Gender and Democratization of Caribbean Education

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In the Commonwealth Caribbean, on average, girls start school-ing earlier, attend school more regularly, repeat fewer grades, are less likely to drop out and therefore stay in school longer, and achieve higher standards of educational performance than boys. In the adult population more women are literate than men. Girls are more highly represented in those sections of the secondary and tertiary levels of the education system which enhance the prospects of upward social mobility. In a real sense girls and women constitute the first sex in Caribbean education. The Car-ibbean is one of the few areas of the world where this is the case. The data to support these assertions are not in question. They are routinely reported and confirmed by the annual education statisti-cal reports of all the countries in the sub-region. The issue at hand is their explanation.

At the same time a simple explanation is not readily at hand. Several complicating factors compel more than superficial answers. First, while it is correct that Caribbean girls and women have had equitable access to education at all levels, and have been highly successful in making full use of these educational opportunities, boys and men are not without strongholds in the school system. Males are more numerous in the sciences and science-based options. They also hold a disproportionate number

of the posts of principals at the primary and secondary levels although women are more numerous as teachers (Leo-Rhynie 1989). Again, at the tertiary level not only are males more numerous but they dominate the higher positions. For example, at the University of the West Indies the vast majority of professors and top administrators are men.

The general picture is that both in the society and in education men are more numerous in the upper echelons of the social structure and the school system, but are also more numerous at the lowest levels (Miller 1991). On the other hand, women increasingly tend to occupy more of the middle positions in both the society and the school system. Both the social structure and the school system are marked by gender differences in various segments, indicating the marginalization of women and some males at different points.

The clear implication is that gender is interacting with the other social criteria organizing Caribbean society, and therefore male-female differences cannot be the sole explanation. Further, it is unwise to treat either males or females as unitary categories. Strong empirical support for these observations come from Gordon (1987) in his study of postwar intergenerational mobility through education in Jamaica. Gordon found that race, class, and gender were important determinants of intergenerational mobility. Light skin-colour and social class proved decided advantages. Most interestingly, boys tended to inherit their parents' social status to a much greater extent than girls. Black lower-class girls were less likely to inherit their parents' social status than their brothers, and more likely to experience upward social mobility than their middle-class peers.

Second, these gender patterns are not recent (Miller 1986). They have been evident, to some degree, in Caribbean society and education for at least a hundred years. However, they have become much more prominent and generalized in the postwar and post-independence period of Caribbean history, that is, in the

period of democratization of socioeconomic and educational opportunities.

One cardinal assertion of Caribbean nationalism has been that the social pathologies created and nurtured by slavery, colonialism, and the plantation would be reversed and eliminated in sovereign nations ruled by the people through their elected representatives. That the gender patterns described in Caribbean education have expanded and become more intense in the era of nationhood controlled by nationals suggest at least two alternatives. Either the nation state has failed to deliver on its promises or the phenomenon is not a social pathology and cannot be attributed mainly to slavery, colonialism, or the plantation. The main purpose of this paper is to offer an alternative explanation posited on the assumption that the feminization of educational opportunity is not a social pathology, nor is it limited to the contexts of slavery, colonialism, and plantation society.

Against this background it is imperative to take a closer look at the transition and transformation of Caribbean society and education in the postwar and post-independence period. The hallmark of this period was the transfer of power from its imperial foundations in the colonies to self-governing states employing democratic forms and institutions.

Caribbean Society and Colonial Schooling

Caribbean education was established during the colonial era. Its genesis occurred during slavery when slaves, Jews, and Browns were virtually excluded from schooling. The abolition of slavery was associated with and accompanied by the establishment of mass schooling available to all groups.

By the 1950s the educational system that had been established in the colonial period was marked by several distinctive characteristics related to the socioeconomic structure of Caribbean society (Miller 1990b). Only a mere listing and brief comments on each of these features are possible here.

Social Cleavages and Discontinuities

Two separate systems of education had developed during colonial times. These were the preparatory school/high school system and the elementary school/teachers college system. To begin with, the two systems were managed separately. Each system catered to different social strata of the society. The prep school/high school system catered to the dominant groups, particularly those located mainly in urban centres, while the elementary school/teachers college system catered mainly to the lower strata and the middle strata living in rural areas.

These two systems also clearly reflected the colour differentials in the society. While some attempt had been made from as early as the 1890s to establish some linkages between the two systems, such linkages were not strong. It should also be noted that the ruling elites had developed the practice of sending their children to Britain for their secondary education. However, those segments of the ruling elites only participated in the local systems at the level of the prep school. In these social relations the dual systems of education reflected the social cleavages and discontinuities that existed in the wider society.

Expatriate Control

The leadership of both systems of education at both the institutional and national levels was expatriate. This included the chairmen of schools commissions and directors of education, the inspectors in departments of education, and the principals of the high schools and colleges. These expatriates came almost exclusively from Britain. The Caribbean nationals employed in the systems were mostly junior and unqualified teachers in the high schools and the teachers and principals of the elementary schools.

External Dependency

The sixth form in the high school and the training of elementary school teachers in teachers colleges represented the highest levels of education available in most countries for almost all of the colonial period. There was no education available locally for secondary school teachers, the various professions except for the clergy, or top-level managers and administrators. To qualify for these positions, nationals had to go abroad to acquire the appropriate education, or expatriates with the required education were imported. These circumstances were very much part of the method of imperial control of the colony.

As the colony did not have any indigenous capacity to educate its own people to the highest levels, the importation of persons from the "Mother Country" could be justified. Interestingly it was only when the inevitability of independence was conceded that the University of the West Indies was established, in 1948, to begin to address this deficiency. But the external dependency was not limited to importing personnel but permeated even the ideas and paradigms that informed local practice. The absence of any capacity for higher education was also related to the outlook that innovation, invention, and initiative were not part of the colony's prerogative.

Anglicization

The dual systems of education at all levels served to produce loyal British subjects. British culture was dominant in all schools. To participate in the school system of any type and at any level was to be Anglicized. The common Anglo-culture was the glue that united the dual system of colonial education that reflected the plural nature of colonial society. The British version of the Anglo-culture was the official and dominant culture of the school. All other cultures were not only made improper but illegitimate in the school systems.

Mastery of the Anglo-culture, particularly mastery of the English language, became the most important criteria of upward social mobility through education. Allegiance to the Crown, the superiority of British culture, and the pre-eminence of the English language were all fundamental tenets of colonial rule to which all had to pay at least lip service, particularly the successful.

The Delinquent State

The colonial state was notorious for its neglect of education. Education was provided largely to ameliorate discontentment of the marginal majority in the colonial society. But whatever was conceded at one period following some social crisis, was either retrenched or left to run down in some subsequent period. For example, in the decades following the Morant Bay Rebellion the elementary system was significantly expanded and improved. Those actions culminated in the introduction of free elementary education in the 1890s, and increased enrolments as well as increased attendance resulted. However, after an economic crisis in the late 1890s, departments of education across the region started to close small schools. The effect was to negate the earlier gains. The delinquency of the state was most marked in the provision of schools, trained teachers, and welfare for poor students.

