made, he is not racist, he is advocating for Black nationalism. But what ‘VOR’ and the others who make this point do not realize is that the way they advocate for Black nationalism is by making racist claims about Indian Guyanese based on nothing but some essentialist common sense ‘knowledge’ about that group. And also, their assertions of Black nationalism are based only on attempts to keep Indian Guyanese migrants in a state of dispossession. Let us not forget why migrants are leaving
Guyana and coming into Barbados – because they are in search of better economic opportunities for themselves and their families.

A part of the discussion about Indian Guyanese migration has been about the competition they will be for Black Barbadian labor, but even in the context of labor competition, many of the comments have also been about their race and perceived innate characteristics that, supposedly, automatically make them racists. In addition, labor competition has often been secondary to discussions about how Indian Guyanese migrants are destructive and only want to spread an agenda of oppressing Black people. Beyond this, many of the people who comment on the blogs state their own nationalist argument for not wanting a large number of immigrants in Barbados in racialized terms; Barbados is a predominantly Black society and we want to keep it that way. Put another way, Indian Guyanese should be kept out simply because they are not Black.

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that most of the blog posters consider Black Barbadian culture to be normative, and as such the only acceptable cultural expression. This is very similar to many of the points made in the previous discussion on nationalism, which says that Black nationalism is the only type of nationalism that Barbados and Barbadians should try to retain. In both cases, most of the bloggers are concerned with maintaining the Black population, and as such, cultural exchanges with Indian immigrants are looked at as detrimental to achieving this goal.
Two of the racist tropes used to demonstrate the legitimacy of Black Barbadians is what Shohat and Stam call “positing of lack that is, the projection of the racially stigmatized as deficient in terms of European norms, as lacking in order, intelligence, sexual modesty, material civilization, even history” and “the mania for hierarchy, for ranking not only peoples (placing Europeans above non-Europeans, Zulus over Bushmen) but also artifacts and cultural practices”(23). In Chapter five, and here in Chapter 6, Indian Guyanese have been perceived and portrayed as deficient in the requisite English norms to be compatible with Barbados. Ranking differences of religious and other cultural institutions, and different ways of cultural expressions within these institutions, are merely coded ways of speaking about racial exclusions.

**Conclusion**

The themes of many of the comments made against Indian Guyanese immigrants have been as follows: one, a denial of being racist; two, concern that Indian Guyanese immigrants in particular will destroy Barbados; and three the claim that Barbados belongs to its Black population. Despite the repetition of these themes across Chapters five and six, the bloggers that I have quoted above give no real evidence to substantiate the claims that immigrants, especially Indian Guyanese, will cause the destruction of Barbados or that they will supplant Barbadian culture. What is stated as evidence is usually a story of an unpleasant encounter with an Indian Guyanese, a second hand story or what they ‘just know’ to
be the truth about the way Indian Guyanese are. Such questionable ‘evidence’ is then used to make generalizations about the entire group of immigrants.

For example, in his reply to “Town Hall Meetings to Discuss Green Paper on Immigration” ‘JC’ recounts an incident in which his 4-year-old daughter was not allowed to use a bathroom in a store owned and managed by an Indian Barbadian. He concluded from the incident “those persons don’t give a shit about us black bajans. THAT IS WHY I WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AS MANY BLACK BUSINESSWS THAT I CAN FIND: Blood suckers! [sic]”. ‘JC’ uses this single incident to make conclusions about how one group of people feel about another group. But what is the origin of these supposed self-evident truths?

In another example, the poster, ‘Anonymous 1’, who also replied to “Town Hall Meetings to Discuss Green Paper on Immigration”, says, “We are doomed. There is a case where an Indo-Guyanese who came into Barbados in the early 90’s has established a construction firm and has hired all . . . Indo-Guyanese” [sic]. Whether true or false, ‘Anonymous 1’ has concluded from the story that all Indian Guyanese will act like the person in the story and only hire Indian Guyanese.

Critical race theory reminds us that it is precisely this habit of using what we just know to be truth without any real evidence, or a single story that is told as a generalized truth, that we must interrogate. How are these bloggers making the leap from single incident to general truth? The origins of such ‘truths’ have to come from somewhere, and, as previously discussed in Chapter three, when we examine the colonial history of the Guyana we see that similar narratives have been in existence
since the early twentieth century when indentured labor joined ex-slave labor on the plantations. The story that has been repeatedly told, that there will be inherent competition between ex-slaves and the ‘newcomers’ the Indian indentured laborers. It has a long history in both Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. There is no history of it in Barbados and yet it is being used to help explain how Indian migrants will behave and interact with Black Barbadians in Barbados.

