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**SELECTIVE MODERNIZATION AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION: THE THIRD
DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN GUADELOUPE,
FRENCH WEST INDIES**

by

MARILYNNE E. DIGGS-THOMPSON

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New
York**

2000

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT**SELECTIVE MODERNIZATION AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION:
THE THIRD DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN GUADELOUPE,
FRENCH WEST INDIES**

by

Marilynne E. Diggs-Thompson

Advisor: Professor Jane C. Schneider

According to French demographers, the attainment of “replacement level fertility” at a rate very near to that of metropolitan France signified that Guadeloupeans were at last “modern.” Yet, in the 1950s, attaining French modernity meant not only limiting reproduction but also more fully assimilating French culture and social values, and emulating the Eurowestern model of family formation. During this era, although Guadeloupeans appeared to have embraced the French assimilationist agenda, in reality, they selected those aspects of French “modernity” which suited their cultural specificity and context-specific needs. Thus, while both the French and Guadeloupeans hail themselves as “modern,” a gulf exists between their versions of modernity.

This study critiques the dichotomized concepts of modern and traditional as they are used to describe and explain procreative practices and family formation. It argues that not only are such concepts inappropriate for typologizing family formation and fertility behavior, but fail to encapsulate the complex dynamics contained within cultural and

political-economic analyses. It argues that the introduction of modern patterns of consumption along with the denigration of “traditional” values and customs, the promulgation of French values and culture, labor migration to metropolitan France, and the introduction of birth control knowledge and technology interacted and were integral to the speed and thoroughness of Guadeloupe’s fertility decline. Despite Guadeloupeans’ ambition to become equal and assimilated French citizens, several components of the modernization process were ignored by local inhabitants, among them family nuclearization, and that the processes surrounding family formation are separable from rather than linked to changes in fertility. Given that from a Eurowestern perspective nuclear families and low fertility remain theoretically linked, this distinction is of key importance in the investigation of fertility transition in Guadeloupe and in other “third world” territories. It is further suggested that such transitions may, in fact, represent a third model of “The Demographic Transition.”

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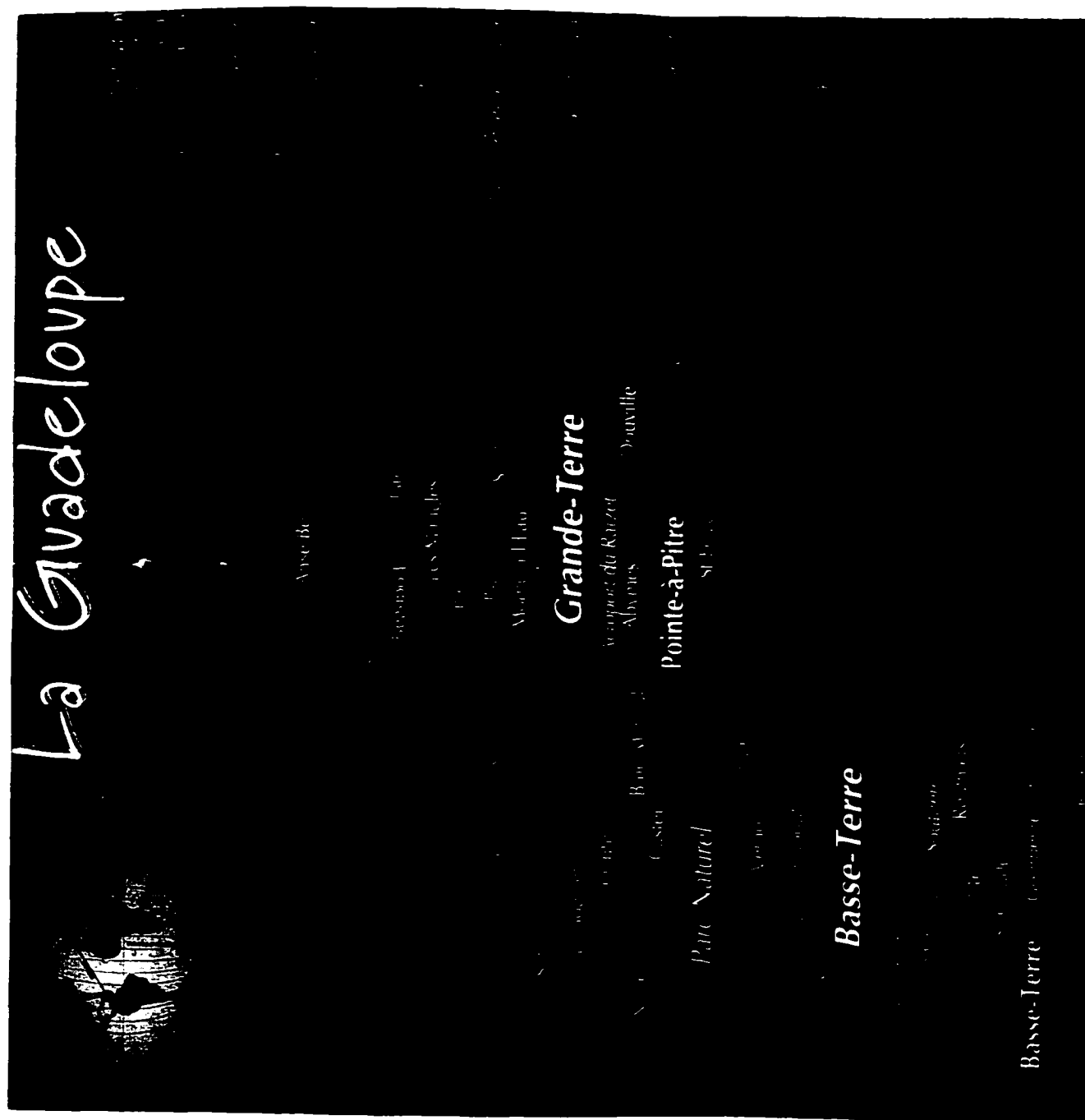
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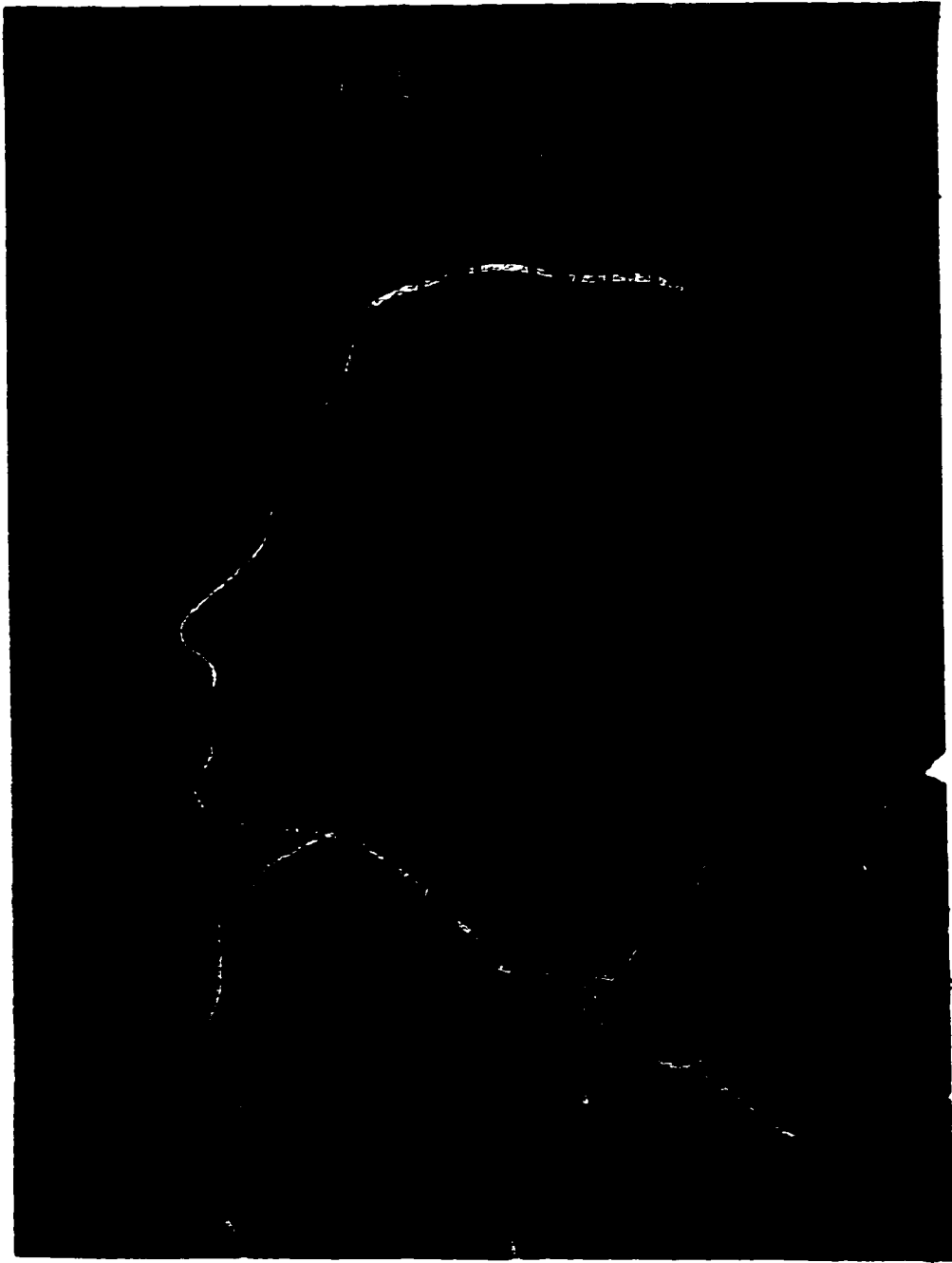
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Map of Guadeloupe





Chapter 1 - In Search of Explanations

[W]ider social, economic, and cultural factors do not act on localities in a simple stimulus-response fashion, but are translated by people according to their historical experience. In the process, the nature and significance of supposedly exogenous factors is likely to be quite transformed. In this way people manage to incorporate major historical shifts (identifying themselves with modern values and practices to a greater or less degree) whilst at the same time reaffirming what they consider to be their own traditions. (Philip Kreager, n.d:5)¹

Introduction

Early in my research, when Guadeloupeans asked me what exactly was I studying, I would often answer simply “Guadeloupean fertility.” Much to my surprise usually people would say, “Did you know that the birth rate in Guadeloupe is the same as in metropolitan France?” The Guadeloupean birth rate had indeed dropped from a high of an average of six children per woman in 1950 to its current low of an average of two, only slightly higher than the birth rate of 1.8 in metropolitan France. Apart from questions about how this “fertility parity” was achieved, I wondered how and why such an obscure fact became common knowledge among so many ordinary citizens.

Obviously, among Guadeloupeans, fertility was an issue of great local importance. Armed with this observation, I added new questions to my original, rather straightforward list. Was achieving “fertility parity” with metropolitan France in and of itself significant? Did Guadeloupeans believe that low fertility was a characteristic of “authentic” Frenchness? Or, although one would not necessarily view modernity and French culture

¹ Philip Kreager. (n.d.). *Population and Identity*. Unpublished paper. Pauling Center for Human Sciences, Oxford University.

as completely compatible, did Guadeloupeans internalize this as meaning that Guadeloupe was as “modern” as the rest of the French Nation?

Slowly, as I spoke to more Guadeloupeans, a preoccupation with modernity emerged as a central issue, but modernity in this context meant something very different than modernity in demographically modern countries. For example, after leaving the airport, a visitor’s first impression of Guadeloupe is that it is a “third world” territory and some “first world” characteristics have been grafted onto its material aspects and physical features. Guadeloupean modernity cannot not be construed as implying the existence of post-modern industrialization and high-rise skyscrapers. Next, one soon realizes that several social aspects of Guadeloupe appear to be more traditional than modern. Take “kinship,” which in Guadeloupe is configured differently than in the West. The typically large and multigenerational Guadeloupean families do not correspond to Eurowestern models. The fact that quite often relatives reside in the same immediate neighborhood and sometimes under the same roof is also at variance with Western images of the “modern family.”

Perhaps the most striking and relevant aspect of Guadeloupean society is that legal, conjugal marriages and “legitimate” offspring are in the minority and that few Guadeloupeans view this as socially, morally, or economically improper. Not only is this behavior quite at odds with the code of conduct sanctioned in the West, but the fundamental tenets of demographic transition theory revolve around the rate and timing of marriage. In my surveys most women wrote that having no more than two or three children was optimum; however, here was a context in which how men and women mated

and married had little bearing on when and why women decided to have children or on the total number of children they desired to have. Clearly, relying on John Bongaarts (1978) “proximate determinants of *marital* fertility,” would not be entirely helpful in determining how aggregate fertility fell. The question for me then remained; what factors should be considered in the course of investigating this fertility transition, and what theory would be best applied to the Guadeloupean context?

A Third Demographic Transition?

I gradually realized that Guadeloupe’s low birth rate was, in a sense, a badge of honor. Over the years, the French media, it appeared, had done a thorough job of inculcating the belief that a high birth rate was synonymous with a backward society while a low birth rate was emblematic of a society’s modernity. Still, linking high fertility and inferior social and economic status was not a new practice. Jane and Peter Schneiders’ coinage of the term “reproductive stigma” well encapsulates the long-held belief that overprocreation is synonymous with irrationality, unfettered sexual activity, and indicates that the population or individual in question is a member of a lower social, economic, and moral order (1996). In fact, like the working-class Sicilians in the Schneider study, minority and non-minority people around the world have lowered their fertility in response to external social pressure and in order to escape being stereotypically portrayed. There had to be, therefore, other factors responsible for the Guadeloupean fertility decline. But while a number of Guadeloupeans were quick to inform me that

their birth rate was “modern,” relatively few could offer a coherent or compelling explanation as to how that status was achieved.

The fact that Guadeloupeans did not attach procreation to marriage as either necessary or even desirable, inevitably led me to consider some very different questions and ultimately to move in new directions. Contending with these contextual “twists and turns,” as Kreager would call them, complicated my methods and my personal and professional perspectives in a number of ways. First, they precluded my relying on existing paradigms for explanation, as both classic and neoclassic variations were overwhelmingly Eurocentric. Even modern variants, such as Ronald Lesthaeghe’s more fluid and flexible concept of a “second demographic transition,” heavily relied on analyzing shifting power relations between *married* partners. Given the fact that nearly two-thirds of all procreation took place outside of legal unions, or was “extramarital,” I asked myself, did Guadeloupe represent a model of a different transition than the post-1960 “second demographic transition” which took place largely in first world and/or Eurowestern nations? If Guadeloupeans could not be described as subscribing to a quality over quantity thesis (as in the first demographic transition), nor as subscribing to the gender symmetry thesis (as in the second transition), was the Guadeloupean demographic transition (which I estimate was roughly concurrent with rather than subsequent to the second) distinctly different enough to be typologized as a third? If so, how and why did fertility fall in spite of the fact that a high percentage of mating and procreation took place outside of legal marriage? Moreover, Guadeloupean families were by and large “traditional” in that emotional ties and quotidian activities were centered

around an extended network of kin and fictive kin -- some of whom did not even reside in Guadeloupe.

In searching for answers, I examined fertility (or parenthood), and family (or marriage and mating) as did Guadeloupeans, as separate phenomena, recognizing the almost certain fact that a thorough investigation of the processes surrounding each would provide me with more accurate data for answering my central questions. In other words, my goal was to research the political-economy and culture attached to fertility and the political-economy and culture of the family as related but separate issues. Prevailing paradigms, I believed, relied too heavily on marital fertility and on dyadic husband/wife relations, and considered culture and identity as footnotes rather than as integral and context-specific components of fertility analysis. I was convinced that getting to the bottom of locally-specific cultural and ideological factors -- or the “twists and turns” -- was necessary in order to arrive at what Susan Greenhalgh (1995) refers to as a “holistic” understanding of fertility change.

Paths To Self-Transformation: Education, Migration, and Consumption

When I embarked upon my “holistic” search for how Guadeloupe’s fertility declined, it seemed logical to first learn more about how birth control was initially introduced. I spoke with the people themselves, particularly with women who were in their teens and early twenties at the start of the fertility transition, with those who had lived most of their lives in Guadeloupe, and with residents who had migrated to France. I interviewed demographers and population specialists, I spoke with health care workers,

doctors, nurses, teachers, school administrators, social workers, librarians, statisticians, famous and not so famous writers, and with local government officials. I searched through archival sources, examining official statistical records, as well as old textbooks and newspapers and magazines. An event that quickly captured my attention was the initiation of a labor migration program between Guadeloupe and Paris which operated during the same years that the fertility transition had taken place. I became convinced that in the 1960s new birth control programs and outmigration operating together were the primary catalysts of change.

The government documents from the 1950s that I examined explicitly outlined the objectives of the postwar five-year economic plans created for Guadeloupe. They also revealed that the dissemination of contraceptive technology in Guadeloupe was initially covert and, according to French law which still banned the use of birth control, illegal. The primary objectives of the five year plans were a) to decrease dangerously rapid population growth, and b) to defuse what had become a widespread and violent anti-French political movement by reducing the youthful segment of the population through labor migration. The rhetoric contained in these economic plans emphasized the socio-economic aspects of “modernization,” defined as raising the standard of living by improving health care and expanding education. The expansion of the latter consisted of transplanting the French educational system, complete with standardized (nationally used) educational materials, to Guadeloupe. Starting in the late 1950s, French newspapers and magazines also became more readily available. Like textbooks, this literature exemplified the white French metropolitan family as the ideal model.