Official Devaluation of Schools, Teachers, Students

The official ideology of the colonial state constantly devalued the achievements of teachers, students, and schools, especially those serving the Black and Indian segments of the society. This was probably the result of at least three factors: (a) justifying the under-provision and delinquency of the state, (b) undermining the use of education by Black and Indian people as a means of upward social mobility, and (c) maintaining colonial inferiority. For whatever reason or combination of reasons, students and teachers had to live with the stigma of inferiority during their

lifetime only to be venerated posthumously for their achievements by subsequent generations.

High Levels of Participation

Although the colonial state never met the demand for good quality education for the mass of the Caribbean population, the people always participated at higher levels than the stated capacity of the school system. Benavot (1988), reviewing the spread of primary education worldwide between 1870 and 1940, produced data which showed that in 1900 the British Caribbean colonies had levels of primary school enrolments which were only surpassed by nine Western European countries, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Remarkably, these data showed colonial peoples participating in education at almost the same rates as the imperial nations, people working in agricultural economies enrolled in school at similar rates as the most advanced industrial economies of the times, and Black people enrolled in schools at comparable rates to Whites at a time when racism was rampant in the world and when racial discrimination was reflected in the educational provision for Blacks and Whites. These high rates of participation by Caribbean peoples reflect the great value placed on education especially as a means of social mobility.

Providers and Participants at Cross-Purposes

The colonial administrators and the ruling elites had always provided education for different reasons than those that have motivated the mass of the population to participate. The former have always provided education with the intention of reproducing the social relations of production, that is, maintaining the status quo. The latter have always participated in the system provided with the intention of changing their socioeconomic position, that is, changing the status quo.

Emerging Female Bias

The major elements of the dual colonial system of education were established after 1834: the elementary school, the high school, and the teachers college. All were established with a distinct male bias, both of teachers and students. But by 1950 all were manifesting a distinct female bias. The reversal of gender bias during the latter part of the colonial period seems to be related to ameliorating the conflict and confrontation that faced the ruling British elite. In making concessions to the several groups, more were granted to the females than the males. The result was a distinct female bias in the provision and participation in teacher training and secondary education, the two main avenues of upward social mobility in the colonial Caribbean, and this has grown even more pronounced.

Changes in the Postwar and Independence Era

The transformation from colonial to self-governing forms started with Jamaica in 1943 with the granting of adult suffrage and representative government, which placed political power in the hands of those representing the marginal majority in the various countries. For the first time in their history, the marginal majority, through their elected representatives, held the levers of state power. This was true before countries became politically independent, and remained true for those countries that did not.

Education was therefore responding more to the prerogatives of full internal self-government than to the changed external relations manifest in sovereignty. Broadly speaking it seems accurate to say that in this period education and the school systems were mobilized to serve the cause of representative democracy in democratizing opportunities in the societies. The specific targets of these policies were the Black and Indian marginal majorities in the several societies.

Elected with a mandate to democratize all the avenues of upward social mobility, to remove discrimination in access to public places, to equalize opportunity, to create just societies, and to address the needs of the previously disadvantaged, the newly empowered representatives pounced on education and schooling as the most obvious means of demonstrating their commitment to that mandate, and possibly for achieving some of its goals. Secondary and tertiary education became prime institutions for reform and development in this era throughout the subregion.

The strategies for achieving equity and equality of opportunity, while employing the unifying rhetoric of nationalism and nation building, could be listed as follows:

Expanding the provision at all levels of the education system, particularly secondary schooling; changing the rules governing access to the secondary level, especially to high schools.

Creating new institutions at the tertiary level and ensuring equity in access to these institutions.

Restructuring the curriculum to promote national and Caribbean identity and solidarity by including national and Caribbean literature, history, geography, specimens, and examples, and including positive images of all the peoples comprised in the societies.

Improving the quality of education through building national and regional capacity, for example, teacher training, examinations, and educational research.

Favourable economic circumstances of the Caribbean in the postwar years up to the mid-1970s facilitated the implementation of these strategies. Not only was there the political will to implement these strategies but there was also economic means to at least embark upon their implementation. The independence era is therefore marked by the unusual coincidence of social demand, political will, and economic means.

Achievements of the Independence Era

The achievements of the postwar and independence era are impressive by any standards. Even the most severe critic would have to concede that substantial progress was made in democratizing educational opportunities. The major achievements can be listed briefly as follows:

1. The vast majority of infants, over 80 percent, are enrolled in preschools compared to less than 30 percent 40 years ago.

2. Universal primary education ensuring access to all children exists within the region, for the first time in its history.

3. Mass secondary education obtains in all countries, 10 of which have universal secondary education. This compares to less than l0 percent access to secondary education up to the end of the 1940s.

4. Most children with special disabilities are now provided for in the public education systems in almost every country, in contrast to 40 years ago when there was no such provision in the public system.

5. The establishment of colleges of all types at the tertiary level make this level of education more accessible to the middle and lower social strata than ever before.

6. Universities have been created that serve the needs of the subregion in the main areas of scholarship and research.

7. Curricula reflect the peoples and culture of the region.

8. Schools are staffed almost entirely by nationals of the region, the majority of whom are professionally qualified teachers, and indigenous teacher training capacity to sustain the professional status of teachers exists.

9. Secondary school students are assessed by Caribbean institutions, for example the Caribbean Examinations Council, on curricula appropriate to secondary education in the subregion.

10. Successful non-formal programs in adult literacy and skills training for out-of-school youths.

11. The more sophisticated management of education is through integrated ministries of education which replaced the more fragmented structures of the past supervised by departments of education.

12. Girls have at least achieved gender equity with boys at the early childhood, primary, and secondary levels and may even have surpassed them. At the tertiary level, males continue to hold the advantage only in engineering-related subjects, but have lost it in practically all other areas, although in the science-based areas the gap is still relatively small.

It is important to note that the female bias evident in secondary school enrolment did not apply across the social spectrum. Indeed the overall averages mask important differences among males and females from different backgrounds. This can be illustrated by reference to children selected to enter high schools in Jamaica, through performance in the Common Entrance Examinations, in 1962 and 1982 as shown in figures 1 and 2.

In a study of the students entering the 26 high schools in Jamaica that existed before 1940, Miller (1990a) found that although approximately 60 percent of the students selected through the CEE are girls and 40 percent are boys, this is not evenly distributed across the socioeconomic spectrum. The pattern is for a high proportion of the girls to come from the lower socioeconomic categories and a higher proportion of the boys to come from the higher socioeconomic categories. This is shown in figure 1. Although some change can be noted by 1982, the basic pattern is still the same.

These data indicate that the gender patterns are different along the socioeconomic continuum. At the higher end of socioeconomic status the traditional patriarchal patterns are in evidence, while at the lower end, the traditional patterns are reversed. The majority of the educational opportunity going to students from the lower socioeconomic categories went to the females and not the males of these groups.