Bloggers such as ‘The Scout’, ‘Kammie Holder’, ‘David’ and many of the other persons who write about immigration on the BU and BFP blogs all write about immigration as if it will inevitably lead to a competition between immigrants and the citizens of Barbados. The idea that issues of immigration can be summarized as a zero-sum of winners or losers is interesting in itself, but what is even more so is why the blog comments that oppose immigration mostly point to the Black Barbadian population as always losing and the Indian Guyanese immigrants as always winning. This is an important question that needs further study in order to be answered.

As discussed in Chapter three, certainly when we look at the example race relations between Blacks and Indians in Guyana we see that for the first 28 years of independence the Black-based political party ruled government, and for the next 23 years the Indian-based party ruled. Each group has had some control over the state and its resources, and neither groups has had a permanent monopoly. Likewise, the narrative of Barbados belonging to the Black population – the descendants of slave labor – is also an old narrative that has been reappearing on the blogs. Black
Barbadians never had to defend their place in Barbados’s history or future because the country has continuously remained largely Black. But with increasing immigration, and its potential to change the island’s demographics, much of the immigration debate has turned to stating, legitimizing and defending a position that says Blacks are the rightful inheritors of Barbados.

What is missing from the ways in which Barbadian bloggers have discussed CARICOM migrants in Barbados is a realistic account of the ongoing racial history in Barbados. The impression you get from the blog discussions alone is that Barbados is a society that has no racial divisions and no racial concerns, and that CARICOM immigrants, particularly Indian-Guyanese immigrants will bring racial problems with them into Barbados. This however is a false notion because as Critical Race Theory says, racism is normative and exists everywhere. In addition, Barbados is a postcolonial society, meaning that it has been (and continues to be) shaped by the racialized social system of colonialism. Being an independent country does not mean that the racial problems from colonialism have disappeared, and in Barbados’ case, many studies already discussed have shown a continued positive correlation between wealth and whiteness, where a few White families dominate the corporate economy. In contrast, while the Black population has enjoyed social mobility, they have not made it past the middle classes because there is still a glass ceiling of whiteness that prevents entry into the upper classes.

The ways in which the bloggers have made sense of their racial positioning in Barbados vis-à-vis CARICOM immigrants, then, lack many important nuances that
emerge when we situate the conversations about immigration in larger structural frameworks of Barbados’ and the Caribbean’s colonial history and also in Barbados’ specific racialized structure. Not historicizing Barbados’ deep-seated racial problems and not mentioning them at all effectively leaves them invisible. Black positioning in the lower and middle class strata relative to the White upper strata should have been a part of the narrative of racialization occurring on the blog discussions in Barbados, but it was not. Such omissions serve one major purpose, they strategically to help maintain the status quo in Barbados, which has always been White wealth at the top of the social hierarchy.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION

This dissertation has critically examined concerns about immigration, particularly Indian Guyanese migrants, which were expressed in Barbados between 2008 and 2010. Responses from both the public and the government of Barbados suggest that these migrants are, and will continue to be, problems. The government of Barbados was concerned with CARICOM migrants in general, but for most of the public that concern was limited to one group of people, Indians from Guyana. The singular focus on Indian Guyanese is a very racialized approach to immigration, and this becomes obvious when we consider that Guyana also has a very large Black population that was not singled out. In fact, they were rarely mentioned in the debates about immigration. Black Guyanese look like the majority of Barbadians – who are also Black – but Indian Guyanese look different. It is important to note that Barbados is predominantly a Black country, with this demographic accounting for approximately 95 percent of the total population, and we have to keep this in mind when we try to make sense of the fear of Indian Guyanese immigrants.

To be clear, the fact that Indian Guyanese look different from most Barbadians is not something that I expand on in the dissertation, because I have not based my critique of the ‘immigration problem’ on supposed phenotypical
differences between people. And in fact, how people may look different from each other was not a part of any of the conversations about immigration. I make this point about skin color only in so far as it helps to make very clear and obvious that the race of the Guyanese migrant greatly affected how they were being discussed, Indians Guyanese were often the center of the conversation and Black Guyanese were hardly ever mentioned at all. By this one measure alone, race mattered.

