

JEAN-PIERRE GUENGANT

Whither the Caribbean exodus?: prospects for the 1990s

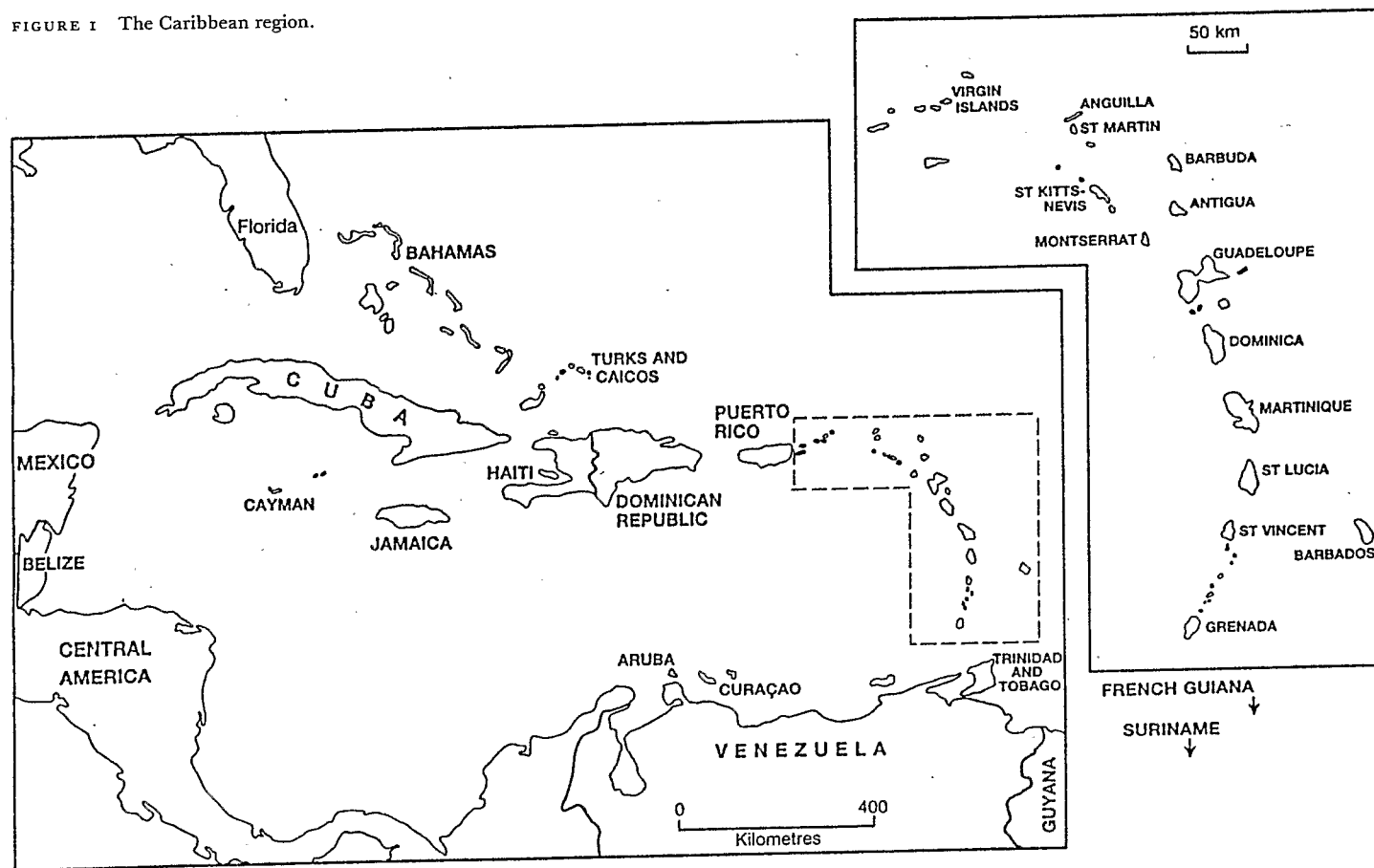
On a world scale, the economies of the Caribbean are small, open, dependent, and undiversified; in consequence, they are very susceptible to external shocks. This is not a new situation. Since the time of their colonization, the Caribbean economies have never been self-sustaining. Structured as plantation economies, they specialized from the outset in the export of primary commodities and have had to import almost everything else, including food.

Following the end of World War II, however, the Caribbean region underwent a major transformation. Most of the larger countries and many of the small islands pursued industrialization strategies in an attempt to overcome the colonial order which had previously confined them to the production of primary goods. Over the following quarter-century, the key objectives of these programmes were modernization and diversification, and these goals were pursued primarily through industrialization. In addition, mechanization was introduced into the agricultural export sector. For social as well as economic reasons, health and education programmes were launched with the objective of attaining levels of health and education similar to those prevailing in the industrialized nations. This was also the period when

Senior researcher, Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le développement en coopération (ORSTOM), and associate professor of demography, Université des Antilles-Guyane, Guadeloupe.