Figure 1

High Schools, Gender, and Class, 1962

Per-
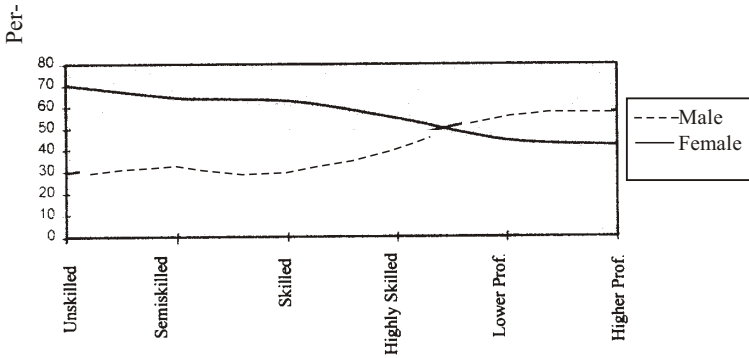
Source: Adapted from Miller (1990a).

Figure 2

High Schools, Gender, and Class, 1982

Per-
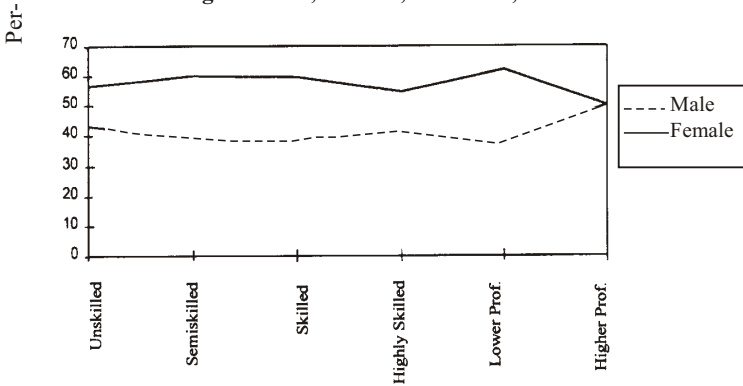
Source: Adapted from Miller (1990a).

Seeking Answers with the Aid of Theory

In light of the above the critical question becomes, Why should a female bias emerge in some areas of the society and the education system, while traditional patriarchal male bias persists in other areas? To put it more bluntly, why should the traditional male

bias persist among the historically dominant minorities in Caribbean society and a female bias emerge among the marginal majorities? Further, why should these gender patterns accelerate and spread more widely during the period of democratization of opportunity in Caribbean society than had been the case in the colonial era?

Established social theories provide very little assistance in attempting to explain these patterns. Functional integration of groups in society or worth in the marketplace cannot adequately account for the race, class, and gender biases evident in Caribbean society (Smith 1984). While Marxist analysis can account for class biases it is unable to effectively address the issues of race and gender, since these latter features of Caribbean society cannot be reduced to class differences or class struggle (Reddock 1993). While Smith's theory of cultural pluralism is more comprehensive, its limitations in dealing with gender issues are well documented by Massiah (1987).

The seminal theoretical contribution of feminist scholarship to social theory has been by the radical feminists who firmly insist that patriarchy must be included as an important category in social theorizing and analysis. Social theories of all hues have been uniformly unisex, making no distinction between male and female whether in terms of their relations to the means of production, in status groups, their perceived worth in the market place, or in relation to the various structures of society. All feminist scholars have pointed to this deficit and discrepancy in social theory compared to the empirical reality. However, radical feminists have refused to engage in reductionism, that is, attempting to explain gender issues in terms of other categories such as class or race or status. They have insisted on gender and patriarchy being recognized as substantive categories in themselves, not capable of reduction.

The definition of patriarchy has become problematic. Weber (1947) had defined patriarchy as women and younger men being dominated by older men, who were heads of household. While a few feminist theorists have followed the Weberian definition, the

more common approach has been to discard the generation difference between men and define patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby 1990). The most prevalent tendency in feminist scholarship therefore has been to adopt a narrower and more exclusive definition than the Weberian definition.

But to define patriarchy solely as men dominating women is to treat both men and women as two separate undifferentiated groups that have sustained their coherence over time and between different cultures. This posture has attracted sharp criticism, especially from Black feminists and post-structural and post-modernist theorists. Hooks (1984), for example, argued that while White feminists have traditionally conceptualized the family and home as a major source of women's oppression, this is not the same for Blacks, where the family is not a major source of women's subordination. Indeed, increasingly it has become a major site of their liberation as more and more Black women become heads of household.

The post-modernist critique maintains that neither man nor woman are unitary categories. Post-modern social theorists argue that the categories men and women are a number of overlapping and cross-cutting discourses of masculinities and femininities which are historically and culturally variable (Fraser 1988).

I have argued that the main limitation of Weber's definition of patriarchy was its lack of attention to the kinship relations, factual or fictive, between the older and younger men and women that constituted the collective (Miller 1991). In other words, patriarchy needs to be defined as that system of reciprocal social obligations in which final authority rests with older men of the kinship collective, who exercise that authority over its individual male and female members in the overall interest of the collective.

The differences between these definitions of patriarchy are the elements included. Most feminist scholars have confined the definition of patriarchy solely to its gender component. Weber's definition of patriarchy included the elements of generation and

gender. I explicitly highlighted the genealogy element, in addition to gender and generation, and insisted that recognition of this element was critical if the complexities of gender issues were to be better understood (Miller 1991). The gender and generation elements related to the internal relations of the collective, while the genealogy element defined its external relations, a critical consideration both conceptually and empirically. The essence of the argument was that conceptually and historically patriarchal collectives have had major difficulties with other collectives that fell outside the covenant of kinship, and particularly with the men of those collectives. When patriarchal collectives interacted outside boundaries where kinship could not be established, whether factual or fictive, then one group had to submit to the hegemony of the other. Failing such compromise, violent confrontation became the means of establishing dominance. The implications of these observations are that patriarchy does not involve only the marginalization of women, but also the marginalization of alien men brought into subjection by any kinship collective.

One implication of these limitations of existing and established social theory is the necessity to develop more appropriate and creative theoretical constructs. My Theory of Place (Miller 1990b) constitutes such an attempt.

The Theory of Place

Before attempting to explain the gender patterns observed in Caribbean society and education, particularly in the post-independence period, it is necessary to outline some of the major premises of the Theory of Place.

Definition of Place

Place is defined as the location relative to others with respect to:

1. *Power*: the ability to determine outcomes consistent with one's interest, even against opposition. It is the capacity to command, coerce, or co-opt others to perform one's will.

2. *Resources*: the material means by which needs, basic or otherwise, can be satisfied. This includes the mode and means of production.

3. *Status or Prestige*: the esteem or regard in which one is held. The capacity to persuade others to show deference. Honour or the lack of it.

4. *Belief*: the ideas, knowledge, and values which inform, inspire, and justify action.

5. *Culture*: the acquired way of life. The habitual rules of behaviour in all fields of endeavour passed on from one generation to the next in a particular setting.

Place is unitary. Power, resources, status, belief, and culture are aspects or dimensions of this unit—place. While they are interdependent and interrelated since they constitute a single unit, each contributes a unique aspect to place. Place is not simply the product of these five dimensions, it is the overall integration of them. Individuals hold their place in society on different bases. Either (a) substantially, that is in their own right, or (b) as a proxy, standing in for the substantive holder, or (c) by relationships, legal or otherwise, to substantive holders. The bases are not mutually exclusive as individuals are located at a multiplicity of levels within the society, macro and micro, and will occupy their places in different capacities at the different levels.