The official reason cited for initiating sweeping socio-economic change was that the benefits to be reaped from the new programs would more than justify their cost. The French believed that “development” would produce modern citizens who would be better educated, more likely to be gainfully employed, become prudent and restrained in matters of reproduction, and who would adopt the model of the modern (French bourgeois nuclear) family. Such a family was characterized by its small size, neolocal and conjugal living arrangements, and its pattern of modern consumer practices. In the end, modern citizens would be less fiscally draining on the resources of the state and more economically productive.

I spent considerable time talking with both residents who remembered and experienced the changes ushered in by government-directed programs in the post-war era and with Guadeloupeans who had taken advantage of migration opportunities. But, while development plans emphasized effecting economic change, Guadeloupeans with whom I talked about the period most vividly remembered “things.” For example, several people vaguely remembered the 1950s and early 1960s as a period of political turmoil and economic insecurity. At the same time, they remembered the era as the period during which they were introduced to electricity, running water and indoor plumbing, new appliances, fashionable clothing, cars, accessories, furnishings and “supermarkets.” Yet, rather than to interpret this desire for “things” as blatant consumerism, or to accept that these narratives seemed to give evidence of shallow, vain, and superficial acquisitive tendencies, I tried to delve beneath the narratives in order to comprehend the meaning and symbolism behind the preoccupation with ownership of modern tangibles. Put another

way, I needed to understand why “things” were so important; what kind of status did they imply, and what messages were modern possessions meant to impart to their owners and to outside observers. I realized that although “things” can provide a measure of personal satisfaction, more often than not, they are symbols of a certain lifestyle, occupying a certain “habitus,” or membership in a certain class (Bourdieu 1984:170-171). Consequently, I listened closely to these nostalgic accounts and consumer memories and considered them carefully, beyond face value, in my final analyses.

Guadeloupeans also remembered that this period marked the beginning of a steady influx of white metropolitans into Guadeloupe. Regarding migration, recollections were filled with phrases like “I just wanted to have a better life,” or “I wanted to get out of Guadeloupe and see the world.” Guadeloupeans remembered wanting to travel -- in particular -- wanting to live in Paris. Little by little the issue of social difference entered the picture as a euphemism for cultural and racial inequality.

As elsewhere in the West Indies, during the 1960s, education levels started to dramatically increase. Guadeloupeans now in their fifties and early sixties recalled that this was the juncture that their ambitions grew, as did the social and economic expectations they had of potential partners. Guadeloupean women recalled the introduction of birth control centers, the creation of a family planning organization, and gradually increasing access to contraception. Some women recalled participating in the early family planning movement and remembered its ties to the metropole, as well as its connections with English-speaking and American-held Caribbean territories. But women most animatedly spoke about the new array of consumer choices and career options that

opened up in the 1960s and early 1970s. These choices, and the desire to improve their socioeconomic circumstances, were often cited as a reason why, whenever possible, women avoided becoming pregnant. It became apparent that social and economic mobility were equally important.

The island of Guadeloupe also changed physically during the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the traditionally prominent agricultural sector declined in size and in importance. The white elite in Guadeloupe shifted its capital from agro-industry to department stores and fashion emporiums. The period is characterized by a rising dominance of waged labor, the growth of the service sector, and a wave of rural to urban migration. And, in spite of postwar “modernization” programs, Guadeloupe’s population has grown considerably -- from roughly 300,000 people in 1960, to nearly 500,000 in 2000. This made me wonder what Guadeloupe’s population would have been if these programs had not been successful. Clearly if a transformation had not taken place, the individual and collective social and economic aspirations of Guadeloupeans could have never been achieved.

From archival sources and personal interviews emerged a consistent theme: “Frenchification” and consumer-oriented “modernization” appeared to be important factors in demographic change. More specifically, it became apparent that the decrease in fertility was strongly influenced by Guadeloupeans’ quest to become more like the French families they read about or saw on their new televisions. Nor were Guadeloupeans passive recipients of externally mandated or top-down social change.^v Rather, they were political activists, social agitators, and avid participants in their upward

climb. I very quickly realized that the introduction of birth control and government-sponsored migration did not create this new perspective, it only capitalized on Guadeloupeans' desire, initiated in the post-emancipation period, to become upwardly mobile. Very clearly, Guadeloupean modernization was aided, abetted, and perpetuated by local black citizens who were determined to use this process to obtain social and economic improvements for themselves and their families, as well as to gain racial equality.

Local black social scientists describe the 1960s and the early 1970s as the period when Guadeloupeans most intensely desired to become more French. Hence, they have labeled it the “do as if we were French” era. During this period Guadeloupeans attempted to mirror not only social practices, as initially implied, but also, became enamored with the idea of becoming modern French consumers. However, Guadeloupeans' narratives indicate that they did more than mimic French culture, rather that they modeled and shaped it to suit their own objectives. In other words, I argue that the transformation of Guadeloupe was both a top-down and bottom-up process -- driven by metropolitan imperatives as well as by Guadeloupeans' economic and social ambitions. Although the top-down component is primarily associated with state-directed change, individual or bottom-up initiatives taken by Guadeloupeans included: availing themselves of educational and migratory opportunities; struggling to achieve regional autonomy; choosing to avoid pregnancy and reducing the number of offspring; and remodeling the French version of the nuclear family into one that was more compatible with French West

Indian circumstances and culture. These were the primary components of the Guadeloupean process of self-transformation.

Complicating, and at times obscuring my analyses of Guadeloupe's process of demographic change was: a) the lengthy period of French colonialism; b) the relatively recent history of massive migration; c) a set of social assumptions derived primarily from a "culture of poverty thesis" based on studies of U.S. blacks. I also discovered, with some surprise, that Guadeloupe's three hundred and fifty year attachment to its colonial parent seems to have created a system of social and economic stratification that combines characteristics of West Indian societies with characteristics of the racialized American social system. And, although Guadeloupeans and Martinicans never endured a version of the southern U.S. Jim Crow movement, they had endured the dehumanizing conditions of slavery. Even blacks who had been freed and managed to become affluent were subjected to denigrating restrictions imposed by the slave code of conduct -- the *Code Noir*. Moreover, Guadeloupean society still bore the imprint of slavery and the hierarchical social structure of the plantation system, and its citizens never became the beneficiaries of "equal opportunity" legislation. French West Indians also had collectively endured the stigma imposed by several highly ethnocentric cultural traits analyses in literature filled with both casual conjecture and scholarly reports alleging that blacks were an inferior people.

As a result of this history, and bearing more recent but inadmissible scars, French West Indians battled to create their own form of equal opportunity which mandated that they constantly challenge all assumptions about racial difference, which in the context of

the time meant becoming assimilated citizens of France. In this, French West Indians were no different than many other minority people who lived in or came in (unequal) contact with the West. Yet, Guadeloupeans selected how and under what circumstances they would achieve their objectives, and the final outcome of Guadeloupean struggles (regional autonomy versus independence) differed from that of their English-speaking neighbors, as did their concept of what constituted a modern French citizen.

Migrations: Old and New

Researching the details surrounding Guadeloupe's migration program was quite enlightening, but more revealing were people's narratives which equated migration with achieving social and economic mobility and equality. Ultimately I came to the realization that the heavily promoted French government migration program was not in and of itself causal of the dramatic decline in fertility. Nonetheless, after beginning my interviews with Guadeloupean men and women I realized that the theme of migration occupied a prominent place in the lives of Guadeloupean men and women. Nearly all West Indians share this migration ideology, which although originally induced by economic factors, was also tied to issues of social mobility.

Commencing with the "discovery" and settlement of the Caribbean by Europeans and continuing through the era of the slave trade and on into the present, various migrations have significantly impacted population change in the Caribbean region. A "migration orientation" is common among nearly all West Indians and discourses about migration continue to dominate modern life. Indeed, it is common for the shortcomings of

local socio-economic conditions to be voiced in conjunction with accounts of voyages, whether merely anticipated or actually undertaken. The narratives of Antillean senior citizens are replete with remembrances -- whether joyful or painful -- of pilgrimages realized and with regrets for pilgrimages unrealized. Middle-aged Guadeloupeans who emigrated to France in the 1980s recall the failure of settlement attempts due to the harshness of a radically different and largely unwelcome social and economic climate in which racism had become more overt.

In contrast, 1990's youth yearn openly for new destinations and settings more conducive to the realization of their personal and professional potential. Also, they are far more likely to reject the use of older established migration networks and are quite content to strike out on their own to the destinations of their dreams. These "dream" destinations include such cities as New York, Miami, San Francisco, Montreal, and Quebec. In interviews, members of the younger generation stated, nearly unanimously, that (unless they have some form of employment contract) they would prefer to emigrate to St. Martin or to the American Virgin Islands rather than to Paris, Nice, Marseilles, or Lyon. Yet, they nearly always search for at least one contact (often an acquaintance) to ease their path in the new location.

Massey et al.(1994) and others (see, for example Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Pessar 1988; Portes 1992; Kasinitz 1992; Sutton 1987) describe how networks are crucial to migratory movement and how they tend to prolong the exodus even when economic conditions cease to be welcoming. The pattern of Caribbean migratory movement during the first 80 years of the twentieth century certainly supports this thesis. Migration

networks remain crucial to the millions who continue to stream legally and illegally into the United States and to "global cities" around the world.

However, just as migrants differ from generation to generation even in the same region, the characteristics of migration may also differ sharply. For example, there are many similarities as well as a significant number of differences in the migration patterns of people from English- and French-speaking islands. For one, England never directly financed or "sponsored" migrants, whereas France, in great need of unskilled labor after World War II, actively recruited them. Inhabitants of the English-speaking Caribbean migrated to the United States and Canada, but French West Indians were linguistically circumscribed in their choices. During the 1970s, migration from the Caribbean to Britain was reduced to a trickle by immigration quotas, whereas in France the number of people sponsored by a government migration program had only just begun to reach its peak.

According to Gary Freeman (1992), the Caribbean migrations to Britain and France started as an economic measure when both nations permitted emigrants from colonial and post-colonial territories to enter for the purpose of engaging in low-waged unskilled occupations. Moreover, unlike England, France vigorously believed that new immigrants (even non-whites) would assimilate its customs and values -- a process that the French actually refer to as "assimilation." Eventually, however, the "open door" policies became policies of selective entry when rough economic periods caused metropolitan residents to react against the presence of immigrant workers. With regard to England, the largest wave occurred in the 1950s, a time when French Caribbean emigration to France was much less pronounced. Initially, for people in both regions, emigration was

largely self-financed, but it was an investment well made when employment opportunities were plentiful.

In 1962, England ended its policy of free movement and granted entry only to those with specific job skills and to West Indians who were re-uniting with immediate family members. By contrast, in 1975 government-sponsored migration to France attracted some 5,000 Antilleans and the number doubles when those whose migration was self-financed are included. Moreover, the French migration program did not officially end until 1982 -- a decade after England had barred entry (Freeman 1992:193)—after which French West Indians found themselves homebound. As migration outlets in Britain closed, as they had earlier in the century, English-speaking West Indians migrated to the U.S. Here their lives and social and economic destinies articulated with those of African-Americans centered in urban cities such as New York. But West Indians who migrated after the 1920s eventually created their own communities. Despite the fact that it was Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey who became one of the most renowned black leaders of the period, after the 1950s a large percentage of West Indians lived within the confines of their own ethnic enclaves. By this time, theoretical assumptions about “the Negro problem” became hegemonic, not only in the literature about American minorities but most noticeably in typologies of “the West Indian Family” -- West Indian being the term most commonly applied to Caribbean residents of African descent.

Racial Stratification and the Emergence of Black Nationalism

Although the notion of black unity is relatively recent in the French West Indies, one of the earliest and most influential activist leaders to link the lives of American blacks and others in the Diaspora with those of West Indians was Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey (1887-1940). In 1907, after leading a printers' strike, and having been branded as a troublemaker by local employers, the young Marcus Garvey was forced to leave Jamaica in search of work. Garvey joined the ranks of thousands of other West Indian men on the labor migration circuit throughout the region. Garvey's experiences in exile made him particularly well informed and allowed him an insider's perspective on the exploitation of blacks in England, South and Central America, and ultimately the United States.

Garvey both observed black powerlessness and debated these issues with other black leaders and activists. He also developed a deep appreciation of the African culture in particular that of Ethiopia and Liberia which at the time were fully self-governing black states. When he returned to Jamaica in 1914, he was a man with a mission: the return of cultural pride, self-government, and economic autonomy to all black people regardless of heritage, history, or social circumstance. Garvey established the first branch of his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Jamaica but met with little success. By 1914 Jamaica was the site of a rapidly growing black-led trade union movement and Garvey, now an outsider, called for black people to rise up against "black and brown oppressors" and clashed with locally influential members of the Jamaican Federation of Labor.

Garvey was again forced to flee Jamaica to the U.S. where everyone was an immigrant and here, where his speeches and writings were well-received, he and his UNIA branches met with much greater success. The conditions of blacks which Garvey had witnessed during his travels inspired him to seek a way to create global black unity and ultimately to establish branches of the UNIA throughout the world. UNIA branches and its Liberty Halls were centers of black economic enterprise as well as of social activities, and although the reign of Garvey's influence was relatively short it was immensely successful. By 1921, there were UNIA Liberty Halls in forty countries scattered over four continents (Anima Mama 1995: 106).

Garvey also believed that ultimately the black race should return to Africa. One of Garvey's economic ventures was the Black Star Steamship Line, established to link the UNIA's global enterprises and to serve as transport for blacks who wanted to return to Africa. This prompted many of his critics (both black and white) to attempt to characterize his entire message as a "back to Africa movement." Another issue that clouded the reception of his message among some blacks was what seemed to be a preoccupation with skin color variations. American black leaders criticized this as typically West Indian, claiming that it was an inappropriate and irrelevant topic among Afro-Americans.

The magnitude of Garvey's legacy and the controversies that he inspired defy oversimplification, but what is often overlooked and particularly relevant to this discussion is that he created a black pride movement early in the century. Often, Martinican-born Aimé Césaire's intellectual concept of *Négritude* is characterized as one

of the seminal black pride movements. Yet, I would argue that in the French West Indian context, the influence of *Négritude* was more literary (infused with Surrealist allegory) than populist whereas Garvey was polemic with black intellectuals. Further, Garvey's proponents specifically advocated political, economic, and social change and inspired a groundswell of activism. Garveyism also predated *Négritude* by some thirty years, and whereas *Négritude* had few adherents in the French West Indies, Garvey's movement spanned four continents. More to the point, the black nationalist message emanating from Garveyism was carried by exiled American Black leaders, activists, artists and writers from Harlem to Paris where it was reborn among black students from colonial territories the under the banners of *Négritude* and other black nationalist movements.

In fact, the creation of black pride and a sense of black nationalism had been Marcus Garvey's initial goal. However, in the late 1930s, by the time Aimé Césaire and the Senegalese Leopold Senghor were in Paris collaborating on their concept of *Négritude*, Marcus Garvey had been imprisoned, disempowered, and discredited by U.S. government investigators, and by 1940 he was dead. Although Césaire makes no specific mention of Garvey's writings, he does credit the work of Harlem-based black authors for much of his early inspiration and mentions the black Jamaican immigrant writer Claude McKay. Whereas West Indians from and in the English-speaking Caribbean were organizing in protest of racial inequality and economic exploitation, inequality as a racial rather than a class issue did not capture a following in the French West Indies. It was not until the mid-1950s that the issue of race briefly took center stage. By that time Césaire had become disillusioned with the class-centered ideology of the Communist Party (with

which he was affiliated) and with the process of departmentalization. The issues about which Césaire and other social activists were most outspoken were economic deterioration and rising unemployment -- largely the same issues being debated by black and white activists and intellectuals in the United States.

Black Studies in the Postwar Era

For the Negro [sic] immigrant from the French or British West Indies, particularly, the label of democracy is found to be fictional. Accustomed to class lines that he has learned to respect even though he may hate them, he can find little solace in a system that brands him as inferior before he is even known. Acceptance of inferior status that is urged upon him abruptly is not easily done even if the economic conditions are materially improved. (I.D.Reid 1939:163)²

Originally, assumptions about West Indian family life were not derived from West Indians but from studies that typologized black Americans. These studies formed the foundation for social theorizing first in former British-held colonies, and later in the French West Indies. Although divided by national allegiances, colonial officials were remarkably collaborative when it came to targeting problems and formulating solutions for their non-white overseas subjects. Early in the twentieth century researchers were documenting and investigating “the Negro Plight” which by the 1940’s, had been relabeled “the Negro Problem” -- a problem that was inclusive of black Americans and West Indians.

² Ira D.A. Reid from The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937.

Research conducted by social scientists such I.D. Reid (1939), Glazer and Moynihan (1944), Melville Herskovits (1941 [1958]), Gunnar Myrdal (1944), and E. Franklin Frazier (1957) on urban African-Americans defined the “the Negro Problem” in the United States. Others (including E. Franklin Frazier) further believed that blacks could and would (under conducive economic circumstances) fully assimilate. But this period was marked by several trains of thought, some deterministic and fatalistic arguing that nothing would alter the status of blacks, others optimistic expressing belief in the possibility of full acculturation. Others avoided the issue of economic circumstance altogether and adhered to the study of historical and cultural origins.