An earlier version of this paper was distributed at the conference, 'Migration, Human Rights and Economic Integration,' York University, Toronto, 19-22 November 1992. The author would like to thank Professor Alan B. Simmons as well as the editors of the *Journal* for their assistance and encouragement.

FIGURE 1 The Caribbean region.



most anglophone countries in the region as well as Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) achieved nationhood.

During this period of economic and social transformation, most Caribbean countries lost a large proportion of their populations through migration. Indeed their integration into the world economy occurred both at the local level (through changing patterns of production and adaptation to technology and markets) and abroad (through the absorption of the Caribbean labour surplus into the economies of the Northern metropolises where so many Caribbean emigrants settled).

In this postwar period, definite advances were achieved in the health and educational fields. Standards of living increased in most countries during the 1950s and the 1960s, although in the 1970s and 1980s about one-half of the countries in the region experienced either economic stagnation or decline. Nevertheless, after some forty years of effort to change the colonial economic order, and despite some achievements, no country in the region, nor the region as a whole, has developed a truly diversified economy. Caribbean economies remain very dependent on a narrow range of specialized niches – tourism, offshore business services, tropical fruits, for example – within the global economy. Some of the smaller countries have been very successful in exploiting these niches, but many of the other Caribbean countries are fighting poor economic performances, budget deficits, and balance of payments problems.

Today, most Caribbean countries face two related challenges: first, structural adjustment, or how to maintain income in a rapidly changing global economy; second, the development of trade blocs, or how to deal with the powerful trade blocs emerging in Europe and North America. How will the Caribbean region and individual Caribbean countries integrate into the new world economy? Will standards of living fall or remain stagnant, as has been the case in many countries over the past ten to fifteen years? Will income and social conditions improve as they did in some of the smaller countries of the region over the same period? Bearing in mind that emigration from the region played a huge rôle

Table 1 Labour force in agriculture and GDP per capita since World War II

	Land area (sq. km.)	Population Beg. 1990 (000s)†	Percentage of population in the agricultural sector§				GDP per capita () in US dollars			
			1940s/50s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1960	1970	1980	1990
Cuba	110,922	10574.9 Of.Est.	41.7	36.7 UN	30.7	25.6	245 E	446 E	1,427 UN	NA
Dominican Republic	48,442	6591.0 Aut.Est.	69.9	67.5	52.2	45.7 UN	238 UN	366 UN	1,218 UN	830
Haiti	27,750	5939.0 Est(1)	85.5	83.0 E	80.4	67.3	75	93	292	370
Puerto Rico	8,897	3514.0 C 90	39.2	24.2	8.0	2.9	790 UN	2,089 UN	4,935 UN	NA
Jamaica*	11,424	2317.3 C 91	48.3	39.7	32.2	31.3 UN	433	748	1,228	1500
Trinidad & Tobago*	5,128	1229.3 C 90	29.1	22.1	16.3	10.2	604	865	6,048	3610
Barbados*	430	256.8 C 90	33.3	26.4	17.0	9.5	378	759	3,350	6540
Guyana*	215,000	794.2 UN	48.2	37.1	29.6	25.1	299	378	747	330
Grenada*	344	90.6 C 91	51.9	43.3	34.1	27.7	135	229	744	2190
Saint Vincent*	384	106.4 C 91	57.7	42.0	29.9	30.9	163	210	584	1720
Saint Lucia*	616	133.2 C 91	60.0	53.1	40.5	32.1	189	357	942	1900
Dominica*	787	72.2 C 91	42.8	52.0	40.0	37.0	178	250	676	2210
Antigua*	442	65.9 C 91	47.7	34.3	11.8	5.0 E	478	695	1,383	4600
Saint Kitts-Nevis*	352	42.0 C 91	58.5	47.6	35.2	29.3	217	313	920	3330
Montserrat*	102	11.0 C 91	65.6	48.9	20.4	10.1	374 E	543 UN	1,990 UN	6800
Belize*	22,965	185.2 C 91	46.2	41.9	37.0	36.6	274	395	1,181	1990
Bahamas*	13,935	253.2 C 90	27.1	16.1	7.7	5.8	1,017	2,133	3,475	11420
Bermuda	53	58.0 C 91	6.0	4.0 E	1.6	1.3	1,954	3,449	10,933	NA
U.S. Virgin Islands	344	101.7 C 90	20.6	5.6	1.2	1.1	706	3,522	7,476	NA