The Egalitarian Ideal and Social Reality

From the perspective of the Theory of Place, the egalitarian society is one in which all individuals are located at the same relative position to each other, that is, the society in which all places are equal. In this society all individuals would corporately make all decisions, all would command exactly the same resources, all would enjoy the same status and be honoured in like manner, all

would practise the same material culture that would routinely and habitually ensure equal treatment of each other, and all would hold to and be legitimized in similar manner by the belief system. Put another way, the egalitarian society, in which all places are equal, is the ethical society marked by equity and social justice. As such it constitutes the utopian ideal in human social organization. The egalitarian ideal is invariably defeated by three factors.

1. The size of society. Direct participation in all decision making is only possible in very small societies. In societies of any size direct participation by all is a practical impossibility. Some hierarchical form of representation is inevitable.

2. The human life cycle. Human beings pass through pre-determined biological stages of infant, child, adolescent, adult, and old person. Infants, children, and sometimes the aged, require guardians to act on their behalf. They are unable to represent themselves.

3. Individual differences. Each human being is biochemically unique. Associated with this are variations in abilities, divergence in thought processes which potentially can lead to pluralism in beliefs, lifestyles, and competence.

While each in itself constitutes a formidable obstacle to equality, together their impact is devastating in their subversion of the egalitarian ideal. The interaction of these three factors undermine the establishment and the maintenance of the egalitarian society in which places are all equal. Equality of places in society is a practical impossibility. The social reality in society is the inequality of places, and by extension, injustice in the inequality that prevails.

The real contradiction in human society is that the egalitarian society which is the only ethical basis upon which society can be established is a practically impossibility, while the relative inequality which is the practical reality cannot be absolutely or permanently justified. The egalitarian society is utopian, while relative inequality, which is the reality in society, is inherently unjust. This is the continuing and persistent dialectic in society.

The moral ideal which is just and equitable is not attainable in reality, but that which is real is inequitable and unjust.

The implications of this are twofold. First, to seek to achieve the equitable and just society is to transcend reality, that is, to take social action or construct society on utopian bases at variance with social facts. The equitable and just society can only be approached through revelation which transcends reality and goes beyond the facts, and logical reasoning based on those facts. Second, to accept the social reality or to be bound by reason and logic rooted in social facts is to rationalize and legitimize inequity and injustice which is immoral.

Confronted with this dilemma, societies are faced with two basic options: Either construct society on utopian ideals that are continually and ultimately subverted by the social reality, or construct society on realistic criteria which justify and legitimize particular inequalities in society as absolute and permanent but which are undermined and subverted by their immoral foundations. While the first option is ethical and moral it is unrealistic, the second is realistic but perverse in that it justifies the unjust and accepts the immoral as inevitable. In either case the basis upon which any society is constructed is ultimately undermined and subverted. The first option is undermined by social facts while the second option is undermined by ethical principles.

As a consequence, whatever the bases upon which any society is negotiated or constructed, it is subsequently deconstructed and renegotiated. Accordingly, the bases upon which society is organized are never permanent and are inevitably changed in the course of history.

Scatter and Cluster of Places in Society

Given the inequality that is the social reality, places in society vary from centre to margin. The central place enjoys power, resources, and status, is justified and legitimized by the belief system, and made routine and habitual by the culture of the society. The marginal place has little or no power; commands little or no

resources even for basic needs which may be at risk; lacks prestige and status and may even be tinged with notions of inferiority; is either ascribed to a subordinate position by the culture or practises a culture at variance with mainstream culture; and is justified as subordinate by the belief system.

Usually places in society are scattered between centre and margin. However, the scatter of places need not be evenly distributed. Clusters and cleavages of places may and usually do occur at different points. The fact of the uneven scatter and cluster of places poses enormous problems in attempting to delimit groups in the society. The problems revolve around the issue of where one group ends and another begins. Such dividing lines are invariably blurred by the existence of places between the clusters. This feature of society arises because each individual place can result from different permutations and combinations of the individual's location on the five dimensions—that is, clusters of locations on individual dimensions do not necessarily or even normally coincide. Mastery of and conformity to the culture, beliefs held, social ranking, economic resources, and the ability to impose one's will do not necessarily overlap. The individual's relative position to others in society can vary in any number of ways, including the following:

1. The totally marginalized place where the individual is located on the margin on each dimension. The person has little or no power, is at risk in resources to meet basic needs of survival, is considered inferior, accepts his/her position by virtue of the belief system, or holds to a belief system that tolerates his/her location, practises the material culture that habituates the marginal position or one that is deviant to that society.

2. The totally centralized place where the individual holds power, commands considerable resources, enjoys high status, is legitimized by the belief system, and practises the material culture and lifestyle imitated by others.

3. A partially centralized place where the individual commands considerable resources, has power and authority, enjoys modest prestige, practises a material culture deviant to the centre, and is not legitimized by the belief system.

4. A partially marginalized place where the individual enjoys great status, is an apologist for the belief system, practises the material culture of the mainstream, but commands little resources and holds even less power.

Differences between Centre and Margin

The inherent contradiction in society between the real and the ethical, the facts and the transcending of them, manifests itself irrespective of the bases upon which society is constructed. Nowhere is the contradiction more marked than in the implicit and explicit differences between the centre and the margin, which represent the two opposite poles in the society. The essence of the difference is twofold. First, in reality the benefits and life chances of those holding central and marginal places are markedly dissimilar and unequal. Those who have the power to make decisions, control the means of production including the distribution of surplus, occupy positions of high status, set societal norms, and determine the mainstream culture invariably develop and serve different interests and enjoy greater benefits than those that are marginalized. This is so whether the society is autocratic or democratic, capitalist or communist, New or Old World, Northern or Southern, Primitive or Civilized, Moslem or Christian. The differentials in life chances and benefits between centre and margin are potential sources of tension, conflict, and confrontation.

   Second, because there is no absolute basis on which place can be permanently assigned between centre and margin over successive generations, the holders of central places are susceptible to the charge of being the beneficiaries and perpetrators of injustice, the more so, because of the accident of birth. On the other hand,

the holders of marginal places eventually have the weight of morality in their favour.

Whether society is organized on utopian or realistic bases, the criteria are never permanent. Transcendental criteria are undermined by reality, and realistic criteria are subverted by moral outrage. Hence, although society may treat these criteria as absolute and definitive, the equality or inequality they advocate are eventually successfully challenged These criteria can be regarded therefore as temporary or operational absolutes—they are operationally employed as absolutes to settle the question of how places should be allocated in society, but in time prove neither absolute, definitive, nor final. Place in society is therefore always assigned on an operational basis for a period. Historically, operational absolutes determining place in society have included some combination of the following:

Age and seniority, generation

Lineage, tribe and family, genealogy

Gender

Race/colour/ethnicity

Class

Caste

Party or ideology

Religion

Merit and achievement

While societies have employed these operational absolutes in varying combinations, they have all been challenged and changed. Why should the oldest persons be super-ordinate and the younger subordinate? Why should family and lineage confer inferiority or race or colour superiority? The answers of whatever kind are contestable and have been contested in history. For in the final analysis there is no perfectly justifiable basis to permanently determine centrality and marginality of a particular line of people over succeeding generations.

The dynamic of human society resides in its paradoxes inherent in place.