I.D. Reid (1939) was of the opinion that economic improvement would do little to alter the natural inferiority complex of blacks. Post-Garveyite black activists were less likely to be working-class leaders and more likely to be elite intellectuals who interacted and debated with other social scientists. Several American cultural anthropologists were involved in these debates, especially New York based anthropologist Melville Herskovits. Herskovits, who had a substantial track record in investigating black culture, originally applied to the Carnegie Corporation first for a grant and later to head up a major study they were sponsoring of American blacks, a job that was awarded instead to Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal (Jackson 1986:117). Herskovits focused on the traits of American Negroes in the 1930s from the theoretical perspective of historical particularism as espoused by his mentor, and father of American anthropology, German-born Franz Boas (see Reid 1939, Herskovits 1941, Glazer and Moynihan 1944, E.F. Frazier 1957). These early theories set the tone for Caribbean population programs that followed.

Black and West Indian Problems Are Merged

The two competing explanations of the origins of the black family in the United States were offered by American anthropologist Melville Herskovits and American black scholar E. Franklin Frazier. Essentially, Herskovits followed a historical-particularist or cultural-particularist approach to argue that blacks had retained a good deal of culture of African origin, whereas Frazier asserted that slavery had all but eradicated African “survivals” among blacks and became the context in which new family forms were constructed. Each protagonist had a different objective for his theoretical conclusion and conducted not only a historical debate but sought to win the validation of policy makers. Herskovits’ interests were largely intellectual, favoring scholarly publication, while Frazier’s objectives were pragmatic and “applied” as he sought to garner more lucrative program funds for Afro-Americans on the basis that they could fully assimilate to (white) American culture. However, Herskovits based his conclusions on fieldwork conducted over a period of some twenty years (from roughly 1920 to 1940) not only in the U.S., but in Haiti, Trinidad, Surinam, and West Africa while Frazier based his thesis primarily upon conclusions drawn from analyzing historical writings about the circumstances imposed upon black Americans after emancipation (see Stocking 1986, Jackson 1986:95-126).

A theoretical turning point of sorts occurred in 1959 when Oscar Lewis published his “Culture of Poverty” thesis about Mexican families living in the state of poverty, a thesis that was first formulated by British social welfare administrator T.S. Simey and others who typologized and summarized the “traits” shared by lower-class West Indians.

Lewis asserted that living in poverty was not just a condition of economic deprivation and social disorganization, but was an enduring way of life passed down from generation to generation and that these characteristics appeared to be particularly salient to the “black problem.” Inter- and intra-group violent tendencies and aggression were characteristics cited by Lewis as endemic to a “culture of poverty.” Other practices which seemed to be especially relevant were those involving early sexual initiation, “free unions or consensual marriages, a relatively high incidence of the abandonment of mothers and children, a trend toward mother-centered families and a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives” (Lewis 1961:xxvi).

When the problems of lower-class first world blacks and Caribbean blacks were juxtaposed they appeared to be remarkably similar and several conferences were held where Caribbean, European, and American scholars exchanged perspectives on black social problems (see Vera Rubin 1957). After reaching a series of conclusions about the American non-white poor, these assumptions were extended into analyses about the non-white population of the Caribbean and formed the basis for ensuing studies. As I discuss further in chapter six, prewar studies of lower-class West Indian families in the Caribbean, conducted primarily by British scholars, cited many of the same problems. Caribbean families appeared to be loosely organized, perpetually economically challenged, socially marginal, and to the dismay of the patriarchal West, overwhelmingly matriarchal.

A significant percentage of welfare workers, government officials, development specialists, and social scientists believed that one antidote for economic stagnation and social disorganization was to transform the Caribbean family into a mirror image of the

nuclear family fostered in the West. Not only should Caribbean families become nuclear, but they should be small, based on legal unions, and return the male to his rightful place as a permanent father figure and recognized head of the household. The creation of employment opportunities retreated in importance as the drive to correct social and moral issues took precedence. Thus, by 1960, propaganda in favor of smaller Caribbean families and of legal marriage with legitimate offspring as *the* acceptable form of behavior became pervasive, and low fertility and small families were indelibly tied to this model.

Causes and Consequences: Selective Modernization

Infused with assumptions drawn from postwar analyses about third world people and urban minorities, classic demographic transition theory makes much ado about differences between modern and traditional societies. Family organization is a particular target of theoretical inquiry. The influence that extended family organization exerts on women's fertility has been seen as being supportive of high fertility. Because West Indians maintain and value extended kinship ties, their family model is seen as the opposite of the "modern" nuclear family. Given that historically a high percentage of West Indians living in the Caribbean were poor, this attachment to an extended family was viewed as problematic.

Researchers' scrutiny of Caribbean kinship has been "at a distance," practiced by welfare workers, and "up close and personal" as typified by the participant observation method of social and cultural anthropologists. Although values and beliefs regarding mating and procreation differ within and between various Caribbean societies, "loose"

mating practices have been essentialized as a common cultural trait. Other "traits" attributed to West Indians are the acceptance of casual, "visiting," and consensual mating practices and out-of-wedlock births. With the possible exception of economic underdevelopment and overpopulation, these topics have dominated Eurowestern analyses of West Indian societies.

In contrast, the average West Indian has been far less concerned with explaining why these social practices exist. Still, the majority of West Indians will confirm that their social norms surrounding family and mating are indeed different from those espoused in the West. For example, when asked about "family model" preferences, nearly all West Indians will say something to the effect that "things are different among us here -- we are Caribbean people." Other "shared" values which people acknowledge include those that pertain to kinship patterns, gender roles and gender relations, sex roles, and family formation and organization. West Indians will also share the fact that they vehemently abhor the American variant of racism but their own struggle to achieve equality vis-à-vis whites has been a long-standing struggle.

Indeed, one could say that the fall of fertility among Guadeloupeans was contained within their plans and ambitions to become in every way equal to metropolitan French citizens. During the 1950s and 1960s, equality had become less synonymous with attaining political power and autonomy than with attaining visible, measurable, and tangible economic opportunities and social/racial equality. In fact, initially, many Guadeloupeans viewed the government-sponsored migration program as a form of recompense for government-directed downsizing of the agricultural sector, for

government's failure to provide new housing, and to match the social benefits available in the metropole.

Improved health care and the expansion of educational opportunity provided quality-of-life improvements, and labor migration further provided the fiscal means by which Guadeloupeans could afford new consumer goods. This socio-economic and consumer revolution played an enormous role in reshaping the character of the French West Indies, and in providing residents with tangible rewards for distancing themselves from the "traditional" model.

The spread of contraception among Guadeloupean women, the intertwining of fertility decline with out-migration, and the continued impact of migration processes clearly played significant roles in reshaping the population profile of Guadeloupe. Yet, the rapidity and thoroughness of the Guadeloupean fertility decline could only have been accomplished by convincing men and women that there were tangible social and material rewards to be obtained by not having children. I, however, argue that what drove the engine of this interrelated and interactive process in the 1950s and 1960s and underlay this profound socio-economic reorientation was the French government's heavy-handed promotion of Guadeloupean "modernization" combined with Guadeloupeans' desire to be upwardly mobile and in every way equal to the metropolitan French.

Bombarded with images of modern French families, Guadeloupeans could not help but note that modern families employed modern conveniences, were attired in modern clothing, and were small. To a racial group long denied the benefits of social equality, eradicating differences that seemed to keep them mired in "otherness" was important. I

would further argue that without the increase in commoditization and consumerism, assimilation to French culture would not have been as effective. French West Indians reacted negatively to discourses but were most prone to visual images portraying them as different and these images were abundantly supplied by product advertisement.

Perhaps the overwhelming level of consumer marketing was out of the ordinary but demographic studies illustrate that this process of modernization was not unique to the French West Indies. In fact, many changes that took place in Guadeloupe were similar to those initiated in the English-speaking West Indian territories. However, in the latter context where the populist political choice was independence, being identified as Jamaican or Trinidadian was as important as receiving economic assistance from Britain. In contrast, French West Indians were concerned with minimizing perceptions of national, racial, and cultural difference between themselves and their white metropolitan counterparts: they wanted to be identified as French. The French West Indies had an economically elite *Mulâtre* class, but political power was retained by whites. In West Indian countries such as Jamaica, a politically active brown elite and middle class had achieved a significant degree of brown and black power by the mid-1960s (see Robotham 1996:310). Also, unlike the French West Indian context, labor migration to England was never government-sponsored and ended in the early 1960s. After 1965, West Indians denied entry to Britain made their own arrangements to find work in the United States. And, in the 1950s, islands that were part of the English-speaking Caribbean had no legal statutes forbidding the dissemination or use of birth control technology.

The ban on dispensing birth control devices in France was lifted in 1967, but family planning started much earlier and was directly associated with the French national movement and was funded primarily by metropolitan-based money. Although there was no legal restriction against distributing birth control devices to single women, the emphasis was on helping married women to space births or to prevent unwanted pregnancies. In France, girls under eighteen were forbidden to obtain birth control devices without parental permission. By contrast, contraceptive technology and knowledge were disseminated among Guadeloupean women regardless of relationship or marital status. Moreover, due to post-war studies conducted in the English-speaking West Indies which indicated that the high rate of teen pregnancy and the low rate of legal marriage were problematic, enormous efforts were made to educate Guadeloupean youth in birth preventative techniques. Indeed, already in the late 1950s, dispensing birth control information and contraceptive devices to young West Indian girls and single women were a common component of "development" programs in the Caribbean. This reflects and exposes some of the racist and classist biases of the demographic transition process and the wider process of modernization in "underdeveloped" countries.

Postwar development programs were based primarily on classic demographic transition theory which retained much of the rhetoric first espoused by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century social observer and essayist Thomas Malthus. In many ways this rhetoric was revitalized by studies conducted among the American black underclass. There is an overriding concern with irrational breeding among the poor, the unfit, and the irresponsible. Another enduring Malthusian relic found in demographic

discussions is the popular and “scientific” belief that somehow the number of offspring born to a woman is inexorably linked to the status of her union and the manner in which her immediate family is organized and perceived in the larger society. Clearly, neo-Malthusian thinking has resisted banishment as has the link between fertility and family formation in both popular and scholarly circles. In the twentieth century, classist concern with the poor was replaced by a more racist concern and there is every indication that such thinking continues to be prevalent as we enter into the twenty-first century.

For a brief period, there had been other explanations. Another “twist and turn” I encountered during the course of my research was the discovery that detailed information about population problems in the Caribbean and about West Indian patterns of fertility could be found only in Caribbean public and university libraries or at specialized libraries within the United States. Upon review I noticed that this regional literature revealed some very puzzling findings. First, I found little or no cross-reference to these studies within Eurowestern demographic literature, despite the fact that the writings were based on very extensive research that took place primarily between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s. Second, the Caribbean literature indicated that West Indian women in legal marriages and long-term stable relationships during the 1950s and early 1960s had a significantly *higher* rate of total fertility than did those in “visiting” and short-term relationships. Explanations offered for this phenomenon were complex and varied and some conclusions have been debated and refuted among Caribbean scholars. Yet, clearly these data, which I will later discuss, indicated that encouraging the adoption of the

“modern” family in the Caribbean was contradictory to, rather than supportive of, lowering birth rates.

Subsequently, a new question was added to my growing list of research questions. If, historically, Caribbean women in legal or stable long-term relationships had higher rates of fertility, why then was there such a push in Guadeloupe and throughout the Caribbean to encourage Caribbean men and women to legally marry? Was it an issue of bourgeois morality, or was it a means by which colonial governments could legally define the economic responsibilities of parents (mothers *and* fathers) to each other and to their children? My first deduction was that, regardless of community-based findings, the vast majority of post-war Caribbean development programs had as their objective the effecting of moral, cultural, political, and economic change.

This dissertation looks at family formation and fertility change in Guadeloupe through the theoretical prisms of culture and the wider political economy. It argues that the introduction of modern patterns of consumption along with the denigration of “traditional” values and customs, the promulgation of French values and culture, labor migration to metropolitan France, and the introduction of birth control knowledge and technology interacted and were integral to the speed and thoroughness of Guadeloupe’s fertility decline. Moreover, despite Guadeloupeans’ ambition to become equal and assimilated French citizens, several components of the modernization process were ignored by local inhabitants, among them family nuclearization. Given that from a Eurowestern perspective, nuclear families and low fertility remain theoretically linked, this distinction is of key importance in the investigation of fertility transition in

Guadeloupe. Put another way, I argue that the motivational context of the Guadeloupean fertility decline was historically shaped by and attuned to local cultural, political, economic, and racial circumstances, as well as social and individual aspirations, and that the processes surrounding family formation are separable from rather than linked to changes in fertility.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter two serves as a brief introduction to Guadeloupe -- its internal physical and cultural characteristics, how the territory and its people are portrayed in relation to Martinique, and how the French West Indies are characterized as a part of yet different from the French Nation. Discussed are a history of its political-economic problems, the difficulties encountered when trying to classify it as either modern or traditional, and the issue of race and racisms in France. At the end of the chapter is an explanation of the specific site of study and the methods used to conduct this research.

Chapter three examines the problem of Eurocentrism in demographic transition theories. I review and analyze relevant debates pertaining to issues implicated in family formation and fertility change in the Caribbean in general and in Guadeloupe in particular. These include a discussion of the circumstances surrounding early population growth paradigms in Europe prior to and during the time of Malthus. The chapter serves to historically situate the emergence of prescriptions concerning childbearing, legal marriage, and “responsible” procreation and parenting. These prescriptions urged individuals to be rational, prudent, and industrious rather than live on the “welfare” provided by others.

We see how the shift from agricultural-based subsistence to industrial-based waged labor altered procreative behavior while simultaneously undermining peoples' ability to earn a decent living. I examine the rise of "modernity" and "modern" European family formation which emerges as the standard against which all other populations are subsequently measured. I look at how "modernization"-oriented demographic theories formulated by Western scholars and policy planners became hegemonic.

Contained within chapter four are issues of gender, education, agency, migration, and the dichotomization of traditional versus modern procreative behaviors. I discuss how and why early classic demographic theory gave way to post-classic formulations which incorporated anthropological analyses of the steep and rapid declines in birth rates taking place in "second" and "third world" settings. At the heart of newer theoretical formulations is an emphasis on changes affecting women, who, as they become enticed by the possibilities of self-determination, self-generated upward mobility, and empowerment, begin to see giving birth to large numbers of children as "irrational."

I look at how "rational" behavior was engineered by first-world powers for third-world populations by promoting a new morality and respectability associated with Eurowestern family formation, and by encouraging the procreation of offspring by legally married couples only, who could then assume the role of responsible modern parents. Alternative debates are likewise presented in which the rationality of Eurowestern family formation as being in the best interests of non-European peoples is refuted. These counter-debates, though still Eurocentric, underscore the failings of a universal macro-oriented paradigm of fertility change and further our understanding of why "modern"

fertility and “traditional” family formation (often stereotypically portrayed) are not a fit but at least are more compatible. The differences and difficulties faced when relying on existing Eurocentric paradigms as explanation also serve to support the possibility that the Guadeloupean fertility decline may be viewed as a model of a contextually different transformation -- a third demographic transition.

In chapters five and six I detail the challenges and constraints faced by the French West Indies in their continuing relationship with France. I illustrate how the French West Indians were ready and willing to embrace modernity which they believed would follow departmentalization, but were left disillusioned and embittered by actual circumstances. Considerable attention is devoted to migration, employment opportunities, the introduction of early family-planning programs, the promotion of modern consumption, and the reviewing the literature on the black family. This historical review illustrates how similar themes are prevalent in problematizing the characteristics of black and Caribbean families, and how mating and procreation practices are cited as causal of overpopulation. I show how France intervened actively in an effort to reduce the population of its Caribbean territories, and how Guadeloupe, in particular, became the target of covert anti-natalist programs.

In chapter seven I examine circumstances and events from the post-war period to the present which are specific to Guadeloupe. Contained are individuals’ narratives about their lives after departmentalization and during the period of French assimilation, and how economic development--or the lack of economic development--and inequality affected Guadeloupeans at the societal and individual level. I focus particularly on the contexts of

fertility transition and family formation, and on how cultural and political-economic circumstances and racism have influenced peoples' decisions.

In chapter eight I summarize the differences and similarities faced by and facing West Indians. I highlight how policy planners have stigmatized the morals and procreative practices of West Indians, females in particular, and have attempted to reshape "traditional" cultural practices through various processes of modernization. I look at contemporary circumstances and present the narratives of Guadeloupean men and women in the 1990s. I look at how "modern" men and women have different opinions about responsibilities involved in marriage, and at how their opinions differ from those of their parents and grandparents. I conclude by arguing that the maintenance of a "traditional" pattern of family formation may result in reduced fertility, but is as much a part of the cultural heritage as of the political-economy. I reiterate the need for an analytic separation between family and procreation, and again propose that, given its unique context, the fertility decline in Guadeloupe can be considered to represent a model of a third demographic transition.