Curaçao	444	148.0	Aut.Est.	8.0 E	1.8	1.0 E	0.4	1,259 UN	1,376 UN	6,160 UN	NA
Aruba	193	61.1	Of.Est.	5.0 E	1.4	0.7 E	0.2	1,259 UN	1,376 UN	6,160 UN	NA
Suriname	163,265	402.5	Of.Est.	35.0 E	29.9 UN	24.8 UN	19.9 UN	382	784	2,807	3050
Guadeloupe	1,705	385.5	C 90	49.9	48.7	22.1	15.0	372 E	874 UN	4,242 UN	NA
Martinique	1,100	358.8	C 90	47.6	40.1	18.2	11.3	406 E	973 UN	4,429 UN	NA
French Guiana	91,000	113.8	C 90	45.0 E	28.0	17.3	15.0	275 E	646 E	3,132 UN	NA
Caribbean Islands		32408.6†									
Caricom countries		5557.1									
Total		33904.3†									

NOTES

NA Not available

* Commonwealth Caribbean—Caricom—countries

† Including 6 countries not listed here. These are (population in thousands at the beginning of 1990 in parentheses): Anguilla (7.7), British Virgin Islands (15.9), Turks & Caicos (11.3), Cayman Islands (25.5), Bonaire (9.5), and Sint Maarten (28.9).

‡ Populations at 1 January 1990 were estimated from the following sources: C 89, 90, 91: Census results taken those years; Of.Est: Official Estimate; UN: United Nations estimate; Aut.Est.: Author Estimate; Est(1): *Haiti*, United Nations, Case Studies on Population, no 25, 1990.

§ Percentage of the population occupied in the agriculture sector: The data presented here for most countries are derived from the results of the censuses undertaken since the 1940s or 1950s in these countries. In the absence of census results, the missing data have been estimated (E) or taken (UN) from the *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*, 1988 edition (United Nations/ECLAC, February 1989).

|| Gross domestic product per capita: The data presented here for most countries are taken from the World Bank EPD Data Bank (1986). In the absence of World Bank data, the data have been estimated (E) or taken (UN) from the United Nations Statistical Yearbooks (the 1981 Yearbook for 1960 and 1970, and the 1985/86 Yearbook for 1980). It should be noted that for Cuba, all figures are crude estimates (i.e., the 1980 figure refers to the net material product divided by the rate of exchange of the Cuban peso given by the UN and the mid-year population.

in its post-World War II transformation, how will future emigration be affected by either successful or unsuccessful integration?

No one has the perfect crystal ball for forecasting the future, but the trends of the 1990s point to several strong hypotheses. The present economic niches (tourism, offshore banking, tax havens, and such) have their limitations and cannot serve as major sources of revenue for all the Caribbean countries. Most of these countries must therefore continue to try to adapt to the new world economy – at varying paces depending on their past development and economic performance. Population movements are likely to continue to play an important role in that process. But there are likely to be substantial variations from country to country in the magnitude, the type, and even the direction of these migrations.

THE CARIBBEAN EXODUS

The loss of population due to net migration out of the Caribbean region during the 1980s has now been calculated at about 1.4 million.¹ This is somewhat less than the 1.7-million loss estimated for the 1970s.² It thus appears that the net migration from the region between 1950 and 1990 totals 5.6 million. This figure is equal to 32 per cent of the region's population in 1950, and 16 per cent of its population in 1990. No other region of the world experienced such heavy losses from sustained emigration during this period.

As might be expected, the larger absolute losses through out-migration are generally found to be from the countries with the larger populations, but there are some aberrations. Overall, the major sending countries are Haiti and Jamaica, with losses of

1 See Jean-Pierre Guengant, 'Current demographic trends and issues,' unpublished paper presented at the Population and Development Symposium, organized by the University of the West Indies, the United States Agency for International Development, and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, Antigua, 19-22 July 1992.

2 See Alan B. Simmons and Jean-Pierre Guengant: 'Caribbean exodus and the world system' in M.M. Kritz, L.L. Lim, and H. Zlotnik, eds, *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992), 94-114.

about one million each over the past forty years, followed by Puerto Rico (about 800,000), Cuba and the Dominican Republic (about 700,000 each), then Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (about 300,000). Looking at migration rates, a different picture emerges. The highest rates belong to five small Commonwealth Caribbean (Caricom) states: the four Windward Islands – Grenada, Saint Vincent, Saint Lucia, and Dominica – and Saint Kitts-Nevis. For these countries, net migration losses between 1950 and 1990 represent more than 80 per cent of their 1950 populations. In fact all of the thirteen Caricom countries, with the exception of the Bahamas – one of the few countries with a net migration gain over the period – were severely affected. The weighted rate of migration loss for Caricom countries stands at a high 62 per cent of the 1950 population compared with 32 per cent for the Caribbean region as a whole.