Place in society is determined on the basis of the relative relations of persons on the five different dimensions of place

Relative equality is a practical impossibility

Relative inequality which is the reality cannot be absolutely justified on any permanent basis

Central and marginal places are marked by different life chances for their holders

Caught in these perpetual paradoxes human society is virtually consigned to cyclical patterns with place assigned on the basis of some operational absolutes, the challenge to these operational absolutes, and the subsequent change to some new operational absolutes. That is, human society is subject to cycles of negotiation and consensus, challenge and conflict, and re-negotiation. Each re-negotiation changes the place structure in that it changes the basis on which the relative relationships between individuals are determined and operationally defined.

The prime motivation in society is for individuals to gain and retain central places or at least a central location on at least one dimension, that is, a partially central place. To do so individuals will employ any means, legitimate or illegitimate. The tendency is for individuals holding central places to seek to retain it for themselves, secure similar places for relatives, children, allies, and clients, or pass on such places to them. This is at the expense of individuals holding marginal places. Over time, therefore, in any society the centre becomes marked by

The most comfortable standard of living offered by the society, as those holding central positions appropriate a better standard of living for themselves

Corruption, as holders of central places seek to retain their position through nepotism, patronage, clientelism, and other such practices

Incompetence, as persons without merit are retained in or promoted to central places

Conservatism, the inertia of success, holding on to ideas, practices, technologies, and methodologies well beyond their relevance and effectiveness

Over time therefore the centre has the tendency to become marked by decadence—enjoying luxury while harbouring incompetent persons recruited immorally through nepotism and patronage and employing outdated and outmoded ideas, methodologies, and techniques. The margin over time becomes marked by

Poor provisions for its members, that is, a much lower standard of living than the centre

Competence on the part of a significant number of persons of ability who for lack of opportunity arc consigned to marginal places

Moral force, because it is discriminated against

Inventiveness and risk-taking tendencies, marginal energy, because it has nothing to lose and everything to gain

In addition, because the holders of central places are the beneficiaries largely of the arbitrariness of birth and other circumstances, they are susceptible to feelings of guilt about their place in society. Centrals often engage in activities that appear to be in the interest of marginals, seeking to expiate the guilt of holding central places. As the decadence of the centre increases, some centrals, overcome by guilt and moral outrage, work to overthrow the centre. Such centrals often become the leaders of resistance movements to overthrow their central kin.

Because the holders of marginal places are often the luckless recipients of the arbitrariness of birth and other circumstances, they are susceptible to feelings of being the victims of circumstances and feelings of shame about their so-called deficits. As the competence and moral force of the margin grow over time, marginals become crusaders for change. However, marginals

experiencing upward movement in place increasingly become defenders of the status quo. This is not because they wish to keep the centrals in their places but because they wish to replace them, and fear that changes may remove the advantages they have already gained or hope to gain. Given these opposite but conflicting tendencies as centre and margin are approached, societies continually experience center/margin tensions to varying degrees.

Cyclical Changes in Society over Time

Given the inherent contradiction in society such that whatever operational absolutes are employed to rationalize place are either subverted by reality or undermined by morality, in the long haul of history, societies experience cyclical changes. While each cycle is not a replica of previous cycles, in that they are not only separated in time but invariably conducted with different contents, the essential processes are the same, with several fairly well defined stages.

Seizure of central places

Creation of a new order: The dynamic phase

Settlement based upon the new order

Decadence and collapse

New seizure of central place

Each stage involves numerous processes and includes significant events over a period of history. Each stage is not a single act, event, or process.

Seizure of central places must not be confused with changes of government or regimes. While every seizure of central place includes taking over the government, most changes of government do not involve a seizure of central places. Most changes of regimes are but reshuffles of the exercise of power among those holding central places. Similarly, changes in the belief system in a society, for example, from Christianity to Islam or Communism

does not necessarily involve the seizure of central places. A subgroup of centrals may have replaced other centrals holding to the old beliefs. The same can be said of changes in culture. The seizure of central places does not involve change in only a single dimension. The latter can often be accommodated in the existing place structure within a society.

Seizure of central places involves fundamental shifts in society encompassing all five dimensions of place—Power, Resources, Status, Belief System, and Culture. The seizure of central places in society is usually marked by historic events and is therefore very visible. It involves displacement and emplacement: Displacement of the former holders of central places and emplacement of former marginals. This includes all dimensions of place. The process usually begins with violent upheaval either through war or internal rebellion. Rarely does the seizure of central place occur by negotiation between the holders of marginal places and those holding central places. It continues with symbolic substitutions sometimes conducted with great ceremony as particular offices and institutions change hands. It ends with the institutionalization of the new place structure through the institutions of the state, legal systems, education, religious or ideological belief, and the ownership and control of the means of production.

The seizure of central places is not necessarily nice and neat, and usually requires united and concerted effort from several groups of marginals within the society. This is more easily accomplished however than the distribution of central places following the seizure. The fighting between former allies can be long and bitter, causing the society, to experience a state of flux, indecisiveness, and uncertainty before the issues of accession to the central places are settled.

The establishment of a new place structure with new operational absolutes is the most dynamic and creative phase of any society. It is where the former marginals perceive that it is really possible to attain central places. This is a highly competitive

period when striving and motivation are high. The young especially are encouraged to strive. Creativity is enormous both in quantitative and qualitative terms—positive and negative. All means are employed, legal or illegal, to maximize movement into central places.

Usually in establishing a new order in a society a new belief system is introduced or the old one purified. This brings with it new ideas about humans and society as these are related to the new operational absolutes. Sometimes some ideas are borrowed from other societies, on occasion some ideas are original. During the creative and innovative phase of society increments are added or lost to human experience—civilization.

It is also in this dynamic phase that new inventions involving new techniques or instruments are usually employed. The introduction of new ideas of human kind—or the return of noble ideas of the past—as well as the implementation of new techniques and machines relate directly to the inefficiency and incompetence of the old order being replaced. This dynamic phase also encourages expressions in art, music, literature, as well as athletic prowess. The duration of this dynamic phase in any society depends on the period over which the society continues to permit free exchanges between centre and margin.

The next stage is settlement, when almost all the central places have been taken and those who have gained them begin to seek to retain them. Limits begin to be placed on upward social mobility. In this phase the younger generations do not enjoy the same degree of upward mobility enjoyed by the generations that preceded them. Further inequality is justified within the framework of the operational absolutes that are employed.

This is followed by the next stage of decadence and collapse of the centre as a result of deep divisions, increasing incompetence, rampant corruption, and obstinate conservatism among those holding central places, and the rising moral force, competence, and inventiveness manifested by the marginalized. Collapse is not brought about solely by pressure from those marginalized

but, as important, by divisions and defections among those holding central places occasioned by incompetence and corruption among centrals. The result is a new seizure of the central places.

The Operational Absolutes and the Place Queue

The cyclical stages in the histories of societies can be approached and understood by examining the process through which the operational absolutes employed by those societies shape interaction between individuals and groups constituting these societies. As was previously stated the operational absolutes are those criteria that are imposed by those seizing the central places at any particular time in the history of a society.

The structure of any society, at any particular time, is the product of the combination and interaction of the operational absolutes being employed by that society in that period of its history. In other words, the operational absolutes determine the place structure of society, and these are reflected in all the power, resource, status, belief, and cultural relationships in the society.