Chapter 2 - Power, Paradox, and Pain: The Many Faces of Guadeloupe

Since the early 1950s, due to [French] government worries about the negative impact of overpopulation and high birth rates there, making economic improvements in Guadeloupe has always been at the top of their agenda. Although Martinique has experienced similar demographic problems, there has always been the feeling that Martinican population problems would be less challenging to manage than those of Guadeloupe. In Guadeloupe, demographic problems are also tied to political and cultural issues. (1996, Jean-Pierre Guengant,¹ French demographer)

Guadeloupe has always been considered the poor relative of Martinique. We [Guadeloupeans] are the unruly ones, the misbehaved, the uncivilized. Our children are the stepchildren of France, but we live life to the fullest and besides, Martinique is so male-centered. We are much more supportive of women. (1997, Maryse Conde, Guadeloupean writer)²

No. I cannot comment about the differences between Martinicans and Guadeloupeans. Even Guadeloupeans love my work. What we [French West Indians] all have in common is that we must liberate ourselves from cultural domination. Our culture has been erased by white European societies. Even our language has been repressed. You American anthropologists understand everything from the perspective of "survivals." What you need to learn is that our culture is about mixture, a blending of values and ideas. Créolité! (1997, Patrick Chamoiseau, Martinican writer)

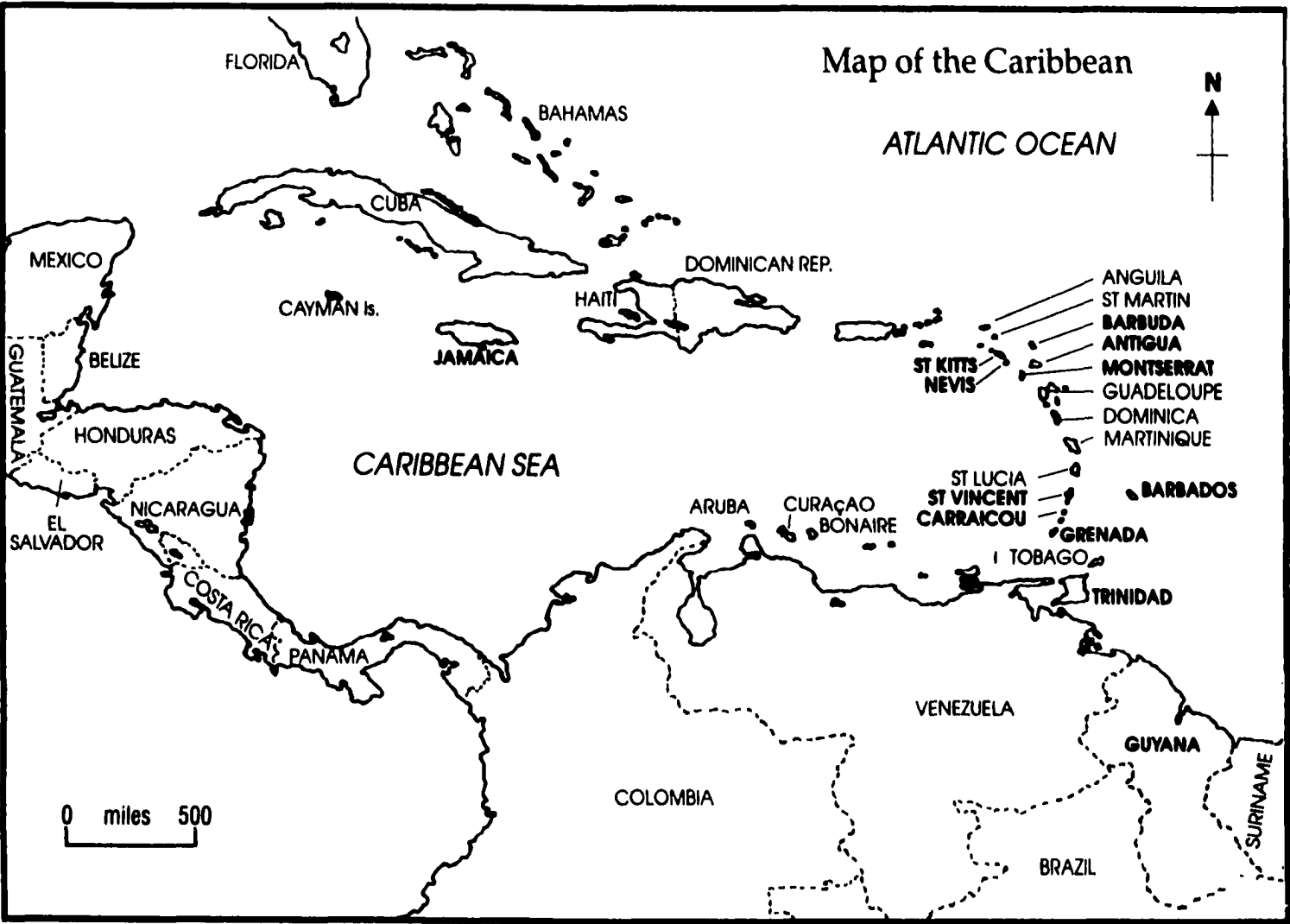
Can I help you? You look like you are lost. You must be from Martinique. No?... You live in Guadeloupe? Oh...really? Well, I must be off. (1994, White Parisian female)

Introduction: The Stepchild Island

Guadeloupe lies in the middle of the Caribbean archipelago of the Lesser Antilles, 200 miles southeast of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. I have never understood why friends, relatives, and people in general seem perplexed as to its location and the nationality of its inhabitants. When people first asked me about the location of my

¹ 1997, personal communication.

² 1998, personal communication.



research site and I told them that it was Guadeloupe, many believed that I was working in the western Caribbean in or near Mexico while others thought that I was working in or around Haiti. In the end I usually cleared up their confusion by explaining that Guadeloupe is an island in the eastern Caribbean, and that it is farther from the U.S. mainland than Puerto Rico, but not quite so far as either Barbados or St. Lucia. This seemed to work. Remarkably, however, Guadeloupe's sister island Martinique, or more technically speaking, sister *département*, did not seem to suffer from a similar "identity crisis."³ Most people knew immediately that Martinique was a French island in the Caribbean.

The next question most frequently asked of me was after deciding on the French West Indies as a site, why did I choose Guadeloupe over Martinique? The answer to this is that although I was mildly surprised by Americans' lack of knowledge about my research site, I was truly intrigued by the reaction of the metropolitan French. When I was traveling in France, many French citizens asked me if I was Martinican, yet none have ever asked me if I was born in Guadeloupe. Several years ago, when I first noticed this reaction, I became curious about people's assumptions and perceptions of Martinicans and Guadeloupeans, and about why many metropolitan French thought they were different. Looking back now I realize that, as an African-American, I should have immediately deduced that at least part of the answer to the puzzle relates to skin color.

³ Technically, Guadeloupe is one of four former colonial territories that are now *départements d'outre mer* or DOMs. The others are Martinique in the Caribbean, French Guiana in Africa, and Reunion in the Indian Ocean. The closest parallel to this status is that of U.S. statehood. The DOMs, like Hawaii for example, are politically but not geographically attached to the home country.

In the French West Indies, I was frequently described as *claire* or fair skinned as opposed to *négre*, dark-skinned, or black. While the strong Guadeloupean sun quickly transformed me from *claire* to brown, in the beginning this description irked me quite a bit.

In the late-1980s, during my initial visits to Martinique and Guadeloupe, I quickly discovered what Guadeloupeans, Martinicans, and metropolitan French apparently seemed to accept as fact. While a broad spectrum of skin tones can be seen on both islands, generally speaking, Guadeloupeans were darker-complexioned than their Martinican counterparts.⁴ French West Indians patiently explained to me that in Martinique, greater mingling had occurred between the black and white populations; there were more whites in Martinique than in Guadeloupe where many members of the planter class had either been killed in slave revolts or had simply fled.

Martinique's higher profile was also partially the result of vigorous French marketing. For years tourist promotions depicted Martinique as sophisticated and "developed"-- a veritable Caribbean French Riviera. Guadeloupe was described as more natural, undeveloped, or in the extreme, as more "primitive" or "savage." Another reason for the difference in visibility is the fact that more famous French West Indians, or the few whom people knew, had been born in Martinique. Even in 1992, when I returned to Guadeloupe to start preliminary research, Americans' knowledge of famous French West Indians was usually limited to activist/psychiatrist Franz Fanon and to the poet/politician Aimé Césaire, both of whom were born in Martinique. Most Americans had not yet

⁴ In Chapter 5, I discuss color and class differences among Afro-Caribbean peoples in greater detail.

heard of Fred Constant, Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, all of whom are now renowned Martinican writers. Many American scholars were still unfamiliar with the names Dany Bebel-Gisler or Maryse Conde, two of Guadeloupe's most famous writers who also happen to be women. Several people have referred to Guadeloupe as the "poor relation" of Martinique.

At the outset, Guadeloupe presented a challenging puzzle which motivated me to embark upon a series of preliminary investigations. My search of North American literature brought to light precious little scholarly writing on the French West Indies in general, and even less on the island of Guadeloupe. Apparently, the region was the domain of European and French-Canadian scholars. During the course of this search I learned that the American social scientists who once had investigated selected French West Indian issues and had once engaged in serious debates about French West Indian politics and economy, such as William F.S. Miles, Willie Baber,⁵ Michael Horowitz, Michel LaGuerre, and Richard and Sally Price, had, in the main, moved on to other issues and/or to other geographical areas. There were a few scholars studying Guadeloupean Creole and issues centered around language usage, but their research fell more under the heading of socio-linguistics than under the heading of socio-cultural anthropology (see Schnepel 1990, 1993).⁶

⁵Willie Baber and William Miles debated the social change and the economic structure of Michael Horowitz's 1976 ethnography Morne-Paysan: Peasant Village in Martinique. See *Ethnology* 1982 vol. 21: 227 - 240: "Social Change and the Peasant Community: Horowitz' Morne-Paysan Reinterpreted."

⁶ Schnepel examines language change and the socio-political context of the 1970s and 1980s Creole movement in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

On the other hand, after I had begun my review of the French literature, I found that French West Indian population, demographic, and fertility change were very well documented topics outside of the United States. The French government has long occupied itself with compiling statistical data on its citizens. As a result it has produced copious quantitative, and even some qualitative, data on these subjects. But, the French government was virtually the only employer of French social scientists. Thus, nearly all the studies that I found had been conducted under the auspices of a French government agency, and usually by white, metropolitan-based officials. This discovery prompted me to question their methodologies, analyses, and conclusions, and to read more closely between the lines for evidence of ethnocentrism or, more accurately, of Eurocentrism, particularly with respect to assumptions and generalizations made about the Caribbean family and Caribbean fertility behavior. My logic was simple. In the United States, where social scientists are more likely to be funded by non-government sources, one continues to find essentialized representations of people of color and of non-industrialized peoples. How then could European, government-funded research remain free of ethnocentric bias?

In the past, I had spent a great deal of time in metropolitan France where I had met several Guadeloupeans and Martinicans. I became intrigued by the pattern of movement between France and the French West Indies and spoke to Antilleans about their migration experience and about conditions they encountered in the metropole. A search of American literature produced little on this topic, but I found that it was well represented in the French literature. Apparently, much government-funded research

centered on problems and issues of the immigrant population, a category into which, it seemed, French West Indians were placed. A great deal of this literature focused on the period between 1960 and the late 1980s. This inspired me to ask myself and others, how were the three processes of migration, fertility, and population growth connected and, more specifically, what was the political-economic context of this period? These issues provided the source of my initial research questions. Given the abundance of data, equally important, in my estimation, was the question of how these processes unfolded at the local and individual level. Specifically, how did they evolve among the darker-skinned population on the "undeveloped" and "savage" island of Guadeloupe?

The Butterfly Island

History relates that Christopher Columbus "discovered" La Désirade, one of Guadeloupe's outer islands, on November 14, 1493. He named the largest island in the group Guadeloupe in memory of Santa Maria de Guadalupe de Éstrémadura to thank her for having protected him during a storm that he encountered on his voyage. Along with its neighboring islands, Guadeloupe had been occupied around A.D.200 by Carib Indians who drove out the Arawaks and named it *Karukera*: island of beautiful waters. French explorers arrived in the middle of the seventeenth century and in turn battled and drove out the Carib Indians, who then settled on the neighboring island of Dominica. On June 28, 1635, the island was claimed in the name of the King of France. Thanks to the importation of African slaves, Guadeloupe soon became a sugar producing, plantation-

complex economy. For a brief period during the French Revolution and its tumultuous aftermath (1796 - 1802), Guadeloupe was occupied by the British.

Slavery was abolished in the islands not once but twice. It was first abolished in 1794, but was reintroduced by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802. Its final abolition came on April 27, 1848.⁷ On March 19, 1946, Guadeloupe was officially designated a French *Département* with status identical to the *départements* of metropolitan France and was further given the status of *Région* in 1974. As a proper department and region of France, Guadeloupe is administrated by two local bodies: the General and the Regional Council. A Paris-appointed prefect represents the French Government and is assisted by two General Secretaries and two *Sous-Préfets*, one for Point-à-Pitre, the other for the northern islands administered by the department of Guadeloupe: French St. Martin and St. Barthélemy. Americans, who in general are already confused as to the exact location of the island proper of Guadeloupe, are even more surprised to learn that a segment of this administrative department lies even closer to the United States. In the French Parliament in Paris, Guadeloupe is represented by two Senators and four Deputies, as well as by two members of the Economic Council.

Although Guadeloupe proper looks like one island it actually consists of two distinct islands which resemble the wings of a giant butterfly. The two halves are separated by a narrow strait called the Rivière-Salée or "salty river." The eastern island, called Grande-Terre covers 218 square miles and is triangular in shape and relatively flat,

⁷ April 27 is a major holiday in Guadeloupe and there are week-long festivities and reenactments of the slave era and emancipation events.

with chalky soil that is perfect for sugar cane farming. Along the coral reef bordering Grande-Terre is the heart of Guadeloupe's small tourist industry. It is also the site of Guadeloupe's airport and commercial capital city Point-à-Pitre. Off its coast to the east is the out-island dependency of Marie-Galante. The western half of the butterfly, which covers 312 square miles, is called Basse-Terre. It is here that the administrative capital city which is appropriately also named Basse-Terre is located. On this side of Guadeloupe the principal crop is bananas. Basse-Terre's elevation is much higher than that of Grande Terre; a volcanic mountain range which culminates in the 4,813 foot high Grande Soufrière volcano crosses the island from north to south. Vegetation on forest-covered Basse-Terre is dense and luxuriant -- a feature that gave rise to its nickname "The Emerald Island."⁸ It is known for its "wild" beauty, waterfalls, and large *Parc National*.

South of Basse-Terre lies a string of tiny islands called Les Saintes, supposedly named because Columbus discovered them on All Saint's Day. To the east is located another of Guadeloupe's out-island dependencies: the island of La Désirade.

Welcome to the Island of Beautiful Waters

Guadeloupe is hailed as the island of beautiful waters. Posters from the visitors' bureau highlight the tranquil water and urge visitors to first and foremost "forget everything: work, schedules and everyday cares." You must, the signs say, let yourself absorb the Guadeloupean atmosphere of *pani pwoblem*⁹ -- which is translated as "no

⁸ This nickname has more recently become associated the island of Montserrat.

⁹ Guadeloupean Créole of the French *pas de probleme*.

problem" and in the parlance of tourism is the equivalent of "don't worry, be happy!" Signs encourage you to stretch out on Guadeloupe's abundant fine-sand beaches which, like the skin tones of its population, range in color from white, to beige, to gold, to brown, to black. Tourist bureau brochures encourage you to meditate on the waves of the sea, immerse yourself in serious sun bathing, contemplate intricate and fluffy cloud formations, and soak up the relaxing atmosphere of a tropical paradise. After you are sufficiently refreshed and unwound, re-invigorate yourself by hiking to the top of volcanic Mt. Soufriere, or through the rainforests and past the waterfalls and dense foliage of *Parc National*. Of course, do not forget to take a few pleasant boat trips to Guadeloupe's beautiful outer islands where some very pleasant surprises¹⁰ regarding "atmospheric" and "cultural" differences will be in store for you (ODTG:1998).¹¹

Despite this familiar American-style tourist hype, Guadeloupe is rarely the Caribbean destination of choice for American tourists. Rather, it remains a vacation destination of French and European travelers. Guadeloupean tourist bureau officials whom I interviewed told me that Americans were a "hard sell," and that Guadeloupe was too "primitive." In Guadeloupe, there is no attempt to cater to the tastes of American tourists (which are decidedly different from those of European travelers). In American eyes, a four-star hotel in Guadeloupe is equivalent to a one-star "Quality Inn." And yet,

¹⁰ The cultural "surprise" referred to here is the fact that inhabitants of Les Saintes are descendants of Norman and Breton fishermen and are predominately white. Les Saintes have also been nicknamed *les îles aux yeux bleues*, the blue-eyed islands and historically have also been referred to as *Blancs-Matignons* as are the white inhabitants of Saint Barts.

¹¹ Excerpted from *Bonjour Guadeloupe* (1998) published by the Departmental Office of Tourism of Guadeloupe.

the cost of vacationing in Guadeloupe can be more expensive than in Paris, since nearly everything is imported via France from elsewhere.

A trip to the pharmacy with a request for something as simple as aspirin to cure a headache will be met with an aggressive sales pitch from a coifed "metro"¹² saleswoman. She will urge you to cleanse and detoxify your system with an assortment of herbal products (usually manufactured in the United States) or with a regimen of homeopathic remedies (usually manufactured in France), the price of which could easily consume half of your travel budget. It is only after much insisting that a customer will be grudgingly sold the French variety of analgesic, and even this costs about three times as much as its American counterpart.