The immigration debates were racialized in other ways, one of which was the preconceived essentialist perceptions about Indian Guyanese behavior. Perceptions that once a sufficiently large number of Indian Guyanese relocate to Barbados they will automatically endeavor to dominate and supplant Black Barbadians and their cultural norms because that is what they, Guyanese, do. Indian Guyanese were portrayed as being incapable of peaceably coexisting with any Black population, with the racial tensions between Blacks and Indians in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Fiji used as supporting examples. It is this perception of domination, and the idea that Indians always try to dominate Black people, that many of the blog participants said they feared.

But as I have discussed, critical race theory warns us of the dangers of common sense ideas of a group of people, such as these taken-for-granted essentialist assumptions about Indians. Without critique these continually circulate and get reused, and this is precisely what I found was happening in Barbados. The perception of Indians as villainous, destructive and always seeking to dominate Black people is an old idea generated from colonial times when both Indian
indentured and Black ex-slave labor worked on colonial plantations in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Colonial powers promoted competition between these two groups of plantation labor through ‘divide and rule’ tactics in order to prevent them from banding together and challenging colonial rule. Although Barbados never had indentured labor, the assumption of a naturally occurring division between Indians and Blacks that has persisted in both Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago have been exported there. These same old ideas about the character of the Indian as one who is trying to dominate Black people has been used to justify why they should not be allowed to migrate to Barbados, and also, why those already there should be deported.

Another way in which the debates about immigration have been racialized is through the claims made by Barbadian bloggers, which says that the descendants of African slaves who labored on Barbados’ colonial plantations should be the people to live in and benefit from Barbados. Indian immigrants do not fit into this identity category, and hence, they should not be allowed to migrate to Barbados. Bloggers refer to this as an expression of nationalism because Barbados’ population has been predominantly Black. They assert a claim for Black Barbadians to prosper from what Barbados has to offer, and want to deny entry to Indian Guyanese because they consider Barbados to be a Black nation. In a real sense they want a country by, of and for Black people. I instead argue that the discourse of Black nationalism is a racist one because it is intended only to subjugate Indian Guyanese, to keep this specific groups of people from seeking a better life in Barbados.
Using a Black nationalist identity category does not exclude Black Guyanese, after all, they too are descended from African slave labor, and according to George Roberts, they may also be descended from Barbadians who migrated to Guyana at the turn of the twentieth century. I have also explained why asserting a claim on Barbados based on a Black identity is problematic simply because there are also White and Indian Barbadians, who ironically, possess most of the economic power in the country. And so, while the Black nationalist identity states that Black Barbadians should be the rightful inheritors of Barbados, other groups have been prospering economically, and this fact has not been critiqued in any way. In addition, in most of the immigration debates, non-Guyanese Indians, including migrants who are not Guyanese, have been left out of the discussion. Migrants from around the world appear not to be considered a problem.

As I have noted, the specific targeting of Indian Guyanese is especially problematic because both Barbados and Guyana are members of the CARICOM single Market and Economy (CSME), a regional integration strategy that, if fully implemented, would result in labor being able to move freely between all the member countries. That means Guyanese migrant labor would be able to work in Barbados without needing a work permit. Even though the full implementation of the CSME has not yet occurred, the fact is, between 2008 and 2010 when debates about immigration were at their highest, it had already been implemented on a limited scale – some categories of workers were already able to migrate between member countries, including Guyana and Barbados. The conjuncture of these two
events cannot be ignored, and in fact, I argue that this conjuncture makes this dissertation especially significant. Although most of the Indian Guyanese migrants that have been the focus of the debates did not enter Barbados under the framework of the CSME, in a real sense what I examine in Barbados is a look at the CSME in action, a look at how the people who are experiencing it are responding to it, but more research is needed on this.