Caribbean migration has been massively directed to the Northern metropolises, mainly to the United States and Canada. The European metropolises – the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands – have received less than one million Caribbean migrants over the past forty years.³ The movement to the United Kingdom was limited to British subjects from what were then that country's Caribbean colonies; it began after the Second World War and was terminated in 1962.⁴ The movements to France and the Netherlands have been restricted to holders of French and Dutch passports from the French and the Dutch Antilles and from French Guiana and Suriname (which became independent in 1975).⁵ In contrast, the United States and Can-

3 See Jean-Pierre Guengant, 'Les émigrations caraïbéennes' in *La Grande Encyclopédie de la Caraïbe*, 1x: *Économie* (Pointe à Pitre: Éditions Caraïbe 1990).

4 The Commonwealth Immigration Act adopted in 1962 ended free access to the United Kingdom for citizens of the Commonwealth. As the result, emigration from Commonwealth countries to the United Kingdom after 1962 has been minimal. See *Britain's Black Population* (London: Heinemann 1982).

5 On the Caribbean migration to Europe, see 'Les Antillais en Europe', a special issue of *Revue internationale des Migrations européennes* 3(1987). On emigration from the Dutch Antilles and Suriname to the Netherlands, see Ronald Tas and Johaness Fredericus, 'La population originaire du Suriname et des Antilles néerlandaises aux Pays-Bas' in this issue.

ada have admitted 2.7 million legal immigrants from all Caribbean countries, mainly since the mid-1960s. If Puerto Rican emigration to the United States is added to this total,⁶ we can say that about 3.5 million 'documented' Caribbean migrants have settled in North America.

Compared with the magnitude of emigration from the region, intra-Caribbean migration appears minor. A plausible estimate of intra-Caribbean migration (based on a permanent change of residence) is around half a million for the past forty years.⁷ This is about double the number of Caribbean-born individuals who were found in a 1980 enumeration to be living in a Caribbean country other than their country of birth. Such an estimate would mean that intra-Caribbean population movement formed about 10 per cent of the overall Caribbean migration during the past forty years. Moreover, the countries of origin and destination for these migrants are restricted to only a few states in the region. Haiti is the main provider of intra-Caribbean migrants, even though the majority of Haitian emigrants go to North America.⁸ The next major source of intra-Caribbean migrants are the four Windward Islands, but here, too, the pattern is the same: multiple countries of destination but with a majority going to the United States and Canada.

Only a handful of Caribbean countries have registered net migration gains over the past forty years as a result of intra-regional movements. These are, in descending order of increase: the Bahamas, French Guiana, the United States Virgin Islands, Sint Maarten, the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Generally, the influx of Ca-

6 As American citizens, Puerto Ricans can move freely to the mainland United States. The figure for Puerto Rican emigration to the mainland United States used here is the net migration balance derived from Puerto Rican census and civil registration data.

7 See Alan B. Simmons and Jean-Pierre Guengant, 'Recent migration within the Caribbean region: migrants' origins, destinations and economic roles,' in *The Peopling of the Americas*, Proceedings, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (Veracruz 1992), vol. 2, 419-41.

8 See James Allman and John May, 'Haitian migration: 30 years assessed,' *Migration Today* 10(no 1, 1982).

Caribbean migrants to these countries has accompanied a substantial immigration from the metropolises.

THE DETERMINANTS OF EMIGRATION

The population movements I have outlined were prompted by a variety of factors, whose relative importance has differed over time. Previous research designed to explain Caribbean emigration rates between 1950 and 1980, using a regression model, identified five independent variables.⁹ Three variables were measures of economic opportunity in the Caribbean: (1) the percentage of the labour force in the agricultural sector at the beginning of each decade, which provided an indication of variations in levels of development and conditions 'pushing' people to seek opportunities elsewhere; (2) gross domestic product per capita at the beginning of each decade, providing a crude measure of national wealth and of the capacity to provide employment and income at home; and (3) change in the percentage of agricultural workers during the decade, as an indicator of the pressure on internal labour markets to accept workers shifting from the agriculture sector to the services or industrial sector. The other two variables were selected to take account of the effect on migration movements of, first, international community and kinship linkages and, second, national immigration rules. This was done after a simple qualitative assessment through the selection of two dummy variables: (1) 'link,' reflecting the importance of previous movements and the consequent sizeable expatriate community,¹⁰ and (2) 'access,' reflecting free versus regulated access to the main receiving countries.¹¹

9 See Alan B. Simmons and Jean-Pierre Guèngant, 'Caribbean exodus: explaining country variation in net-migration balance' unpublished paper, ORSTOM, Pointe à Pitre/Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, York University, Toronto, May 1990, 28 pages.

10 'Link' was coded '1' for all anglophone countries, the French and the Dutch Antilles, and Puerto Rico, and '0' for the large Spanish and French Creole-speaking countries: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

11 'Access' was coded '1' for countries with privileged access in a given decade or '0' for countries with controlled access to any metropolitan destination over the decade.