It is not surprising that the Americans most familiar with Guadeloupe are wealthy yacht owners who are fond of sailing through the island group of Les Saintes.¹³ Caribbean-born Americans are also familiar with Guadeloupe, although almost none have ever been there and very few seem motivated to go. Caribbean-Americans also do not believe that Guadeloupe is an "equal" *département* of France. To them, Guadeloupe is just another backward colonized island full of black people like themselves, but who unlike themselves seem to remain mentally colonized since they -- the Guadeloupeans -- "have failed" to achieve independence.

¹²"Métros" is the abbreviated term used to refer to metropolitan-born whites. Their arrival and presence in Guadeloupe are discussed in Chapters 5 through 8.

¹³ The islands of Les Saintes have a reputation among yacht owners as being among the most beautiful sailing destinations in the world. Although tourist facilities are minimal, these islands have good ports and cater to well-heeled adventurous vacationers.

From Laggards to Leaders : Making Guadeloupeans French

Loudly trumpeted of late, the Guadeloupean fertility transition -- the precipitous drop in the birth rate between roughly 1960 and 1980 -- for the most part occurred quietly (INSEE 1991:22). For Guadeloupeans, despite the initial lack of fanfare, the attainment of "replacement level fertility" -- a rate very near to that of metropolitan France -- serves as quantitative proof that they were at last "modern." No longer could social and political observers classify them as "backward" inhabitants of a third world country. In demographic parlance, Guadeloupeans were now "leaders" rather than "laggards" in the war on overpopulation.

Until the early 1980s, the problem of a high birth rate and rapid population growth stigmatized Guadeloupeans collectively as inferior or second-class citizens -- still somehow more savage than civilized and more African than European. Furthermore, many residents felt that this perception of Guadeloupeans linked them closely to black and Latino Caribbean nations while distancing them from the mother country, France. The perception of being less civilized and black, and being classified as a "third world country," was one that most Guadeloupeans had vigorously repudiated in the past. After all, France, the nation into which Guadeloupe was politically enfolded, was not only modern and industrial, but also in the vanguard of modern fertility decline.

In order to reach the same level as the French, Guadeloupeans realized that many adjustments were needed. To justify ongoing demands for full equality in the French nation (and with further prompting from the French Government), Guadeloupeans in the 1960s were willing to work hard at becoming decisively less "Caribbean" and more

French. To the French, the route to modernity meant not only limiting reproduction and reducing population growth, but also more fully assimilating French culture and social values, and conforming to the Eurowestern model of family formation.

In fact, high fertility and overpopulation were only part of a nexus of negative characteristics particularly vexing to citizens that desperately wanted to be numbered among the "modern." In the beginning at least, in the quest for modernity, Guadeloupeans eagerly embraced any program or institution which they deemed potentially capable of rendering their society more "developed" and more "French." However, despite this ostensible acceptance of the modernization agenda, I argue that France's version of a "modern" Guadeloupean society was never adopted in its entirety. On the contrary, Guadeloupeans selected those aspects of the modernization program that suited both their cultural specificity and their individual needs. The thrust of my argument rests on the fact that twenty years after "the demographic transition," and after over 300 years of nearly continuous French colonial rule,¹⁴ the flavor of modernization and modernized family forms continues to differ significantly from the "French model." This is due in part to the inhabitants' selective emulation of French culture. In addition, French "generosity" never really included any sustained program of local economic development. Rather, Guadeloupe has endured a process of structural adjustment and remains locked in its economic dependence on France.

¹⁴ For a brief period during the 18th and 19th centuries (1796 and 1802), the island was under British rule.

For Guadeloupe and its sister Caribbean *département d'outre-mer* (DOM), Martinique, changes in reproduction and production were closely linked. In the absence of capital investment in local production, a contraction of both the agricultural and industrial sectors occurred. As a result, the DOMs helped to fuel the engine which drove France's continued industrial growth by becoming key reservoirs of cheap migrant labor. During the years of demographic transition, outmigration was as responsible for a reduction in population growth as was the introduction of new birth control technology. Nor was this considered a problem by French policy makers. On the contrary, an assumption of population displacement underlay the series of government-initiated economic plans which were the core of the "modernizing" process for Guadeloupe in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These plans produced improvements in education levels and in life-expectancy rates, which rose as a result of "social and economic inputs" or quality of life investments, but they did not address the immediately pressing problem of overpopulation. Initially, family planning was at best a covert and unpublicized program. Moreover, in the process of "economic integration" with the metropole after departmentalization, Guadeloupe lost its ability to employ large numbers of skilled or unskilled manual laborers. High unemployment, poverty, and inadequate housing engendered growing political unrest. This volatile situation required immediate attention and labor migration was, initially at least, viewed as a solution beneficial to both France and Guadeloupe.

As with any intensive modernization campaign, images were all-important. Other modernization mechanisms included the expanded circulation of print and broadcast

media¹⁵ to an increasingly literate population, thereby providing closer exposure to the lifestyles of the metropolitan French. The new propaganda implied that lying at the heart of any truly modern society was the modern nuclear family, defined not only by its small size but also by legally sanctioned, exclusive, and monogamous marriage. The message conveyed by the media was that modern French families typically consisted of 2.1 children,¹⁶ which exemplifies replacement level fertility.¹⁷ Images in the media also showed "typical" French families enjoying modern consumer goods -- luxury items and convenience commodities -- further highlighting the perceived differences with Guadeloupean families. Similar depictions were found in the French textbooks used in Guadeloupe in conjunction with the newly installed French educational system, which instructed students in *French* history, *French* politics, and *French* culture.

Those who were lucky enough to visit or live in the metropole confirmed the "modernity" image of small families going hand in hand with monogamous marriage, affluence and consumer choice. Meanwhile, within Guadeloupe, increases in educational attainment, life expectancy, and the ownership of modern conveniences were associated with a noticeable increase in the number of legal marriages. Highly coveted was the opportunity to live permanently in France, or to attend school there, or to work there even on a temporary basis. Until government-sponsored work programs were introduced in the 1960s, such opportunities were available only to a select few who self-financed the

¹⁵ Though now there is somewhat more diversification, in 1958 all radio and television stations were government run, and print media was controlled by the metropolitan-based interests of the Herzant family.

¹⁶ In 1950, the metropolitan fertility rate was 2.72 (INSEE 1998).

¹⁷ Replacement level fertility is characterized by mortality rates and fertility rates in equilibrium.

trip or made the pilgrimage with the help of friends and relatives. Subsequently, migration intensified as a solution for "excess" or "surplus" population in Guadeloupe and for labor shortages in France.

One factor not explicitly recognized in post-hoc explanations of the Guadeloupean fertility decline is the ripple effect created by both realized and unrealized migratory plans and goals. The government's facilitation of regularized or sponsored migration after 1960, in addition to the long-standing pattern of "spontaneous" or self-financed migration, opened windows of opportunity that had never existed before. But, the door to opportunity via this route was closed to pregnant applicants. As the new migratory prospects significantly enlarged the "opportunity structure," they also provided motivation to limit family size or to avoid pregnancy altogether. And even though not everyone who dreamed of emigrating actually did so, many Guadeloupeans made financial and behavioral changes in anticipation of the possibility. While the lure of economic and social mobility through migration may not be, in itself, sufficient explanation for the astounding fertility drop, it is nonetheless deeply implicated as part of the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of this period.

By the late 1990s, Guadeloupe had not yet rid itself of the problems and challenges it faced in the 1960s. As in the days of the sponsored migration program, the lure of relocation continues to attract many young men and women today. Today, however, Canada and the United States rank highest on the wish list of preferred destinations. They are, moreover, particularly attractive to women seeking to establish a professional or semi-professional career. As was the case in pre-demographic transition

days, women are particularly susceptible to glamorized images surrounding beauty products, clothing, and consumer durables. In today's media, however, these products are modeled primarily by single spokespersons, not by families. It is difficult not to notice the newspaper and broadcast media coverage of the beauty competitions which have proliferated throughout Guadeloupe. Continuing and powerful push factors are the lack of affordable housing, high local and national unemployment rates, and increased exposure to a global market of commodities. These are now depicted as essential to an independent, self-supporting singles lifestyle. At the close of the twentieth century, marriage is a phenomenon which punctuates but does not define a successful life. For Guadeloupeans today, early marriage and family -- nuclear or otherwise -- are not "in." A non-productive society in economic crisis, Guadeloupe continues to display a close connection between production and reproduction, not only at the societal level but also at the level of individual reflection, where educational achievement and success have a higher priority than family.

Selecting Tradition and Modernity: Fission or Fusion

When tracing social changes during and after Guadeloupe's demographic transition, one realizes that family nuclearization and a pattern of legal marriage never came close to dominating the social landscape, despite the falling birth rate. Statistics reveal that during the early and middle years, there was indeed an increase in the marriage rate. But a large percentage of the new marriages were of short duration. Moreover, statistics documenting the equally high divorce rate may be too low, since they miss

altogether those who chose not to, or could not afford to, seek a legal dissolution. No longer caught between the postulated¹⁸ dual models of society -- French and Caribbean -- today's Guadeloupean men and women no longer unconditionally aspire to legal marriage (to a financially successful partner), but exhibit greater comfort with "Caribbean-type" family forms. More succinctly put, adhering to a French-modern cultural model is far less important than realizing one's personal ambitions and achieving individual economic success. Perhaps not coincidentally, this comes at a time when the French government has publicly bemoaned the falling marriage rate, the increase in "out-of-wedlock" births, and the precipitously low fertility among metropolitan-born French.

Statistics tracking "illegitimacy" rates in France demonstrate that even in the metropole, "out-of-wedlock" births are three times higher now than they were forty years ago. Early in 1997 the French government announced that it would consider extending conjugal benefits to non-married domestic partners, but in that same year it sponsored an advertising campaign which urged couples to marry (and to procreate). As such it was acknowledging the extent to which France has fallen prey to the "post-modern" trend of cohabitation and/or delayed or postponed marriage. In 1998, the measure proposing the recognition of legal rights to domestic partners was soundly defeated.

It is an ironic twist of fate that metropolitan French youth, suffering from high unemployment and the lack of affordable housing, are faced with fertility-inhibiting socio-economic problems similar to those of their Guadeloupean counterparts. Meanwhile, the

¹⁸ Sociologist Annick Benjamin maintained that Guadeloupeans are trapped between European and Caribbean type family models (1993, 1997: personal communication).

current climate in France discourages DOM residents from seeking migration to the metropole, as do increased xenophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant sentiment directed at Asians, Arabs, and Africans. Black Guadeloupeans are equally deterred. Recently, a host of highly successful and visible Guadeloupean scholars and literati have become US or Canadian residents -- a development not surprising in light of the fact that France has quite vocally ended its welcome to people of color.

Consumption in Guadeloupe is an activity that has attracted significant scholarly attention. Political scientist William F.S. Miles (1986), who has written several political profiles of the island, has charged that in the French overseas departments, dominant characteristics are conspicuous consumption and blatant consumerism. To this charge I would respond that to the extent that zealous consumerism may exist, it has been vigorously promoted by government and capitalist practices and institutions. It is also integral to the circular system of transfer payments by which the French government supports Guadeloupe as evidenced by the limited availability and high cost of non-French-made products. The French government supports Guadeloupe while simultaneously enforcing a "closed market system" which ensures that its residents are restricted to purchases of consumer products that are primarily made in France or made by French companies.¹⁹

The portrait I offer of Guadeloupe is that of a society where residents aspire to attain levels of economic advancement that enable participation in a selectively modern

¹⁹ Small and medium sized business owners in particular criticize this restriction. Cheaper equipment and supplies could be purchased in the U.S. if were it not for import duties that double their price.

and western lifestyle characterized by choice. After all, between 1962 and 1982 hundreds of thousands of young DOM residents jumped at the opportunity to relocate and become productive workers, and hundreds of thousands still aspire to do so. Even DOM - "sponsored" transplants who fell on hard times in the metropole, or who discovered that the sponsored employment opportunity was in fact underpaid exploited drudgery, found it unacceptable to admit failure and stayed on. Some sent children back home to be raised by family members.

There is a duality in Guadeloupean society which has less to do with Caribbean vs. French social structure than with being successful or unsuccessful in the selective emulation of western traits and in the acquisition of a "modern" lifestyle. Rather than characterize this as "resistance," given the hegemonic circumstances, I see it as choosing among available options in order to construct a lifestyle that is appealing and that works. While economic reality requires maintaining close political ties with France, Guadeloupeans are looking further afield (closer in cases of regional cooperation) in search of societal and individual solutions to personal and regional economic stagnation. This is in part a result of what Guadeloupeans view as France's abandonment of any serious effort at reviving economic productivity and internal development in Guadeloupe. Another reason for their partial social defection from France is the apparent French failure to take legal steps to censure LePenist displays and acts of racism. At the same time, however, Guadeloupe remains at the economic mercy of its own white elites -- *Blanc Créole* or *Béké* -- who benefit greatly from Guadeloupe's remaining an appendage of France.

Guadeloupeans -- particularly the young -- now view American counterparts with new and widened eyes.²⁰ Negative sentiments toward Americans and Americanisms shifted radically during the six years between my first visit to Guadeloupe in 1986 and my subsequent visit in 1992. During research trips from 1992 to the present, I observed continued incremental differences in social attitudes. Sparked largely by dissatisfaction and disillusionment, this shift has translated politically into the recent (1997) electoral support -- for the first time in thirteen years -- of Socialist Party candidates. Reflecting what Guadeloupeans feel is the neglect of deteriorating economic conditions, their reasons for voting Socialist were somewhat different from those of their metropolitan counterparts. (Paradoxically, a similar set of depressed socio-economic circumstances led to the passage of the 1946 law of departmentalization, which ratified Guadeloupe's department status).

Meanwhile residents of the administrative dependencies of Guadeloupe -- the tiny islands of French St. Martin and St. Bart's -- have remained staunchly right-wing and openly declare their desire for political affiliation with the United States or Canada, the sources of their economic prosperity.²¹ They would prefer to become either independent countries or U.S. territories and are actively seeking a way to dissolve the long-standing Guadeloupean/French ties. In this case too the politics of color as difference plays a

²⁰ Although middle-aged and older Guadeloupeans enjoy visiting the United States, nearly all of them say that they much prefer to live in Guadeloupe where they are covered by France's comprehensive social welfare package, which includes retirement, housing supplements, fully paid schooling, extended maternity leave, and medical and dental coverage.

²¹ A very high percentage of the visitors to St. Barts' and St. Martin are American and Canadian vacationers and conference attendees.

major role, since a large percentage of the population of St. Bart's is white. They also consider themselves socially and economically superior to Guadeloupe proper, which they feel is still a backward and largely underdeveloped department and thus an obstacle to their own social and economic progress. It is significant that, initially, Guadeloupeans viewed me as an African-American or "black" other -- a perception of *exclusion*.

Subsequently, their perception of me shifted to one of *inclusion*. As a result, many Guadeloupeans now freely discuss with me the problems that "we as black people" experience without any signs of embarrassment.²² Although there remains a tendency to distinguish people of different skin variations as *négre* or *clair*, there is clearly a growing sense of diasporic solidarity.

As regards the linguistic dimension in this shift, English has become by far the most popular second language, even if fluency in it is still the exception rather than the rule. More and more Guadeloupeans acknowledge that English and computer skills are highly marketable and integral to the realization of career goals. Fledgling entrepreneurial enterprises providing these skills or related services have multiplied.

Yet notwithstanding their profound cultural, social, and economic disenchantment with France, Guadeloupeans do not seek to alter the departmental arrangement which ties them politically to their former colonial rulers. Radical independence movements have subsided since the bombings and peak activities of the 1970s and 1980s, and most residents fear that any break with France would almost certainly spell economic disaster.

²²As recently as 1990, when I used the phrase "we black people" in Martinique and Guadeloupe, I noticed that many people were either offended or considered the term to be appropriate for African-Americans in the United States but inappropriate for the French West Indians.

However, Guadeloupeans' desire to maintain political affiliations with France does not mean that their children have to experience its hostile reception of blacks, nor be confined by France's limited opportunity structure. By 1996 I had stopped counting the number of friends and acquaintances who asked me about the "possibility of arranging" for grown and adolescent children to stay in the United States. I will admit that I have hosted several adult and adolescent visitors during the last few years, although, as I discuss in chapter three, we have disagreed over the definition of a "short stay." A large agency exists in Paris for the purpose of arranging participation in exchange programs for French and French West Indian students. Most Caribbean applicants seek to circumvent the requirement that students go first to Paris before being placed in a homestay program in the United States.²³ It appears that many who are ineligible for the program for one reason or another²⁴ attempt to experience its benefits without having to pay its rather high cost.

"English at all costs" seems to be the motto of parents of modest or middle-class means who, recognizing the requirements of the global market, are willing to spend an enormous portion of their income -- often borrowing as well -- to guarantee better opportunities for their adult and adolescent children. Just as having a good *French* education was once a necessary requirement for entry into the "modern" world,

²³ Guadeloupeans who had children living in the United States frequently asked me to be the interpreter in conversations or discussions they needed to have with the American families who were "hosting" their children. Quite often, these occasions arose when there was a misunderstanding about a child's accommodation (Guadeloupeans expect that their children will be given their own room) or in matters related to financial or emotional difficulties encountered by the students.

²⁴ Academic rank, English-language skills, and financial status are among the qualifications.

French/English bilingualism is today considered a decisive factor for future individual success.