Perhaps the people who say that Barbados should have managed migration, or those who reject immigration altogether, see their opposition as promoting some sort of social justice for Black Barbadians, specifically, justice for the fact that Black Barbadians are the descendants of slaves who suffered and survived the horrors of slavery. Even if this is the case, the social justice for this group should not come at the expense of social justice for another. The Guyanese population, whether descended from African or Indian colonial labor, also deserves social justice from the underdevelopment precipitated by colonialism. A “refusal of empathy, the withholding of sympathy for people caught up in the struggle for survival within the existing social order, the maintenance of a cool, skeptical distance in the face of claims of oppression [and] the systematic devalorization of life” (23), according to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, are two of the key mechanisms through which colonial-style racism occurs. They remind us that these components of racism force a binary of “us/them” (24), which we have seen demonstrated throughout the dissertation.
The CSME and its free movement of labor is supposed to be a step towards getting social and economic justice for all of its member countries – justice in the form of reducing poverty and affording a better life. It is also supposed to be a step towards forming a unity among the member countries, a unity sufficiently strong to constitute a community. Comments from the two blogs that I have used suggest that if the CSME wants to achieve social justice for all the different population groups in its member countries, it needs to engage rather than ignore the aspects of racial subordination that I have discussed in this dissertation.

Admittedly, the scope of this dissertation is small – I have examined only immigration into Barbados, and there are many more CSME countries – and I am not making any general statements about the current state of race relations in the entire Caribbean. The fact remains, however, that the re-emergence of these old divisive accounts of race relations between the Black and Indian populations, even on such a small scale, is a cause for concern and further study. It is important to understand how these narratives have been passed down if there is to be any intervention to change them. This is especially needed since the CSME member countries are supposed to be growing as one community.

A real immigration problem may one day exist if too many immigrants populate Barbados simply because of its very small size and limited resources, but there are still many unanswered questions that have emerged out of the discussion in the dissertation. Further questions must be asked and answered, including: Is the immigration issue in Barbados really only a matter of numbers and the country’s
small size? In one sense it has to be, and yet the above discussion has also
demonstrated that who constitutes those numbers also matters. In other words, it
matters that perceived racial and cultural differences get mobilized within
immigration debates, and values are attributed to these perceived differences.

Questions also need to be asked about how immigrants to Barbados are rated
and valued. Who matters more and who matters less? Indian Guyanese have been
singled out as a group that needs to be controlled more than any other.
Extrapolating from this, Indian Guyanese appear to matter less then even their Black
Guyanese counterparts. While this speaks of race as a point on the value scale,
Jamaicans, many of whom are Black, have also come under scrutiny in some of the
blog posts. Race, then, matters, but maybe something else also does.

The discussion on who should have the right to occupy and thrive in
Barbados that has accompanied the rising Indian population, is similar to what
transpired in the 1960s as Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago gained political
independence from their colonizers. The issue then, as it is now, is a question of
what should a post-colonial society formed from the descendants of both African
slaves and Indian indentured labors look like? At this juncture in Barbados – an
island with over 90% Black population is experiencing a relatively large increase of
Indian population – some of the discourse about the uncertainty of these two groups
coexisting together looks oddly familiar. It resembles the discussions about national
identity that took place during the lead up to the independence of Guyana and
Trinidad and Tobago.
But neither this juncture in Barbados, nor the CSME, is about independence from a colonial oppressor; it is about moving forward in the global economic space by forging a larger, more united economy and society that can compete against and with more powerful countries. Has this vision been lost to the bloggers that I have been discussing? Going forward, further research is also needed on how Caribbean people feel about the CSME. As the first regional integration strategy to include people moving between member countries, it is important to know how the people who experience, and will experience it, feel about it.

In chapter two, I chronicled how a change in the sociopolitical and economic circumstances of Caribbean countries was translated into societal critique. This was especially obvious in the various anti-and post-colonial critiques that came in the early to mid twentieth century. For example, critiques of Black inferiority, and increasing Black consciousness became more prominent expressions about blackness once colonialism was nearing its end and independence was beginning. I consider the CSME to represent another period of significant change in the social and economic circumstances of Caribbean countries. It is change that will be defined by an increase of more openings between island boundaries and an opportunity for what Sridath Ramphal calls an “ethos of unity” (7) to develop. Although in its infancy, it is a period of increasing movement of people, and increasing uncertainty. It is also a period of increasing movement of capital, something I do not discuss in this dissertation, but which may very well reshape the economies of member countries, and this too needs further study.
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BIOGRAPHY

Stacey Cumberbatch received her Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Political Science from the University of the West Indies in 1996 and her Masters of Science in Development Studies from the University of the West Indies in 1998. She has taught at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill campus, and at George Mason University.