The operational absolutes employed by society establish the order allocation of place in that society during that period—these operational absolutes combine to form place queues which influence all aspects of place in that society. For example, in a hypothetical, relatively simple society that at a particular time employed toe length, age, and gender as the operational absolutes, then these operational absolutes would combine to form place queues establishing the rank order of preference in placing persons in that society. If for example, older is preferred to youth, male to female, long-toe to short-toe, then the place queues for that society would establish the following rank order of preference:

Older long-toe males
Younger long-toe males
Older long-toe females
Younger long-toe females
Older short-toe males

Younger short-toe males

Older short-toe females

Younger short-toe females

Older long-toe males at the head of the queue would have first preference for all opportunities including those for holding power, acquiring resources, receiving honour, being legitimized by the belief system, and being able to influence conservation and change in the mainstream culture. As such, older long-toe males would have greatest access to power, resources, and honour in that society and would have their position protected by law, justified by belief, and routinized by culture. This order of preference set out by the place queue would be reflected in all the society's institutions: the state and government, law, labour force, education, family and kinship, property rights, and so on.

In contrast the young short-toe female would have the least access to central places, being marginalized on all three operational absolutes, being young, short-toe, and female. She would be the least protected in law, have the least access to good education and good jobs or to high social status.

The place queue which is formed directly from the operational absolutes employed by a society at a particular time is here labelled the Type A queue. But following the cyclical nature of society, those marginalized by the operational absolutes used will contest their marginal positions and challenge the central positions of those who had seized them. Those most likely to make the initial challenge are those marginalized by one or two operational absolutes, for example, older long-toe females or older short-toe males or younger long-toe males. Challenge by younger long-toe males is the easiest to resolve in that over time they are the natural successors to the older long-toe males. On the other hand, the challenge by older short-toe and long-toe females would be more fundamental, in that capitulation would mean radical change in the operational absolutes used to organize society.

Where those most centralized by the Type A queue are forced to make concessions to those who have been marginalized by the operational absolutes, they will offer the concessions to those most marginalized. In this case, older long-toe males would make most concessions to younger short-toe females. This would result in creating a second type of queue in the society, a Type B queue, which would operate in the arenas of the society in which the conflict between marginals and centrals is most manifest. The Type B queue would have the following order:

Older long-toe males

Young long-toe males

Younger long-toe females

Older long-toe females

Younger short-toe females

Older short-toe females

Older short-toe males

Younger short-toe males

The essence of the Type B queue is the reversal of the positions in the queue of the most marginalized. Those most marginalized, that is, those occupying the bottom position in the Type A queue, are allowed to skip several positions in the queue. Those singly marginalized are demoted in the queue, except for those who are the natural successors to the most centralized, that is, those who are the natural successors to those at the head of the queue.

While the immediate effect of the Type B queue is to defuse the challenge and delay change, its ultimate consequence is to fatally compromise the operational absolutes on which the society is organized. For after a time, young people, short-toe people, and females will all have access to places in society inconsistent with the Type A queue, which is the logical consequence of a society so organized.

Once the operational absolutes organizing the society have been fatally compromised, those holding central places will find it more and more difficult to sustain or justify their central places and the marginalization of others. Those marginalized will propose some new operational absolutes on which society should be organized. These new operational absolutes may retain one or more of the old absolutes, such as age or gender, but will also include new ones, such as merit or party or religion or ideology. Whatever the combination, they will be the basis of a third queue, the Type C queue, which in essence tries to rationalize and replace the inconsistencies of the Type B queue and the "injustices" of the Type A queue.

If some marginals are able to seize central places based on the new operational absolutes, then the Type C queue in fact becomes the new Type A queue, and the cycle of changes in queue types begins to repeat itself. If the old centrals are able to retain their places then the old Type A queue would be re-instituted over all, and the cycle of changes would also again begin to repeat itself.

The Place Queue and Social Facts

The place queue in any society, at any particular time in its history, establishes the cognitive framework within which individuals in the society think and act purposefully and rationally, the interactive outcome of which determines the social facts of that society. While power and belief largely determine the selection of operational absolutes that generate the place queue, the social interaction generated by the milieu and ethos created by that same queue sets the parameters of power and belief in that society in the future. The place queue of the society, whether explicitly articulated or implicitly understood, is recognized by the members of the society. Moreover, all individuals are cognizant of their positions in the queue. Cognizant of the existence of the queue and their ranked position in the queue, individuals think

and act purposefully and rationally, whether they are doing so independently or collectively. Intentional and rational actions by individuals, premised within the parameters implicit in the place queue, create the content of the society in several ways.

First, the place queue is by definition social in that it establishes the calculus of advantage in the society. Both the individual's recognition of the queue and of her/his position in it are the symbolic representation of the social that each individual carries around as part of the self. Individual existence is always in relation to and in interaction with the social, and is therefore never totally individualistic.

Second, the place queue and individual recognition of position in it allows collective thinking and corporate action to be constructed independently, since intentional and rational thinking and acting are fashioned with respect to the calculus of advantage established by the queue. Individuals, unknown to each other, and thinking independently, will arrive at the same conclusion concerning the action they will or must take. Collective action is therefore facilitated through the mechanism of the place queue. While individuals will conspire to take collective action, it is the mechanism of the place queue that makes the conspiracy possible in the first place. Personal encounters in the formation of collective action is of the second order. First order interaction is with the symbolic representation of the social in the form of the place queue and the individual recognition of place in it.

Third, intentional and rational thoughts and actions are with respect to place, holistically, and not just with respect to a single dimension. Intentional and rational behaviour is never solely political, economic, social, ideological, or cultural. Rather, it is with respect to place, the holistic integration of all these elements. Clearly, the holistic integration of all dimensions of place is not necessarily evenly distributed in each thought or action. While the priority given to elements will vary with the content of the specific action, the other dimensions of place are present, even if only to a very slight extent.

Fourth, rational and intentional thoughts and actions are always constructed with the inherent contradictions that mark human society. That is, in constructing thoughts and actions in relation to the place queue, and their position in it, individuals are faced with the choices of thinking and acting realistically, supported by a situation ethic; or idealistically, holding to a transcendental ethic. Depending on the bases upon which the place queue is constructed, this choice translates into working within the calculus of the queue, or challenging the assumptions of the queue frontally or indirectly.

Fifth, acting in relation to the queue and their position in it, individuals must always take account of the consequences of their actions in the short term and the long term, since these do not always coincide. Short-term advantage may translate into long-term loss and vice versa. In addition, the gains and losses resulting from the actions may vary for different dimensions of place.

Sixth, inconsistency is a feature of social action, given the complexity of intentional and rational thinking in interaction with the place queue and the individual's position in it, and given the limitations of rationality. Tarski's Theorem showed that even in the most rigorous system of deductive logic beginning with a set of axioms, by the fourth- or fifth-order deductions, inferences drawn were at odds with the original axioms. No system of logic, or rational thought, can be entirely consistent, nor is any set of axioms complete. This limitation on rational thinking combined with such thinking being applied holistically to all dimensions of place, accommodating the choice of acting within the assertions of the place queue or challenging these assertions, and calculating short-term and long-term consequence, results in glaring inconsistencies in the construction of the social. What is often referred to as irrationality is nothing more than the inconsistencies inherent in the outcomes of rational thinking and actions within the framework of the place queue. Similarly, what is referred to as a lack of purpose is nothing more than the inconsis-

tencies in the setting of priorities between different dimensions of place in acting in similar situations.