Finally, although Guadeloupeans still recognize a dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" society, traditional is in no way seen as pejorative nor are tradition and modernity seen as incompatible. Rather, in some cases, retaining a knowledge and awareness of Antillean²⁵ tradition can constitute a valuable source of both cultural and economic capital, and, more to the point of this work, can significantly contribute to one's productive and reproductive capacity. Thus, while both the French and the Guadeloupeans hail themselves as "modern," a gulf exists between their versions of modernity. A necessary conclusion is that modernity embraces a kaleidoscope of conflicting and barely coherent images, whether in a Guadeloupean landscape or elsewhere.

Eurocentric Economic Rankings and Cultural Markers

Modernity, a concept central to classic demographic transition theory, is a nebulous word with various overlapping meanings. Based on highly subjective evolutionary or hierarchic rankings, its terms have always been defined by those who think of themselves as on top. More than an empirical developmental yardstick, the Eurowestern demographic interpretation of modernity privileges both low fertility and family nuclearization. "Modern" subjects, according to both popular and intellectual

²⁵ The term Antillean is commonly used to denote residents of the French West Indies and is used here interchangeably with the term French West Indian.

versions of this interpretation, are inherently rational, well-ordered, educated, and "in control" of a multiplicity of quotidian and long-range affairs, including family size.

According to the modernization paradigm, these are the characteristics which enable a society's prosperity and, by extension, the prosperity and longevity of its citizens.

By contrast, a non-modern or "traditional" society is continually on the brink of demise. Even if it is somehow able to survive for the moment, it is assumed not to be efficient. Surely it will be faced with a spate of socio-economic crises in its future. When a colonial power is economically responsible for a "traditional" society, it is certain to have much to say about the future direction of that society. This clearly has been the case in the relationship between France and Guadeloupe. During the middle of the twentieth century, Guadeloupe, in contrast to its Caribbean neighbors, could have conceivably been described as semi-modern, yet compared to metropolitan France, its motherland, it was a society struggling in the dark ages. The "dark" connotes not merely "underdevelopment" or the skin color of the majority of its residents, but also evokes Guadeloupe's roots in the "dark" continent of Africa. Indeed, many mid-century descriptions of Guadeloupe referred directly to the "Africanness" of its residents -- far more so than in the case of its sister department, Martinique. During this period, such references to Africa highly inflamed the sensibilities of Guadeloupeans who had long referred to themselves as French. As Fanon wrote in 1955,²⁶ to deliberately or

²⁶Fanon explains here that French West Indians, who had believed that they were equal to citizens in France, and that France was color neutral, became vividly aware of the extent of French racism during the Vichy era when thousands of non-sensitized white troops were forced to remain in the French West Indies. (see "West Indians and Africans," 1955)

mistakenly refer to a French West Indian as African was tantamount to inflicting upon him or her an insult of the highest order.

Until recently, the cultural and ethnic marker of Guadeloupeans was not deemed to be skin color, but rather their long-term Frenchness determined from the beginning of colonization in 1635. Yet the modernity implied by the term "Frenchness" went hand in hand with socio-economic characteristics more in tune with those of its colonial cousin Senegal²⁷ than with those of its political and cultural reference point, Paris. For example, at the end of the 1950s, Guadeloupe had an agricultural sector in crisis, a largely uneducated Créole-speaking population, a per capita income not far removed from that of neighboring Dominica or *Kréyol*-speaking²⁸ Haiti, a birth rate which stubbornly hovered close to six children per woman, and a population growth rate which seemed to threaten its viability. This profile hardly qualified Guadeloupe as modern. At least from a western perspective. And indeed, such was the perspective of French government officials, who realized that responsibility for the economic consequences of "backwardness" fell squarely on their shoulders. "Backwardness," they feared, was fueling extreme political dissatisfaction with the newly sanctioned status of *département d'outre-mer*.²⁹

From the vantage point of French government officials, Guadeloupean society was a time bomb ready to explode and send shock waves through a French state still grappling

²⁷Until 1960 when it was granted independence, Senegal was a French colonial territory where a large number of French West Indian citizens were stationed as civil servants. Fanon (1955) points out that the West Indians considered themselves superior to African natives.

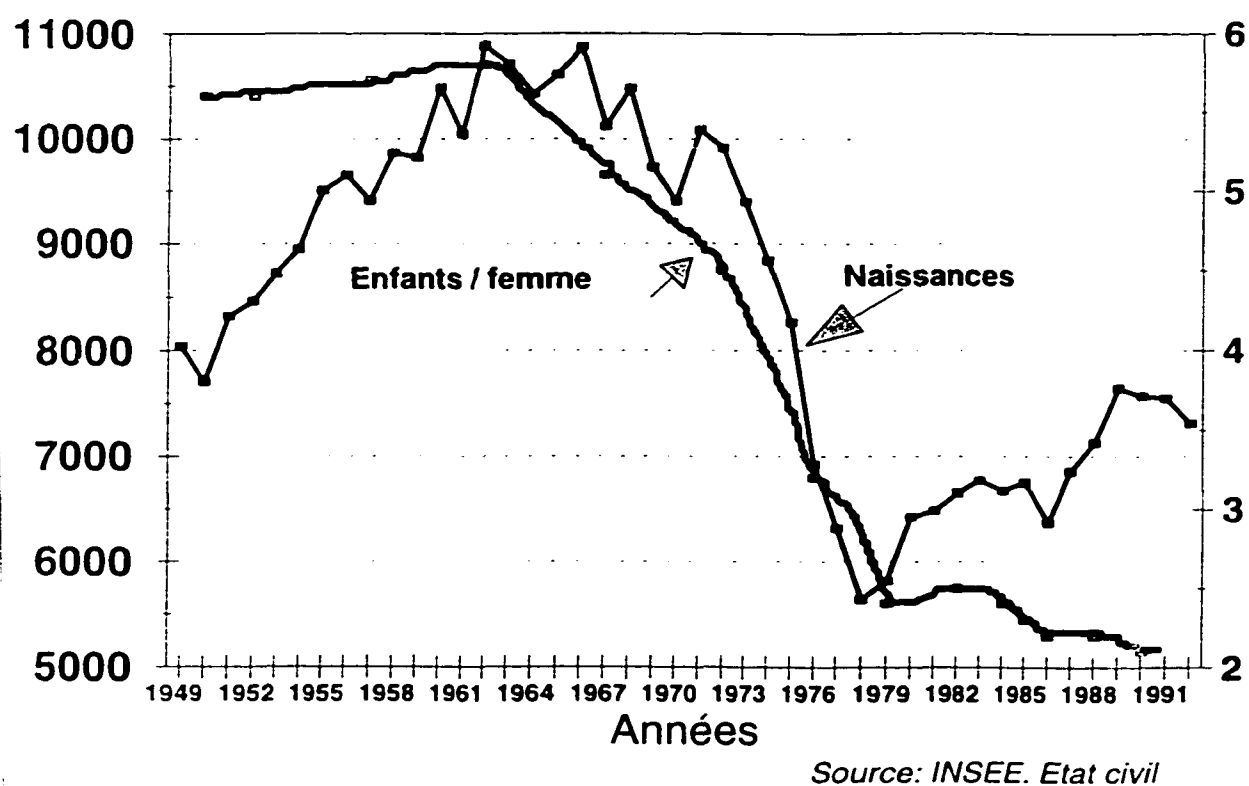
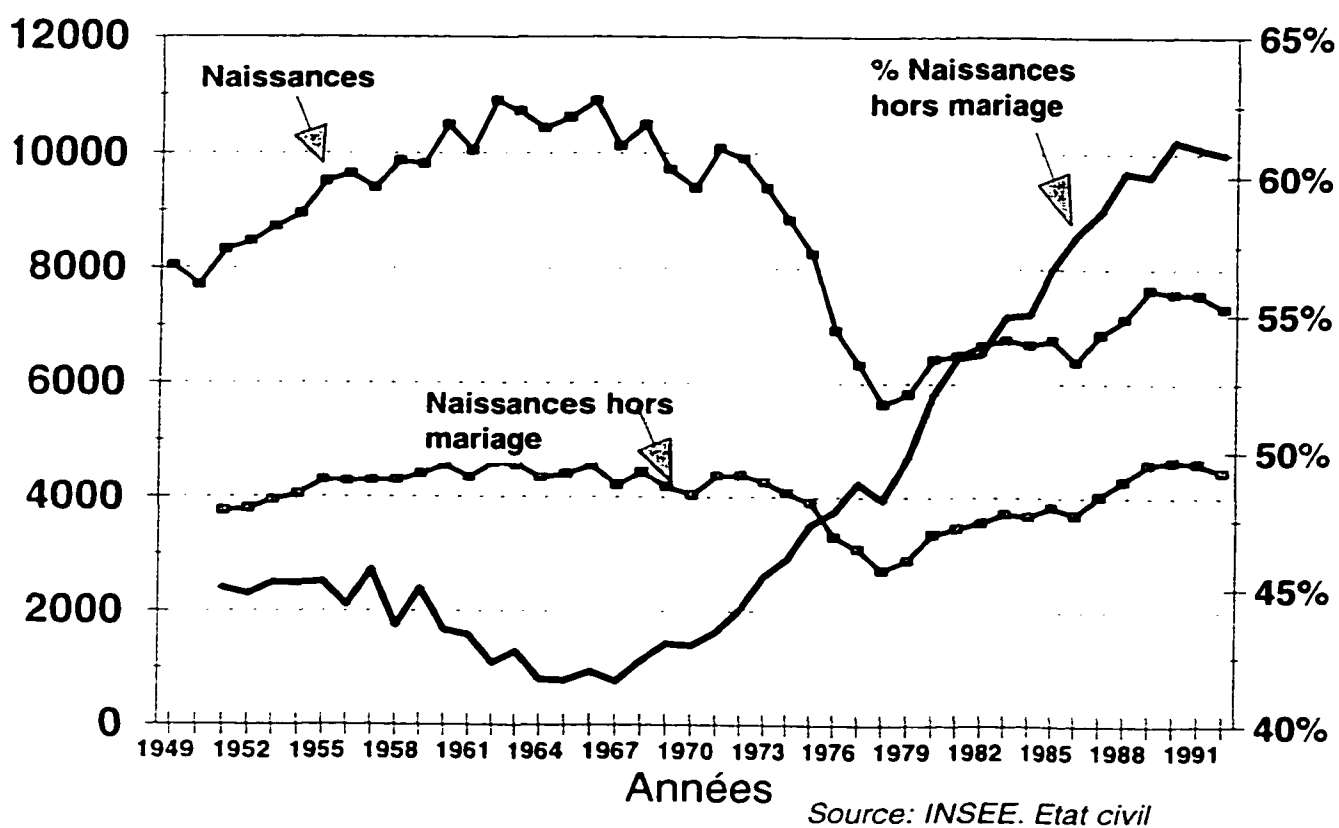
²⁸In linguistic terms, *Kréyol* is often used to denote the official language of Haiti. That spelling is often used interchangeably with *Créole* to denote speakers of the language in the French West Indies, or those who are native born.

with fallout from the Algerian crisis and other political missteps. Should political conditions explode, the French saw the United States as a mighty imperialist vulture circling around and waiting to pick up the pieces. Defusing the Guadeloupean time bomb required elevating local living conditions and reducing the political-economic stress on the state. The first step was departmentalization in 1946, with associated educational and social programs aimed at political-economic modernization. The immediate solution to the overpopulation problem was out-migration. But it was also a policy goal to lower the birth rate (Billotte 1971). French officials believed that these two strategies -- political-economic modernization and fertility decline -- would spearhead Guadeloupe's great leap forward. It was projected that once these "correctives" were set in motion other more tangible societal improvements would follow in trickle-down fashion.

As the illustrations below indicate, the population reduction programs did show results. Between roughly 1960 and 1980, fertility dropped precipitously from nearly 6 births per woman to about 2.2, and this remarkable decline remains a source of local and national pride.

²⁹Popular support for departmentalization was voiced in a local referendum held in 1946. This marked the successful culmination of a century-long effort by French West Indians.

Evolution of Birth (Naissances) Rates 1949 - 1992 - Including Out of Wedlock Births



Disagreement surrounds the issue of cause and effect, and the jury is still out on the classification of Guadeloupe as "modern." As recently as 1990, Sunshine (among others) still typologized Guadeloupe as firmly entrenched in a "third-world" camp. William F.S. Miles (1989, 1992) continually cites the artificiality of apparent prosperity with its "rampant consumerism" and characterizes Guadeloupe as a non-productive society. I argue, however, that the problem may be less related to Guadeloupean "modernity" than to the chameleon-like quality of the word modern.

In the late 1950s, due in part to the aforementioned characteristics, Guadeloupean society and metropolitan French society were more dissimilar than similar. Apart from the ethnic and phenotypic differences between the two populations, the metropole had a birth rate of 2.72 while that of Guadeloupe was approximately 6.0. Also dramatically different were per capita income, education levels, mortality rates, patterns of family formation, economic productivity, and access to the French social welfare system. Although it seems that there is always at least one segment of French society in a state of insurrection,³⁰ in the post-war Gaullist context, one could nonetheless say that within its metropolitan borders France was relatively stable politically. By contrast, during the same period Guadeloupe was fighting for economic survival. Culturally it was also at war with itself over the dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" values.

³⁰Planning and carrying out strike demonstrations is a constant activity in France and in the French West Indies. One of my contacts was a government labor mediator in charge of directing discussions between striking parties. One weekend, she worked non-stop to mediate six major strikes, among them strikes called by banana workers, clinic doctors, teachers, tourist bureau employees, and gas station attendants.

Extended family networks have always been important in traditional societies. In demographic transition theory, they have also been cited as conducive to higher rates of fertility. My own research data on the subject of Guadeloupean households and residence patterns reveal that many extended family members either lived with one another or lived in the same vicinity on what was once a larger parcel of land. Assumptions borrowed from functionalist-oriented kinship studies conducted during the 1950s influenced French officials to classify Guadeloupean families as Caribbean and "the Caribbean Family" as *dysfunctional*. Labor migration gave the French government the chance to solve at least four "problems" with a single move. Out-migration would fracture extended family networks, foster nuclearity, relieve socio-political pressure caused by high local unemployment, and ease France's shortage of unskilled labor. Migration was also seen as a "temporary cure" to lower the high birth rate (Billotte 1961), but introducing Guadeloupean women to contraception was considered a more permanent cure (*ibid*). To further government efforts to reduce population pressure, in the early 1960s the Guadeloupean chapter of *Maternité Consciente* or conscientious motherhood, a national organization similar to Planned Parenthood, was created.³¹

During Guadeloupe's demographic transition, the French government was decidedly -- albeit covertly -- anti-natalist in Guadeloupe while implacably pro-natalist in the metropole. In fact, long-standing French statutes then made it illegal to use, buy, or sell artificial contraception. In light of such a blatantly polarized policy, I wondered why

³¹ The *Maternité Consciente* and the family planning movement in Guadeloupe is discussed at length in chapter 5.

Guadeloupean women were complacent about what Césaire had once charged was a racist policy and deliberate social engineering (Segal 1969:94).

Race and Racisms in France

In its modern history, France has sustained several black eyes regarding religious freedom and racial relations that contradict its revolutionary motto of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. One of the most glaring contradictions took place in 1890 and subsequently became known as “The Dreyfus Affair.” In highly publicized proceedings, Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, was convicted of high treason and imprisoned. Dreyfus was later exonerated of all charges and released when it was proven that he had been the victim of anti-Semitism and conspiracy.

Another and one of the most severe modern setbacks for the advancement of French egalitarian ideology came close to the end of World War II. Much to the shock and amazement of French citizens, Adolf Hitler-led Nazi Germany defeated French forces and occupied the country in 1940. The German occupation in and of itself deeply wounded fierce French national pride. But, what drove a wedge between Frenchmen were the collaborationist dealings of several highly placed French civilian and military leaders with Nazi officials. With their central seat of power at Vichy, for four years, between 1940 and 1944, French General Marshal Pétain and fellow collaborationists ruled the southern and central French provinces under Nazi tutelage (Derbyshire 1990). They were opposed by the French underground and the “Free French” forces led by General Charles de Gaulle.

During this period, France experienced bitter internal civil strife with revenge and suspicion emerging as dominant themes. Several French leaders became deeply involved in and/or supportive of blatantly eugenic agendas and of an ideology intolerant of Jews and people of non-western origin. In the end, Free French forces, who helped the Allies mount the D-Day offensive of June 6, 1944, prevailed. Allied forces defeated and liberated France, but repercussions from the “Vichy Regime” and collaborationist era continued long after the end of the war.

For years, French Nazi collaborators were hunted down and were either executed vigilante-style or were legally convicted and imprisoned for perpetrating crimes against the nation. Not only at top echelons, but at every level of French society, those suspected of having been collaborators became politically and socially tainted even if they escaped punishment. As for de Gaulle, his anti-Nazi activities and military prowess placed him at the forefront of the political stage. However, even de Gaulle, who in the immediate post-war period became a vigorous advocate of social and political unity in the interest of healing the nation, proved incapable of quelling social, economic, and political unrest. The enormous task of calming the political and economic climate was not accomplished until several years into his tenure as President of the Fifth French Republic, formed in 1958 (see Ardagh 1969, Derbyshire 1990).

Several ultra-right extremist factions emerged as a direct result of the Vichy period. Among them, the most enduring and popular was the *Front National* led by Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen and followers rose to prominence between 1956 and 1962 as opponents of Algerian liberation from France. Their efforts proved unsuccessful, and after a bloody

civil war on Algerian territory, Algeria was granted its independence in 1962 (see Fanon 1963). Algerian independence nearly pushed the National Front and its extremist membership into obscurity. However, shortly thereafter, Le Pen re-emerged championing a new cause -- that of maintaining French cultural, racial, and religious purity in the face of an increasing presence of immigrants, many from the former colonies. His message had the added attraction of advocating the deportation and repatriation of Algerian and African immigrants in France (Derbyshire 1990:25). Le Pen's National Front, now constituted as a political party, considerably enlarged its base of support as post-war industrial expansion slowed and as French unemployment rates started to rise.