The model using these five variables explains 69 per cent of the variation in net migration rates over the 1970s for the 21 countries with net migration losses during the 1950-1980 period.¹² If one excludes Curaçao and Aruba – whose emigration patterns are largely shaped by the fortunes and misfortunes of their giant oil refineries – the model explains 73 per cent of the variance for the remaining 19 countries. Interestingly enough, when using only three variables – percentage of the labour force in agriculture, gross domestic product per capita, and 'link',¹³ the R-square (corrected for degrees of freedom) is only slightly less: 0.66 against 0.73. The reason for this is fairly straightforward: all three measures of economic opportunity are inter-correlated, such that inclusion of all three helps increase the R-square only slightly. But whereas dropping the variable 'change in percentage of labour force in agriculture' has virtually no impact on the results, dropping either 'percentage of labour force in agriculture' or 'gross domestic product per capita' has a major impact in reducing the variance explained. When one or the other of these two variables is dropped, it appears that retaining 'percentage of labour force in agriculture' provides the highest result. This is particularly true for the 12 Caricom countries which experienced net migration losses during the 1970s. In their case, 'percentage of labour force in agriculture in 1970' only explains 59 per cent of the variation in net migration rates between these countries!

Indeed, the decline in the agriculture sector in the Caribbean over the past forty years – both in plantation and peasant agriculture¹⁴ – is a key factor in explaining the timing and mag-

¹² Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, 12 Caricom countries (the Bahamas are excluded because they experienced a net migration gain), Guadeloupe, Martinique, Suriname, Curaçao, and Aruba.

¹³ 'Link' and 'access' as they were coded appeared to be very similar, and interchangeable. So, the use of 'link' instead of 'access' in the three-variable model does not affect the results.

¹⁴ On the economies of the Caribbean, see George Beckford, ed, *Caribbean Economy: Dependence and Backwardness* (University of the West Indies 1975) and Lloyd Best, 'Outlines of a model of a pure plantation economy,' *Social and Economic Studies* 17(September 1968), 283-326.

Table 2 Migration balances, Caribbean countries, 1950-89

Country	Migration balances (000s)				Total
	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1950-89
Cuba	-10.0	-475.0	-222.6	-19.9	-727.5
Dominican Republic	-54.0	-175.0	-220.0	-240.0	-689.0
Haiti	-70.0	-220.0	-350.0	-400.0	-1040.0
Puerto Rico	-469.8	-211.9	-41.1	-110.1	-832.9
Jamaica	-165.1	-289.5	-270.8	-246.5	-971.9
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.4	-110.1	-94.7	-75.0	-280.2
Barbados	-20.2	-38.2	-14.7	-10.7	-83.8
Guyana	-4.3	-53.1	-129.5	-121.6	-308.5
Grenada	-12.4	-18.5	-21.4	-19.5	-71.8
Saint Vincent	-9.3	-20.0	-15.1	-13.1	-57.5
Saint Lucia	-13.4	-17.8	-18.5	-13.0	-62.7
Dominica	-5.5	-9.7	-12.5	-15.8	-43.5
Antigua	-2.7	-5.0	-7.1	-7.1	-21.9
Saint Kitts-Nevis	-6.1	-16.9	-8.0	-7.4	-38.4
Montserrat	-4.5	-2.6	-0.8	-1.6	-9.5
Belize	-0.8	-7.1	-19.5	-14.7	-42.1
Bahamas	13.6	23.9	3.9	7.4	48.8
Bermuda	0.0	0.0	-2.3	-1.1	-3.4
U.S. Virgin Islands*	-1.0	26.5	1.8	-13.1	14.2
Curaçao	-4.5	-18.3	-16.9	-20.4	-60.1
Aruba	-13.0	-9.9	-5.5	-5.6	-34.0
Suriname	-4.4	-27.8	-97.6	-33.5	-163.3
Guadeloupe	-3.4	-25.3	-50.3	14.0	-65.0
Martinique	-4.5	-30.9	-46.5	-4.3	-86.2
French Guiana	2.5	8.2	7.9	25.7	44.3
Caribbean islands	-856.2	-1644.2	-1413.1	-1202.8	-5116.3
Caricom countries	-231.1	-564.6	-608.7	-538.6	-1943.0
Caribbean region	-863.2	-1724	-1651.8	-1346.9	-5585.9

NOTE: Migration balances: The migration balances presented here represent the difference between the expected population without migration at the end of the decade considered (obtained by adding the population at the beginning of the decade and the natural increase observed or estimated during the decade) and the estimated actual population at the end of the decade or at the beginning of the next decade.

nitude of the Caribbean exodus to the metropolises. In countries where the absence of subsistence agriculture offered few alternatives for agricultural workers faced with a deterioration in earnings and employment conditions on the plantations, massive emigration started early. Puerto Rico and Montserrat are typical examples. But in countries with a sizeable peasantry at the end

of World War II, such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Guyana, and Belize, emigration only developed later when the crisis in the plantation sector deepened, making subsistence agriculture more precarious, and when the first groups of emigrants in the metropolises facilitated further emigration.