Seventh, given the inconsistency inherent in rational thinking and purposeful action within the framework of the place queue, the social is constructed not only of the intended outcomes of rational actions but also of their unintended consequences. Neither those centralized by the place queue nor those marginalized by it can perfectly anticipate the short- and long-term consequences of the purposeful and rational actions they take in interacting within queue parameters.

Eighth, given these complexities, social behaviour is more readily explained post hoc. However, social behaviour is not so idiosyncratic as to defy prediction or explanation. Knowledge of a society's place queue is critical to understanding, predicting, and explaining social behaviour and social structure. Least problematic is identifying the categories of likely actions. More problematic will be establishing their frequency and timing. Most problematic is anticipating the unintended consequences.

Promotion of Place Interests

The basic motivation in society is to move to a more central place if marginalized, or if centralized, to maintain one's existing place. Individuals and groups resist movement to more marginal places. The actions of individuals and groups to maintain or enhance place are promoted by intentional and deliberate strategies.

One major strategy to promote place interests is the formation of coalitions and alliances, involving both vertical and horizontal linkages of places in the queue. Coalitions are seldom permanent. They change over time both within and between generations. The purpose of coalitions is to promote the place interests of the individuals or groups that form them, and they survive only as long as they do this.

The holders of both central and marginal places employ the coalition strategy when it suits them. Holders of central places

will co-opt and compromise marginals challenging them. Some marginals may be facilitated in holding secondary central places, that is, places in which the location on one or more dimensions is central. Likewise marginals will seek coalitions with holders of primary or secondary central places in order to gain access to power or resources or to gain status in particular endeavours.

Given the scatter and cluster of places in the place structure and the various permutations and combinations of location on the various dimensions that determine place, the possibilities for coalitions in society are numerous. For example, individuals whose places are based on great wealth, little power, low status, and a deviant belief system may seek alliances with individuals of the mainstream belief system, with high status or power but limited resources. All parties to the alliance may find it attractive because of its complementarity.

Coalitions compete for place advantage in the society. In this competition each coalition intentionally seeks some place advantage. The extent to which they are opposed by other coalitions depends on how directly they threaten their existing places or place intentions or the extent of the risks involved in confrontation. Some coalitions may not oppose another coalition because their place interests are not affected. A coalition may gain its intention through the benign neglect or lack of opposition from other coalitions. While their action will be deliberate and intentional it will not be conspiratorial. It would not involve collusion with other coalitions. The result will have been produced by the concatenation of place interests.

Mobility in Society

Mobility is the movement of individuals from marginal to central places or vice versa. Movement to a central place is the ideal for those holding marginal places. The dynamism and integrity of any society depend on the degree of movement—the extent to which it permits exchanges between centre and margin. Mobility in society is defined by two factors:

1. The extent to which a society permits legitimate place exchanges between individuals at the centre and margin.
2. The extent to which it allows all categories of persons to participate in the centre-margin exchanges.

The ideal society minimizes decadence in the centre and maximizes the motivation of those who are marginalized by offering upward mobility opportunities. It offers the prospect of full exchange between centre and margin in the course of any generation, thus addressing both aspects of its inherent paradox. First, it capitalizes on the ideals of equity, morality, and social .justice, thus maintaining positive connections with the transcendental imperative to reach beyond the social reality of inequality. Second, by not seeking to make inequality permanent, it maintains contact with social reality, in that in any generation places will be unequal. The ideal society as a consequence of the full exchange between centre and margin ensures competence and moral integrity at the centre, as well as mobilizes the full extent of marginal energy as those who are marginalized strive to overcome. The ideal society, therefore, is marked by creativity, inventiveness, efficiency, justice, and equity.

No society to date has realized this ideal. Even where centre-margin exchanges are fostered, participation by all categories of persons has not been facilitated. At some points restrictions are imposed based on age, gender, race/colour, class, caste, party, family, region, nationality, tribe, religion, or ideology.

A society stagnates when those who have captured central places manage to perpetuate themselves in those places (often through their relatives) and maintain the continued marginalization of others. While a multiplicity of measures is needed to do this, with coercive measures often chief among them in the beginning, the place assignments may eventually become accepted by the entire society—centre and margin—especially if the belief system justifying the place structure also justifies the lack of movement between centre and margin. In dealing with the
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nescapable question of mobility, such a belief system would probably relegate it to the after-life. For example, a belief system which justified the status quo in its entirety and promised that under certain conditions individuals would in the future re-enter the society in a new place may in fact facilitate such stagnation.

The holders of central places cannot maintain their places in complete isolation from the rest of society. In addition they face constant challenges for their places. They therefore sponsor mobility for some marginals, which might include their movement to a secondary central place, where the individual is located centrally in one or two or three dimensions but remains marginal on the others.

Holders of marginal places following the rules and circumstances established by the centrals will engineer mobility not intended by the centrals who, however, have to accept it as adhering to the logic of the place queue. Centrals may try to contain such engineered mobility by changing the rules or the prescriptions, but such engineering cannot be entirely eliminated.

Mobility in society, whether sponsored or engineered, is based upon the operational absolutes employed to determine place in the particular society at that time. These operational absolutes could be conceived of as a hierarchical, organized set of filters that separate persons within the society into subgroups which experience substantial differences in their life chances within that society. The interactive effect of the filters, the operational absolutes, is to create ceilings above which only token numbers of members of particular subgroups will rise, due mainly to idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies in the application of the logic of the place queue.

The most marginalized in mobility opportunities sometimes survive by isolating themselves in a belief system and culture that deviate totally from that of the centrals, sometimes to the point of being its very antithesis. This withdrawal of the most marginalized is a strategy of challenging the centre fundamentally. As the challenge gains legitimacy and support, requiring

concessions by the centre, the apparently isolated marginals begin to be re-integrated into the society on all dimensions of place.

Gender Patterns Explained by the Theory of Place

In applying the Theory of Place, I took the position that the place structure of Jamaican and Caribbean society in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century was based on four main operational absolutes or criteria: race/colour, class, gender, and age (Miller 1994). Race/colour was the principal criterion, followed in rank order by class, gender, and age. Accordingly, the place structure could be said to be dominated by ascriptive criteria, since it was composed of three such criteria, race/colour, gender, and age. Class, employed with its Weberian definition, was the only achievement category reflecting accomplishments in education, employment, and earnings.

Race/colour, the primary criterion of the place structure, according to Caribbean convention was subdivided into three categories: White, Brown, and Black. The term White refers to all persons of European ancestry. Some were bureaucrats from Britain, others were planters of large and small holdings and their support staff, some were professionals while others were poor. The term Brown is used to describe persons of mulatto heritage and Jewish ancestry because they occupied the same niche within the society and were treated in the same manner. This group was accorded their civil rights in the society in the period just prior to emancipation. The term Black is used to include all persons of African ancestry, most of whom were slaves, but some of whom were freed persons at the time of emancipation.