Although up and down in the polls over the years, Le Pen and his racist and anti-immigrant message (which now includes Asians among the targets), continues to garner middle-of-the-road and extreme right-wing political support. Its membership is particularly strong in France's southern region, particularly around the city of Marseilles, and has spread somewhat to Guadeloupe's administrative dependencies, St. Martin and St. Barts. But, as can well be imagined, a Front National presence is virtually non-existent within Guadeloupe proper or on the island of Martinique.

Problematic Foreigners and the New Xenophobia

Despite its checkered history of tolerance, during roughly the first seventy years of the twentieth century, an eclectic mix of blacks and other people of color made pilgrimages to France in search of racial freedom. In fact, until the late 1980s, France capitalized on its revolutionary tradition of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* by proclaiming a

sense of "color blindness" while submerging as much as possible its wartime record of collaboration. France became a haven for racially and religiously persecuted artists, writers, and intellectuals, as well as for skilled and unskilled workers from America, the Caribbean, and throughout Europe, who wanted to work at their craft and to live and let live in peace.

In the late 1980s and the 1990s, as the French economic climate changed negatively, the welcome to foreigners grew sharply colder. Deteriorating economic conditions were later exacerbated by the necessity to conform to the economic criteria for aspiring members of the impending European Union. In 1994, I noticed that in many parts of France I had become a racial rather than a national "other." Suddenly I was stopped frequently while running for a train by the "metro police" who demanded to see my ticket. Similarly, hailing a taxi, eating in certain restaurants, and registering in some hotels became a more problematic and, at times, hostile process.

In 1996, during one stay in France, after alighting from a taxi, I overheard my driver give a bizarre justification to a group of staring colleagues as to why she had broken an apparently accepted rule by picking up *une femme noire* -- a black woman. My driver flashed a 200 *franc* note at the group and said: "For only a short trip she gave me a very generous tip." My immediate thought was that my taxi driver possessed a remarkable ability for quick and creative thinking, as her explanation was a clever fabrication if not an outright lie. She had not hesitated in picking me up and had chatted pleasantly during the trip about her opinion of the new but "very ugly" *Bibliothèque Nationale*. I had tipped her only 5 *francs* (\$1 U.S.) for a 35 *francs* (\$7 U.S.) ride. From the 200 *franc* note

(roughly \$40 U.S.) she had so grandly waved at the other drivers, she had returned to me 160 *francs* in change.

As in many other countries, French census and other statistical data do not categorize by race. Instead, racial and ethnic origin must be inferred from another requisite category, namely, place of birth. The heightened activities of Jean Marie Le Pen's extremist and racist *Front National* against foreigners and foreign-born nationals has impacted a good deal of right-wing and middle-of-the-road thinking, as well as that of some avowed Socialist and Communist partisans. Decisively implicated also in the spread of French xenophobia is the very high rate of unemployment, a rate that stubbornly remains about three times higher than the U.S. rate. France's racism is cited by French West Indians, (who find themselves the objects of scorn alongside Africans, Arabs and Asians) as a reason for their return to Guadeloupe, but one middle-aged Guadeloupean woman who lived in the metropole defended French national honor to me explaining French racism as the result of greater competition for fewer and fewer resources. Yet, this attitude of exonerating the French, while prevalent among middle-aged and older West Indians, was notably absent among members of the younger generation. In their experience, it is not only impossible to get a job, or be served in a store or restaurant but, for newcomers, it is nearly impossible to obtain housing because of race.

Historically, the nation has valued productive and/or talented foreigners and has given employment priority to francophones and "assimilated" foreign cousins. But studies abound in which Guadeloupean and Martinican migrants of the 1960s talk openly

about being treated as stigmatized, racialized others (for example, see Lirus 1979). Even more to the point of this research, France's economic plans for Guadeloupe and other DOMs in the late 1950s made it abundantly clear that French officials believed firmly that this segment of its citizenry was backward and inferior.

It is in the policy directives of the French State and in its literatures on "social problems" that one finds both overt and thinly veiled racialized references about specific members of its increasingly heterogeneous population. Consequently, in addition to expanding the limits of demography to include gendered, cultural, and political-economic interconnections, one must also be sensitive to issues of race when investigating family formation and fertility change among "traditional," non-industrial, and/or non-white peoples. As Lee Baker writes: "public health and clinical literatures, including work in medical anthropology are also useful to look at in assessing the extent to which other analytical constructs -- such, as ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic status -- are serving as euphemisms for race" (1996:17). Being a black woman, whom many people mistook as French West Indian, provided me with both an insider's and outsider's perspective on racial issues.

Research Site, Design, and Methods

This thesis is based on data obtained over a two year period of research primarily in Guadeloupe, but also in Martinique and in metropolitan France between 1996 and 1998. Preliminary studies and early archival research, amounting to approximately ten months, were undertaken between 1994 and 1996. Most of the data were obtained when

I resided in Guadeloupe between October 1996 and September 1997. Follow-up interviews and additional archival research took place in January, and May through August, 1998.

The data presented in this study, though in part derived from archival sources, are strongly influenced by the time period during which my fieldwork took place.

Circumstances and events occurring during that time were far reaching in scope, and represented important landmarks in French and Guadeloupean history. Thus, in addition to quotidian interactions, these "events" profoundly impacted my understanding of many issues, particularly those that related to analyses of the contemporary state of affairs.

In the course of my research, I was also able to travel to Jamaica, Dominica, Antigua, and St. Lucia where I was struck by both contrasts and similarities between and among West Indians and by the varying opinions they had of one another. Two trips to France were made explicitly for the purpose of formally gathering data at archival sites such as at institutions affiliated with the National Library System (*Bibliothèque Nationale*) in Paris and in Nanterre. Overall, I visited several offices of the *Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économique* (French Bureau of Statistics) and conducted interviews with primary, secondary, and university educators and demographic specialists working on population and migration issues in the ethnically diverse suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis. I found information obtained informally from these specialists and from the staffs of various institutions to be extremely helpful.

Interviews of Arab, Asian, African, Russian, and Canadian immigrants in France were highly illuminating and enriched my knowledge of past and present orientations

toward people of color there immensely. Similarly illuminating were interviews with dozens of French metropolitan residents, particularly in the "service" sector, who were willing to talk with me about the issues and the problems they believed to be pertinent to France's immigrants. They also helped me to better understand when, why, and how racism manifested itself in everyday living and the place it occupied in political/nationalist thought. Those interviewed included white and black metropolitans, highly placed government officials and mid-level clerks, hotel managers and reservation agents, an assortment of domestics, nannies, conductors, subway clerks, streetcleaners -- and of course taxi drivers.

While living in France, particularly in the south, I faced the discomfiture of finding anti-immigrant literature, including the flagrantly racist National Front party literature, shoved under my door. But I also had the opportunity to attend a massive anti-*Front National* demonstration that took place in Strasbourg in the spring of 1997. In the process of traveling between Guadeloupe and "the metropole," I came to a first-hand understanding of how, for better or for worse, metropolitan France was an integral part of Guadeloupean life. My purpose for traveling there was to find people and literature unavailable to me in Guadeloupe. Guadeloupeans' purposes for traveling to France were endless: to attend meetings or colloquia, weddings, funerals, baptisms and important birthday parties, or even concerts or sporting events; to take care of ailing, elderly, or infant relatives; to sign or co-sign legal documents. Guadeloupeans also went to France to receive specialized medical procedures and tests or for long-term hospitalization; for

professional training; for military service; for education; for shopping, vacation and visits to relatives and friends.

Joining the ranks of Guadeloupean migrants, I experienced the practical necessity of having to live in two worlds, one that was Caribbean and one that was European. Trips taken to the metropole, with and without other Guadeloupeans, were further revealing when, to my surprise, I learned that a black American was often treated better than a black French citizen. In general, my most hostile encounters were with conductors or ticket takers, flight attendants, and waiters whereas the most receptive were shopkeepers and salespersons in stores and in marketplaces.

I noticed that even in the most hostile situations, when I identified myself as an American, service became friendlier -- or at least more tolerant -- and faster. I often suspected that in these situations my identity shifted from a racial other to a tourist other who undoubtedly had dollars to spend. But, being American seemed to also help me when conversing with white metropolitan residents. When traveling I never failed to strike up a conversation with a fellow voyager who, nine times out of ten was white. Perhaps due to the temporary nature of our association, many of these dialogues were quite open and frank. Conversations with white residents about racial issues or the treatment of immigrants frequently assumed the tone of a friendly philosophical debate. We would often compare the political-economic context of racism and immigration in France to similar issues in the United States. France's high unemployment rate and housing shortage were cited as the most common causes of racial and immigrant bias there.

In 1996 white and black French residents would ask me why black churches had become the target of U.S. racism in a society that purportedly prided itself on equality. Or ask why the United States often still had to legislate equality. I noticed that my willingness to discuss U.S. racial issues seemed to provoke more frank dialogues about racial and immigrant affairs in France. In nearly all situations in France, and much to my surprise, identifying myself as associated with a U.S. university helped rather than hindered my reception and, in many instances, I suspect served to prolong some of these discussions and debates.

The period between 1995 and 1997 was one during which political activities and politicking in general were intense both in Guadeloupe and in France. Leaders and members of the extremist National Front were highly visible and vocal. The outcome of national elections gave France a new Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, and with him the formation of a coalition government with a right-wing president at its head and a Socialist/Communist-party-dominated legislature. This was an enormously important topic of discussion for French and Guadeloupean citizens. However, as a citizen of a country that had a Democratic President and a Republican-dominated legislature, the idea of political "cohabitation" did not seem at all strange to me.

When in France, I followed the news closely, watching a barrage of "political campaign announcements." In Guadeloupe, I joined my landlady and her husband every night for an hour of local and national news shows that ran back to back. I stayed up overnight to hear election returns from France as well as those from Martinique, St.

Barthélémy, and St. Martin.³² And when Montserrat's volcano erupted and created havoc and disruption,³³ I remained fixed in front of the television to watch the unfolding of this event as well. I also listened to the commentaries of economic planners who stressed that while Guadeloupe would welcome the Montserrat victims, Guadeloupe could ill afford to support any more immigrants and that the accommodation of refugees must therefore be stipulated as "very temporary."

In addition to obtaining archival data at research facilities in France, I visited the University of the French West Indies at Fouillole in Guadeloupe, the Guadeloupe Bureau of Statistics (INSEE), and the Departmental Archives at Gourbeyre. I also distributed approximately 120 survey questionnaires on the topics of family formation, work, migration experience, and national ideology. Specific questions about birth control use (past and present), live birth and abortion history, family size and household income, were included. The locations at which the survey research took place were the university, the offices of a pediatrician, a gynecologist, a general practitioner, a dentist, two general health clinics, and the office of social services in the city of St. Hélène. Women who completed the survey at the offices of the gynecologist and the pediatrician tended to be

³²Although *Front National* leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has never been able to successfully visit Guadeloupe and Martinique (he has landed at the airport in Guadeloupe but on these occasions, residents have blocked the roads and surrounded the airport), there were two *Front National* candidates running for assembly seats in St. Martin and St. Barts'. Le Pen was able to visit these islands during election campaigns, but when he connected via Guadeloupe for his return trip to Paris, Guadeloupeans demonstrated in force to ensure that his presence in Guadeloupe would be confined to the airport terminal.

³³When Montserrat's volcano first erupted, Guadeloupe was blanketed by clouds of gray ash, inspiring the media to refer to the day as "Ash Friday." Flights between Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe also passed directly over Montserrat. I was once returning to Guadeloupe when suddenly our American Eagle pilot invited passengers to look out of their windows at the "awesome and massive destruction that the lava flows had created." Eventually, American Airlines thought that it was more prudent to fly around, rather than over Montserrat, and soon stopped mentioning the island at all.

young to middle-aged. Clinic patients, of more modest circumstance, represented a cross-section of age groups whereas clients of the general practitioner were predominately middle age and senior citizens, enabling me to reach women beyond their childbearing years. Because many of the attendees were women between the ages of 55 and 75, questionnaires were also distributed at a reunion meeting of civil service workers retired from the education and medical professions (primarily teachers and nurses). Given the personal nature of the questions, I did not attempt to construct a random sample; rather, the choice of sites for the distribution of questionnaires depended on whether or not I had developed a personal relationship or connection with the physician in charge, or with an employee of the facility.

A large percentage of recipients expressed their desire to complete the survey in private. Initially, some potential respondents were suspicious that my survey was somehow connected to another survey being conducted on HIV transmission. Although I had expected the opposite effect, many were reassured when the doctors and medical professionals who had allowed me to use their space (all of them were strongly tied to the local community), told them that mine was an independent survey. In the end, 68 surveys were completed. A questionnaire was also adapted for male clients who visited the health clinics and the general practitioner's office, and 15 of these were completed. Of the 15 men who were willing to participate in the survey, two respondents were senior citizens, ten were in their 20s and 30s, and three were teenagers.

On a separate page, men and women were asked if they would participate in a longer life-history interview and, if willing to do so, to indicate an address or telephone

number at which they could be reached. Of the twelve women and 3 men who responded affirmatively and listed a telephone number and/or address, 7 women and 2 men were selected. These life history volunteers were added to 10 residents previously identified through a process of snowball sampling. The majority of life history interviews took place at people's homes. Three interviews (one of a student, one of a maintenance worker, and one of an administrative clerk) took place on the campus of the University of the French West Indies at Fouillole. Two working women in the professional and upper-middle income category preferred to come to my residence. Both of these interviews took place during the day on a local holiday.

While the data obtained from life-history interviews were in-depth and rich, the data obtained from survey questionnaires were mixed and in the case of open-ended questions ranged from longer explanatory answers to short one-word responses. Given the uneven pattern of response to the range of questions, results are used mainly to contextualize the issues under discussion.

During the course of my fieldwork I attended meetings and conferences on issues pertaining to historical events and contemporary circumstances, both as an observer and as a participant. I also had the opportunity to attend numerous cultural festivals, beauty pageants, political rallies, parades, and concerts, and theatrical productions. In all instances reaction and comment from the audience was as meaningful as the event itself. Information was obtained from other sources such as magazines, radio and television, as well as from some lively debates around the kitchen table. In each case my understanding

of the past, present, and projected future of some aspect of Guadeloupean culture, politics, or economics was greatly enriched.

This study is also shaped, in part, by my place of residence in the town of St. Hélène³⁴ in the Basse-Terre countryside. It is here and in the surrounding towns that I conducted most of my surveys and life-history interviews, and participated in and observed daily life. It is also shaped by the very extended network of family members, tenant families, and tenant farmers of which my landlady and her husband were a part. These contacts encompassed a wide variety of educational and socio-economic backgrounds, although the immediate family with which I interacted was predominately middle class. To better obtain a balance of orientations and of economic levels, I fostered friendships and acquaintances with agricultural workers, domestic workers, and with members of their families wherever and whenever possible. I also interviewed members of well-to-do elite families, both white and black, as well as legal and illegal immigrants from Haiti and Dominica. Although my daily interactions were largely among middle-aged and young people, I passed a great deal of time with elderly parents, grandparents, and aunts and uncles discussing recollections of their childhood, their experiences of having and raising children, and their connections and interconnections with their immediate society as well as with the French nation.

Doctors, teachers, medical and other social service professionals with whom I

³⁴In many ways the island of Guadeloupe is one small town. It would be relatively easy for someone to identify a speaker by age, family circumstance, occupation, migration history, and level of education. Therefore, whenever possible, minor details which do not affect my conclusions, have been changed. Names and places have been assigned a pseudonym.

worked were well aware of my concern to obtain a cross-section of people and greatly supported and enabled my efforts in this direction. For example, one doctor made it a point to ensure that survey respondents included private as well as clinic patients, and nearly everyone went out of their way to see that both the formal and informal information I obtained was diverse in every way possible. All told, I believe that my data are reasonably balanced.

Chapter 3 - The Myth of the “Modern Nuclear Family” : Early Theories of Fertility Decline

A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on who[sic] he has a just demand, and if the society do[sic] not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he does not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favour...The guests learn too late their error, in counteracting those strict orders to all intruders, issued by the great mistress of the feast, who, wishing that all her guests should have plenty, and knowing that she could not provide for unlimited numbers, humanely refused to admit fresh comers when her table was already full. (Malthus, 1798)¹

Introduction

Guadeloupe's was not the first and, I daresay, is far from the last population of color to be singled out for social engineering. In fact, initially Guadeloupeans were quite amenable to relinquishing any trace of cultural specificity that branded them as socially and culturally inferior, or black. Indeed, contemporary readers will be quite familiar with the view that posits a direct link between minority group women (seen as breeders) and overpopulation. Although European in origin, the earliest speculation about the cause and effect of overpopulation (as economic pressure) was relatively color blind. "Stratified" reproduction as related to race, religion, and ethnicity was preceded by a focus on economic status, which emphasized industriousness and discipline in the realm of production and self-discipline and restraint in reproductive matters. Concern with overpopulation did not come to the fore until the rise of modern industrial nations. Until

¹Malthus, Essay on Population. Quoted in Himmelfarb 1983:122

the mid-to-late eighteenth century, production and reproduction were linked positively: European nations which had a "surplus" of people considered themselves destined for greatness. As Jane and Peter Schneider (1996) point out, in England at least, the prevailing thought was that "more people meant an ample supply of workers...[and] a 'surplus' of people meant manpower for the military forces that were advancing their state's territorial claims" (1996:18). Although the French were more pessimistic on this front, they too believed that strong states developed only when their populations and other resources were "well-ordered" (ibid:20). By the 1950s, France believed that order in Guadeloupe was threatened by "surplus" population.