Though very useful in providing a better understanding of the determinants of Caribbean migration, this regression model has several shortcomings. First, it was designed only for countries experiencing net and massive emigration. Second, it is not relevant for those countries which have never had a significant agricultural sector, or whose agricultural sector has long since disappeared. Third, it tends to play down the importance of external factors, such as the immigration regulations of the receiving countries and the role of the diasporas in the dynamics of migration.

THE CARIBBEAN IN THE

NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

The elimination or marginalization of Caribbean agricultural workers and peasants should be interpreted as a further step in the integration of the Caribbean countries, and the Caribbean as a whole, into the global economy. In the new international division of labour, the Caribbean occupies an ambiguous place.¹⁵ It has some relative advantages for the development of certain services activities: tourism, offshore banking, and such. But it is not really an attractive place for investments in offshore industrial activities for a variety of reasons including higher salary levels than in other Third World countries, a less docile labour force, and, in several countries, especially those with low wages, political instability. Indeed, the major relative advantage of the Caribbean is its reasonably well trained and healthy work force.

¹⁵ See Steven E. Anderson, *The Americas in the New International Division of Labor* (New York: Holmes & Meier 1985). See also Jean-Pierre Guengant and Alan B. Simmons, 'Globalisation et nouveaux régimes démographiques dans la Caraïbe,' paper presented at the colloquium, 'Fécondité et Insularité,' 11-15 May 1992, Saint-Denis de la Réunion, 11 pages plus graphs and tables.

Since the early movements within the Caribbean Basin (to Panama, Cuba, and so on) and to the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the people of the Caribbean had developed a 'culture' of migration.¹⁶ They were therefore ready to enter the American and Canadian labour markets when these two countries needed workers and opened their doors to immigration from the Third World in the 1960s.

However the integration of the Caribbean into the North American economy through the incorporation of its labour surplus from the agricultural sector is uneven. Haiti is the most characteristic example of incomplete integration. First, about two-thirds of its labour force still works in agriculture, mainly at the subsistence level.¹⁷ Second, most of the adult population is illiterate. Third, despite the volume of the emigration from Haiti, net emigration since 1950 still represents a low percentage of the resident population by Caribbean standards – 18 per cent. Yet, even here, the integration process is proceeding. In the 1970s, manufacturing activities developed in free zones around Port-au-Prince to take advantage of the low wages and lack of safety and social protection. Primary school enrolment, mainly through private institutions, has increased significantly over the past two decades. Finally, even though they are latecomers in the Caribbean exodus, the Haitians now constitute the largest group of Caribbean emigrants. However, in 1980 the number of legal immigrants in the receiving countries who were born in Haiti was small compared with the total net migration loss since 1950.¹⁸ This means that most Haitians – between 65 and 75 per cent – are illegal migrants in the countries in which they reside, particularly in the United States, their main destination.

By contrast, Barbados is among a number of anglophone

16 See Dawn Marshall, 'The history of Caribbean migrations,' *Caribbean Review* 11(no 1, 1982).

17 See Jean-Pierre Guengant, *Haiti*, United Nations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Case Studies in Population Policy, no 25, ST/ESA/SER.R95 (New York 1990).

18 See Jean-Pierre Guengant, 'L'exil haïtien,' *ANTIANE: Revue économique des Antilles et de la Guyane*, no 6(April 1988), 16-19, Institut national de la Statistique et des Études économiques – Antilles-Guyana, Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe.

Caribbean countries which is more integrated into the international economy, but its integration has occurred largely through the export of its labour. Less than 10 per cent of its labour force is now employed in the agricultural sector. Primary education is universal and secondary school enrolment is high by Third World standards. Tourism is the leading economic sector. Emigration peaked in the 1960s and has since declined. Also, Barbados attracted some immigrants from neighbouring poorer islands – particularly Saint Vincent and Saint Lucia – as well as some returnees. Despite these inflows, net migration loss since 1950 represents as much as 40 per cent of the island's 1990 population. In sharp contrast to the Haitian migrants, however, the number of immigrants born in Barbados who were legally admitted to the United States and Canada since 1950 suggests that more than 80 per cent of the Barbadian emigrants in these countries are legal immigrants.