Within each colour group there were status groups or classes. Differences in occupation, income, and education differentiated the groups. However, the Whites of the lowest status groups regarded themselves and in many respects were treated as

superior to Browns of the highest status groups. The same could be said about the relative relations between Browns and Blacks.

Within each colour/class group, males were accorded higher rank than females. Moreover, older persons enjoyed seniority over younger persons and exercised final authority in decision making, assumed leadership, and occupied the prominent positions in the society. The place structure that existed could be labelled colour/class patriarchy.

Caribbean society in the first half of the 20th century was segregated along colour/class lines. Whites and more affluent Browns constituted the dominant social segment, while Blacks and less affluent Browns constituted the subordinate social segment. In Trinidad and Guyana, and to a lesser extent, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Grenada, Indians constituted yet another subordinate segment. Each of these segments was served and differentiated by different educational and other social institutions.

The second half of the 20th century was marked by the transformation of' the colonial society into self-governing states. This occurred in the context of the nationalist movement which contested the colonial status of the Caribbean societies. Embedded in the contest was the issue of racial discrimination and prejudice. At the same time that external relations of Caribbean societies were challenged, so too was the principal operational absolute, the criterion, upon which the societies were organized internally. The essence of the transformation could be listed as follows:

1. The replacement of colonial policy makers and administrators by national representatives drawn largely from the coalition of groups that had opposed the colonial authorities or had been sponsored by them.

2. The democratization of occupational and educational opportunities in the society in the context of the twin circumstances of fundamental constitutional changes and robust economic growth and development.

3. The integration of the segregated institutions that had previously served particular segments of the society, justified by

the tenets of social justice, the principles of democratization, and the ethic of equality of all citizens within the nation state.

The nation state brought fundamental change to the place structure as all nationals were deemed to be equal, with merit or achievement being the proposed basis for differentiation between nationals. Class therefore replaced race/colour as the primary criterion of social stratification. At the same time the ascriptive criteria of race/colour, gender, and age were deemed illegal in the conduct of the affairs of the nation although they remained embedded in the social milieu as criteria which determined the structure of civil society. From the ethical perspective, the state and civil society were locked in the tension between what was projected as the national ideals of social justice and the societal reality of inequality based on race, colour, gender, and age. While equality of opportunity and individual merit represented the national ethic, race/colour and gender conferred distinct advantages or constituted real obstacles in accessing opportunity and in determining achievement.

Further, the democratization of political power consistent with the national ideal of justice resulted in the fracture of the solidarity that had existed, for almost all of Caribbean history, between the holders of political power and those commanding the greatest share of the resources of the economy. These were no longer mutually supportive. Economic resources remained largely with Whites and those Browns who had risen to prominence in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. However, adult suffrage resulted in the virtual expulsion of this group from political office, and the installation of a new coalition of educated Browns and Blacks, and a few Jews in some countries, who could probably be best described as middle class. They represented the marginalized Black and Indian majorities who had elected them. Educated Browns and Blacks did not only constitute the holders of political office but also the vast majority of officials of the state bureaucracy.

Having seized the central places in state power, the policy-making apparatus, and bureaucratic machinery, the new holders of power not only sought to consolidate their new place in the society, but also attempted to meet some of the demands of their more marginalized partners, who formed the mass of the electorate. To address these two imperatives the holders of state power adopted two strategies with implications for the society's gender structure. First, they recruited women of their group as junior partners in the process of consolidating their group's newly acquired central places. Brown and Black women of the middle strata were recruited into intermediary positions while the men held the central places. Second, working within the framework of the paradigms created by the White colonial elite, the new holders of state power offered, through education, most of the expanded opportunities conceded to the marginalized groups in Caribbean society to the females of these groups. These females were also recruited to intermediary positions within the state machinery.

The light-skinned holders of central places in the economy adopted similar strategies. In defence of their group's place in the society, light-skinned men commanding the heights of the economy recruited women of their group into intermediary positions in their business. They also recruited into their private bureaucracies more women than men of the other ethnic groups in the society in the process of integration, which became the compelling social prerogative.

The opportunities offered to women through both strategies, and in public and private bureaucracies, went mainly to young women, in contrast to the mainly older men holding central places in power and resources. Gender and generation combined, as genealogy was contested as the principal criterion in the organization of Caribbean society.

It is important to note that while older men holding state power or commanding the main resources of the society may manipulate these circumstances to promote the interests of their groups

within the society, they are not able to compel compliance from either women of their group or from members of the subordinate groups. Their decisions to accept or reject the opportunities offered are based on their assessment of their place interest within the framework of the operational absolutes, governing how the society was constructed as well as its process of renegotiation and reconstruction. Within this context nationalism and nation building constituted a highly persuasive ideology around which to mobilize all the groups within the society, particularly those that had been marginalized. Its premise and promise of equality, justice, and integration would be particularly appealing to the latter.

Another critical point is the incomplete status of the socioeconomic transformation of Caribbean societies based on the premises of equality of opportunity and social justice. Colour/class patriarchy still persists in several segments of Caribbean societies. In these segments older men of the group, supported by their heirs, dominate their group and the other groups subordinate to them. In these circumstances young women of the subordinate groups continue to be the most marginalized within the traditional relationships that persist. In the terminology of the Theory of Place, the Type A queue continues to constitute the framework within which social life is constructed.

This is significant in that currently in Caribbean society there is both conservation of traditional social organization and transformation into a new order. Both the Type A queue and the Type B queue are operative. In the operation of the latter, women of the dominant groups are junior partners with the men of their groups in securing the advancement or defence of the group's place in society. At the same time young women of the subordinate groups enjoy socioeconomic advancement over their fathers, brothers, and prospective spouses.

The implications of these developments are that the solidarity of subordinate groups in Caribbean societies is being challenged f

rom several directions, leading to the emergence of gender, generation, and social gaps within groups. The gender gap arises as the women of the groups are incorporated into the mainstream of society faster and in greater proportion than the men of the groups. The generation gap arises as young people advance to a greater extent than older people. The social gap arises as close relatives within families experience widely different social mobility outcomes. Hence, young women making great strides through the educational system, up the occupational ladder, and in their income-earning capabilities are often the daughters and sisters of women continuing to experience the lot of marginalized women in Caribbean society.

Concluding Comment

The principal purpose of this paper was to offer an alternative explanation of the gender patterns currently observed in Caribbean society and education and to relate these to the process of democratization and social integration that has marked developments within the sub-region over the last half of this century. The key argument put forward is that the gender pattern currently observed in Caribbean society has to be understood as the competition between groups for places in the society in the context of the operational absolutes employed to rationalise inequality and to promote equality in the society.

Democratization of opportunity, social justice, and integration address utopian ideals in human society. Efforts to promote these ideals have had to contend with inequality, which is inherent in society but which is unjust and unfair. The current social facts of Caribbean societies, including their gender pattern, have been constructed from the combination of intentional actions of Caribbean peoples seeking to promote or defend their place in society and the unintended consequences of those actions. The Theory of Place seeks to offer new insights into explaining and understand-

ing the observed patterns largely through its capacity to include multiple constructs as well as the interactions between them.

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