Lastly, the Bahamas and the United States Virgin Islands are examples of countries which successfully took advantage of new economic niches. Therefore their integration into the international economy has been achieved primarily through the development of tourism and other services, and not through the export of labour. Over the past forty years, both countries have registered massive immigration from other Caribbean countries and from the metropolises. But this migration peaked in the 1960s and has since declined. In fact, during the 1980s, the United States Virgin Islands recorded a massive net emigration because of the end of the hotel building boom and a slowdown in the tourism sector. Despite positive migration balances, both these countries nevertheless lost sizeable numbers of emigrants to the American labour market over the past forty years.

SMALL IS NOT ONLY BEAUTIFUL,
IT IS ALSO BETTER

The uneven integration of the Caribbean economies into the global economy is reflected in huge differences in gross domestic product per capita: from a mere US\$300 or US\$400 for Haiti

and Guyana to more than US\$10,000 for Bermuda, the Bahamas, the United States Virgin Islands, the French Antilles, and some other small islands. Recent levels of performance for Caribbean economies are also diverse and reflect the success or failure of their efforts to benefit from a mixed international environment and to adjust to the emerging new international division of labour.

Interestingly, the smaller countries have fared much better than the larger ones. The smallest countries of Caricom – the Windward Islands, Antigua, Saint Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat, Belize, and the Bahamas as well as the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla – were foremost among the high-growth economies, recording rates in excess of 5 per cent a year between 1981 and 1990.¹⁹ This success was due largely to vibrant and growing tourism industries coupled with, in the case of the Windwards, good results in the banana sector. By contrast, during the 1980s the economies of the larger countries either contracted (Guyana, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago) or experienced low growth rates of 0 to 2 per cent a year (Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and Suriname) or, at best, moderate growth rates of 2 to 3 per cent a year (Jamaica, Cuba, and Puerto Rico).²⁰ The lower economic growth in the larger countries is surprising because they have relatively diversified economies and often possess a substantial manufacturing sector.

Taking into consideration population growth and inequality of income distribution, these statistics suggest that at least in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, and the 'most developed countries' of Caricom (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guy-

¹⁹ See Wendell A. Samuel, 'Socio-economic scenario for the Eastern Caribbean,' unpublished paper presented at the Population and Development Symposium, organized by the University of the West Indies, the United States Agency for International Development, and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, Antigua, 19-22 July 1992.

²⁰ See Barbara Boland, 'Population dynamics and development in the Caribbean,' paper presented at the Meeting of Government Experts on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Saint Lucia, 6-9 October 1992. This section draws on Boland's paper as well as that of Samuel (*ibid*).

ana, and perhaps most recently Barbados), people have become poorer in recent years. In the other countries of the Caribbean, the economic growth of the 1980s has meant a substantial increase in gross domestic product per capita. In a number of small economies devoted to tourism and offshore business services, such as Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and the British Virgin Islands, gross domestic product per capita is now above US\$10,000.²¹ In countries with little or no tourism, such as the Windward Islands and Belize, it is around US\$2,000.

During the 1980s, most of the countries with poor or modest economic performances have had to implement severe structural adjustment programmes imposed by international financial institutions. The measures governments adopted – a lowering of expenditures on social services, a reduction (and sometimes elimination) of subsidies for basic consumer goods, and a steady devaluation of their currencies which increased the prices of imported (basic and other) commodities – have made life worse for most of their people. Likewise, debt servicing has been a constant drain on the foreign exchange earnings of these countries, reducing the level of investment as well as growth potential. Governments have thus been forced to divert resources away from local expenditure, resulting in disproportionate cuts to social services. Guyana and Jamaica suffered particularly severely from externally imposed adjustment programmes. For the most part the faster growing economies have been spared the debilitating effects of externally imposed programmes. But many of them have undertaken self-imposed adjustment programmes to adapt their fiscal operations to levels dictated by adverse international economic development. During the 1980s, many of these countries achieved surpluses on their current account, which enabled them to undertake social infrastructure and other investment projects. The emphasis was more on productive capital expenditure and slightly less on social investment. Thus, the

²¹ See Courtney N. Blackman, *Tourism and Other Services in the Anglophone Caribbean*, Working Paper 26 (Washington: Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development, March 1990).

programmes may have resulted in a slight shift in the balance away from social infrastructure. However for these countries, on average, government expenditures on health and education remained roughly constant.

Despite the varying economic performances of Caribbean countries, virtually all of them experienced dramatic increases in their unemployment rates.²² This has even been the case for countries which had massive emigration rates. Indeed, one major consequence of the integration process at work over the past two or three decades has been to make increasing numbers of Caribbean workers available for external labour markets – mainly in the metropolises, but also in the ‘new niche’ economies of the region.

What then is likely to be the impact of the emergence of two major trading blocs – the European Community’s single market and the North American free trade area – on the Caribbean economies and on migration from the Caribbean?

IN BETWEEN THE TWO BLOCS

The Caribbean is already an economic battlefield for these two blocs. The French and Dutch authorities have long tried to use ‘their’ respective Antilles as ports of redistribution for their goods and services, not only to the rest of the Caribbean but also to the North American and Latin American markets. American shipping and airlines companies use Puerto Rico as a base for exporting their products in the region, and Puerto Rico’s airport has become a compulsory transit stop for many North American tourists going to other Caribbean destinations, including the French and the Dutch Antilles. Moreover, a newly established direct air link between Puerto Rico and Europe is likely to provide increasing competition for the European airlines which bring tourists from Europe to the Caribbean.

The ‘banana war’ is another example of the confrontation of

²² See Carmen Diana Deere, co-ordinator, *In the Shadows of the Sun* (Boulder co: Westview 1990).

the two blocs in the region. The bananas grown in the French Antilles and in Caricom countries (mainly the Windward Islands) benefit from protected markets in France and United Kingdom respectively (for the latter under the Lomé Agreement). American banana companies expanded their production in Cameroon and, under the Lomé agreement, entered the French market at the expense of producers in the French Antilles. Germany, which imports – for roughly half the price – bananas produced by American companies based in Central and South America, has recently challenged the protection enjoyed by Caribbean bananas. These disputes are not fully settled, but it is far from certain that Caribbean bananas will continue to enjoy protected access to the European market.

Turning to the manufacturing sector of the Caribbean economy, the prospects for its three components – agro-processing, import substitution, and the enclave sector – are not promising.²³ The agro-processing sector constitutes a potentially strong base for the industrial development of the region, but it is characterized at the moment by varying degrees of efficiency because of primitive technology and the variability of the quality of the inputs. The import-substitution sector, geared to local and regional markets, is characterized by a high level of imported content in the production process. The World Bank asserts that this sector is highly uncompetitive and can only survive with extremely high tariff protection. Lastly, the enclave sector is dominated by foreign garment and highly specialized electronics firms. They export mainly to the United States and are competitive in the global market. But enclave manufacturing firms can be a source of uncertainty in the orderly development of an industrial sector. These firms are inclined to move frequently seeking advantage and they cater to very volatile export markets where recession and technological changes can decimate the sector in a short space of time. They also employ mainly female workers at low wages, workers who may be more and more

23 Samuel, 'Socio-economic scenario for the Eastern Caribbean.'

tempted to migrate to North America to earn more, possibly in better jobs.

CONCLUSION

The continuing integration of the Caribbean region into the global economy over the past fifteen to twenty years has resulted in an increased vulnerability for the Caribbean economies. Even though several countries in the region have been very effective in taking advantage of new economic niches, these successes are fragile. Moreover, similar developments cannot be envisaged for all countries of the region, especially the larger ones. Competition within the region between the two international trading blocs may create new opportunities for economic development in certain countries, but probably at the expense of other countries in the region. This competition may also work to the disadvantage of the region, as the controversy over Caribbean banana production demonstrates.

Increased economic vulnerability is likely to go hand in hand with increased mobility for people, a logical outcome of increased international economic integration. Population movement in the region is likely to be diverse as well and to pose new challenges to both receiving and sending countries.

For the countries with a substantial percentage of their labour force still in the agricultural sector, emigration will continue, whatever the immigration policies in the potential receiving countries may be. The numbers of emigrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic are likely to be much higher than the numbers the receiving countries are prepared to accept. Severe tensions between countries and within the receiving communities can be expected. However, the need for unskilled labour, both in the more developed countries of the region and in the United States and Canada, may help to reduce these tensions. The future of Cuban migration is difficult to predict, but any changes in the present regime are likely to lead to large numbers of Cuban emigrants. For those countries which have already lost many emigrants to North America, emigration will continue to

be a mobility strategy for many youths, irrespective of the economic performance of the sending or the receiving country. And for many of the earlier Caribbean emigrants a permanent or temporary return home will be an increasingly attractive option. This is true both for those still of working age and for those who have retired and possess an American or Canadian pension.

VOLUME XLVIII NO. 2 SPRING 1993

le c a garde fi
7000 exp

International Journal

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Migrants & refugees

GERALD E. DIRKS

ASTRI SUHRKE

HÉLÈNE PELLERIN

HAROLD TROPER

ALAN B. SIMMONS

ROGER DANIELS

JEAN-PIERRE GUENGANT

NO DEC. 1993

O.R.S.T.O.M. Fonds Documentaire

N° 38698 ex 1

Cote B

THE MARVIN GELBER PRIZE 1992
INTERNATIONAL FUNCTIONALISM & THE
POLITICS OF FORGETTING/DAVID LONG

DANDURAND REVISITED/
JOSEPH T. JOCKEL & JOEL J. SOKOLSKY