Responsible Producers Versus Indigent Reproducers: Population Growth Theory and the Poor

In the shift between viewing surplus population as power and surplus population as burden, greater attention was placed on biological reproduction as a responsibility and an earned, rather than a "natural," right. The ideological ground beneath production and reproduction shifted when industrial capitalist development and the concentration of private property in limited hands rendered more people incapable of subsisting through self-support. Rural-to-urban migration (for example to London and other English cities), with its endless stream of cheap and desperate labor, sparked heated discussion among various interests in English society (see Himmelfarb 1983, James 1979, Schneider and Schneider 1996).

While spurring early industrial capital accumulation, such urban demographic concentrations placed greater demands on the state in regard to housing, sanitation, food supplies, medical attention, and crime prevention; in general, they also drew attention to the need for greater investment in urban infrastructure -- a need for which someone had to pay. These discussions created a wall, not just between rich and poor but between poor and poor -- the worst-off of whom seemed to benefit disproportionately to their economic contributions.

In England, this debate widened the gulf between the industrial and agrarian capitalists, between those owners still able to derive an income from rural rents and those for whom the greatest profits were derived from exploiting urban factory labor. In France there were fewer interests attached to nascent industrial capitalism; consequently, no such gulf occurred there. The debates over who deserved to reproduce, who did not, and under what circumstances, were more heated in England than in France. In England, Malthus, whose social and economic position was intertwined with agricultural improvement, reacted negatively to urban migration and biological reproduction by the "improvident" poor who supplied factory labor (James 1979:126-136). Malthus laid the foundations of a population theory which predicted the destruction of nations whose populations exceeded available resources. His prescriptions of when reproduction should take place were influential for a long time to come. He wrote:

If men are induced to marry from a prospect of parish provision, with little or no chance of maintaining their families in independence, they are not only unjustly tempted to bring unhappiness and dependence upon themselves and their children, but are tempted, without knowing it, to injure all in the same class with

themselves. A labourer who marries without being able to support a family may in some respects be considered as an enemy to all his fellow-labourers. (1798)²

As we will see, the subject of marriage -- when and how it should be contracted by the poor -- played no small part in Malthusian discourse.

There were alternative solutions for eighteenth-century English overpopulation. For the far-flung empire of Britain, the out-migration of military personnel and colonists constituted a safety valve, just as expanding world trade provided an external source of foodstuffs, particularly for urban dwellers. As in part the breadbasket for England's industrial might, France developed a somewhat different perspective on population pressure. As in England, class differences were characteristic, but the French were more bound to the land and had fewer colonies to which they could relocate their surplus population. While it is true that the French Caribbean colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe are considered *vieilles colonies*,³ having been settled in 1635, the dynamics of French colonization in the Caribbean were quite different in many ways from the dynamics of English colonization, above all in the temperate zone of North America. As I will later discuss, French settlement displayed a pattern of more limited migration, oriented toward the permanent settlement of landed gentry. This feature was eventually to play an enormous role in the structure and long-term domination by the gentry of French Caribbean colonies (see, for example, Dookhan 1976, Clark 1991, Richardson 1992).

²Quoted in Himmelfarb 1983:112

³French settlements in the Caribbean constituted the first colonies of the French Empire

It is no surprise that French concerns about population dynamics in the pre-Revolutionary era originated in aristocratic interests and centered not around concern with the plight of the poor, but around the maximization of agricultural production and profit, which were the life blood of a class dedicated to courtly displays and conspicuous consumption. While the English pondered the problem of how, or if, to feed and support the rural and urban masses, the French were busily devising deterrents to excessive reproduction among the better off. Some believed, for example, that it would be possible to reduce the number of offspring of land-holding tenants by diverting property allocated to them away from agricultural production and into gardens and gaming compounds (i.e., into holdings set aside for aesthetic pleasure and leisure pursuits) (see Schneider and Schneider 1996:22).

Significantly, the pace and pattern of fertility decline in France preceded that of other European nations, placing France in the forefront of the modern demographic transition, and winning for its people the title of "French exceptionalism." In the pre-Revolutionary context, French agricultural productivity was a concern not only of large estate holders, but also of a multitude of small property owners who lived off the land. Those who worked as sharecroppers as well as those who were small landowners were pressed to maximize the yield from their labor.

Martine Segalen (1992) writes that even in the pre-Revolutionary period, the French birth rate had started to decline. Between 1800 and 1914 the birth rate in France dropped roughly 40 percent. France's early and rapid fertility decline stood in contrast to the rest of Europe, where it fell on the average of 20 percent during the first eighty

years of the nineteenth century. After this period, the rest of Europe began to catch up (ibid:227).

Central to the issue of France's early decline in fertility have emerged historical questions regarding French inheritance practices and whether or not they are implicated in the decline. Segalen writes that while French Law was in theory egalitarian about property division among heirs, in practice, inheritance patterns varied within and between regions. French law supported equitable inheritance distribution among offspring, but rules regarding succession, tenancy, and ownership restricted the partibility of land. According to Segalen, since land succession and inheritance practices have been so diverse, her own research and the work of others have yielded no measurable causal factors linking inheritance and fertility decline (Segalen 1992:232-233).

It is interesting that agricultural productivity was historically important to French social structure, even when it was not profitable. To this day agriculture remains part of the defining core of the character of the French nation. So much is this the case that France was more than willing to sacrifice the economic viability of its *vieilles colonies*, Martinique and Guadeloupe, in order to preserve agricultural productivity at home (Sutton 1991:118).

John Ardagh (1969) asserts that the size of French farms continually decreased from the Napoleonic era until the postwar period as a result of the laws of equal inheritance. Because small parcels of land became increasingly unprofitable, the partible inheritance system created a wave of rural to urban migration in France. According to Ardagh, since the mid-1950s, the average farm size in France has gradually increased, and

has roughly doubled in size since 1882. Still, under conditions of modern agriculture, which require large tracts of land in order to be profitable, many French farms remain viable only with subsidy assistance from the French state (Ardagh 1969:68).

While agriculture remains a heavily subsidized economic sector in France, in Guadeloupe it is a sector that has been gradually destroyed by a combination of market forces and central planning. It is ironic that the agricultural sector, which is normally conducive to couples having large families, was far larger in France than in England, yet it was France that became emblematic of modern fertility.

The European Marriage Pattern

In post-hoc analyses of France's early, and stunning fertility decline, we see the stirrings of modern "rational actor" discourses. Throughout Europe and elsewhere, for centuries, abstinence from sexual relations was the one certain means by which pregnancy could be avoided. In the European context, knowledge and use of *coitus interruptus* spread from the cities to the countryside and added another weapon to the arsenal of early family planning methods. Couples chose this method with the objective of ending childbearing altogether or of spacing children through longer intervals between births. The result in either case was lower marital fertility (see Pollack and Watkins 1993:469). Among the motivating forces was the projected fall in the standard of living that numerous offspring would cause. In the view of historians and demographers who have reconstructed this change, a form of rationality related to immediate and long-term

economic circumstances prevailed and stimulated a desire to contracept (see, for example, Caldwell 1982).

Much has also been written about the "European Marriage Pattern," a concept that shows the influence of Malthus. First named by Swedish demographer John Hajnal in a famous essay (1965)⁴, this refers to: (a) the tendency for European men and women, relative to world standards, to marry late; (b) a population celibacy rate of 10 percent to 15 percent unique to the European context; (c) an age gap of only two or three years between husband and wife; (d) the tendency to establish nuclear household living arrangements after marriage. These practices which Hajnal delineated as constituting the core features of the "European Marriage Pattern" were directed by the ideology, first set forth by Malthus, that before he married, a man should be in a financially stable position and able to support a wife and children (see also Schneider and Schneider 1996:47).

Although in practice, as Hajnal documented, the European Marriage Pattern existed before Malthus, it was most coherently articulated in nineteenth century Malthusian prescriptions for ensuring quality offspring, promoting responsible parenthood, and encouraging self-reliance among the poor. It lay at the heart of the prescribed rational ordering of fertility so as to insure quality over quantity. It involved delayed or postponed marriage and when necessary, life-long celibacy for those without adequate financial means. The "European Marriage Pattern" was the antithesis of the pattern exemplified by those poor who engaged in early and "improvident" marriage.

⁴see Hajnal (1965) "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," in David. V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley, eds., Population in History. London: Edward Arnold, 1965:101-146, where he describes in depth the historical origins of this practice.

Marriages that were encouraged by poor relief and the unfettered demand for industrial labor also contradicted the pattern. Delayed and prudent marriage forestalled early and abundant breeding, thereby elevating the quality of life for all concerned -- at the household and societal levels. Marriage, as a legally contracted agreement stipulating among other things the fiscal responsibility of husband and wife for their offspring, evolved as the centerpiece of discourses on controlled population growth. Of course this assumed either the implicit or the explicit contract of "rational" control over biological urges as exemplary of a modern citizenry. In any given population, the rational and responsible segment was the one that eschewed extra-marital sex and, where prudence dictated, married late; the irrational and irresponsible segment did the opposite. According to Malthusian discourse, those who extract resources illegitimately and thereby subtract from national greatness are decried, while those who "legitimately" support and contribute to national interests are lauded.

The Malthusian era produced a vigorous commentary on marriage, a fetish with family size, and a concern with idleness and non-productivity. Rationality in matters of production and reproduction, the value of "prudent marriage," and debates about "poor aid" as a stimulus to unwanted population (debates to which we are today nearly desensitized) are all holdovers from the days of Malthus. These issues are now, however, more explicitly linked to a "cultural" context of color/ethnicity/religion and have found saliency in more than a few theories about demographic excess among minorities. Yet, they are very similar to those which fueled population growth debates in the early nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, what now reigns is a

very visible "invisible" hand for which skin color is a critical factor, while the new "field of forces" is a very mature capitalism based on flexible accumulation and high mobility for both capital and labor. Capital's globalization continues to erode what remains of the social welfare system in most of the world's societies and polarizes still further the redundant and devalued producers and reproducers and the exceptionally overvalued few.

The mid-nineteenth-century preoccupation with the "undeserving" poor also found its way into "scientific" approaches to demographic change that are still with us today. Popular discourses on quality versus quantity had their echoes here too. And, we hear them today from social and political leaders dealing with the "underclass." Finally, the terminology bears a striking resemblance to that used to describe the population explosion in Guadeloupe. More to the point, the history of "French Exceptionalism" made the Guadeloupean stigma of "exceptionally" high fertility seem all the more glaring in the 1950s and 1960s.

Modern Demographic Transition Theory

Until recently, anthropologists have stood apart from demographic debates, watching as "cultural" aspects of their work were appropriated and used to fill in the gaps of an increasingly untenable demographic theory. Anthropological, cultural, and political-economic explanations have not only gained currency, but appear to be the only approaches capable of linking micro- and macro-level analyses at the global and individual level. As is discussed in chapter four, it is, perhaps, demography's attempt to "do" anthropology that prompted anthropologists to enter the theoretical debates.

Anthropologists are uniquely qualified to enter these discussions as they have long been involved in investigating the linkages between culture, political economy, and social organization among "minority" populations. As for the fertility decline in Guadeloupe, I argue that a theory of culture and political economy is the only approach capable of completely capturing the complex circumstances under which it occurred.

Given that the period of the greatest decline was from 1962 to 1982, it is hardly surprising that the programs initiated to promote fertility decline in Guadeloupe were founded upon the postwar modernization thesis. Subsequent theories -- which Susan Greenhalgh (1995) refers to as post-classic theories -- were, for the most part, reformulations of the modernization theme. Further, demographic studies that later attempted to incorporate kinship and women's status were extensions of, rather than a revision of, modern demographic transition theory.

The contours of Guadeloupe's demographic transition between 1962 and 1982 did indeed appear to follow the tripartite stages postulated by "classic demographic transition theory." "Classic" transition theory emerged in the postwar period as the justification for a broad array of development schemes and remained in force for some thirty years -- roughly from the mid-1940s to the 1970s. Revisiting the circumstances surrounding its creation and reconsidering its postulates allow us to better comprehend the rationale behind the changes implemented in Guadeloupe, particularly those which advocated socio-cultural as well as reproductive change.

This tripartite scheme -- derived from characteristics that emerged during Europe's fertility decline -- posits the following stages: 1) a pre-transition period of slow

population growth in which high mortality balances high fertility; 2) a period of rapid -- even explosive -- population growth in which socio-economic inputs reduce high mortality but leave high fertility virtually unchanged; 3) a culminating period that marks a successful transition in which equilibrium is reestablished by reducing high fertility -- thus low fertility balances low mortality.

Classic transition theory did not emerge exclusively within the walls of academia but was devised to respond to the urgent call for postwar development directives. Szreter (1993) points out that when they first outlined its main tenets, Frank W. Notestein and Kingsley Davis, the co-creators of the theory, were affiliated with the Office of Population Research located at Princeton. Notestein was the agency's director and Davis a senior colleague; and both continued to modify their work under the aegis of the agency. In 1944, Notestein appeared before the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization in a forum convened to educate policy makers about what constituted the "building blocks for social analysis." Notestein's transition theory was hailed for "enabling them to classify all nations into a policy-relevant threefold typology" (Szreter 1993:681). In other words, the motivational force behind the formulation of classic transition theory was the need of policy planners who "urgently required reliable estimates of future population growth in different parts of the world" (ibid).

When placed in the postwar context, classic transition theory seems logical and pragmatic. It defined markers by which the state of population growth of various nations could be identified. Using fluctuations in fertility and mortality throughout Western Europe as a model, it pinpointed three stages of population change through which

countries progressed. These stages allowed researchers and policy makers to explain and predict the pace and the pattern of population growth. In essence it proposed that policy planners set out to transform third-world into first-world people, or at least to encourage them to adopt first-world material values, family types and cultural norms from which lower fertility would follow.

Classic transition theory was both positivist and evolutionary. Susan Greenhalgh states that according to Davis and Notestein's 1945 formulation, "the transition in fertility was ushered in by broad forces of modernization such as urbanization and industrialization, which altered the economics of childrearing, lowering desired family size" (1994:4). The engines driving this transformation were to be fueled by socio-economic forces capable also of razing barriers to modernization --barriers, theorists argued, that were held in place by a society's adherence to "traditional" values. According to Notestein, in such [traditional] societies

religious doctrines, moral codes, laws, education, community customs, marriage habits, and family organizations are all focused toward maintaining high fertility. These change only gradually and in response to the strongest stimulation. (Notestein 1945, quoted in Szreter 1993)

Szreter has interpreted this as meaning that high fertility would only be reduced by a multi-pronged and multifaceted campaign designed to make "traditional" populations more receptive to the materialist forces of industrialization and modernization. Among the effects of such a campaign would be a "growing culture of individualism, rising consumer aspirations, the emergence of socially mobile urban populations, the loss of various functions of the family to the factory and the school" (ibid), and the fostering of a

personal outlook which would allow people to feel in full control of both their productive and reproductive destinies. Szreter's description applies remarkably well to the transformation that took place during Guadeloupe's demographic transition. In fact, in the 1950s it was classic transition theory that provided central planners with the justification for Guadeloupe's "development" as well as with some practical guidelines for implementing change. It was also early American and British social scientists and development specialists who characterized socio-economic conditions of Blacks as problematic. In light of this literature, most French officials believed that nothing short of radical change could quell the boiling cauldron of political turmoil that gripped Guadeloupe. Even more enticing to them was the fact that since nineteenth-century France had provided a model for the rest of Europe, by reshaping Guadeloupe they would reduce political pressure and simultaneously create a microcosm of the French Nation.

Neo-Malthusian Rhetoric and Eugenics in Twentieth-Century England

One could argue that England's (and by extension, British West Indians') early advancement and acceptance of birth control technology can be directly attributed to Malthusian precepts. As will be later discussed, France's prohibition against the use of "artificial" means of birth control in the metropole had less to do with religious dogma than with the state's concerns over the postwar decline in population. McLaren (1992) writes that up until the mid-1920s, English women, particularly peasants and the urban working poor, heavily relied on *coitus interruptus* -- which was often ineffective -- and various dangerous abortion methods to control unwanted pregnancies. In reaction to

rising rates of abortion-related illnesses and deaths, an organization called The Malthusian League was formed in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The objective of The Malthusian League was to encourage women to replace dangerous abortion techniques with effective contraceptive methods. According to McLaren, between 1879 and 1921, the league distributed approximately three million pamphlets advising against the use of abortion, and in 1913 started to include practical information on how to avert pregnancy. Reinforcing the League, an educated well-to-do woman, Marie Stopes, popularized birth control ideology through her writings on the rights of a woman to experience sexual pleasure equal to men. Stopes argued that the practice of coitus interruptus, which was largely controlled by men, too often created sexual frustration among women by not allowing them to experience completed sexual pleasure. Stopes' approach seemed modern and enlightened.

Her orientation was also eugenic in nature (ibid:91-92). Although the majority of Stopes' readers were middle-class married women, her lectures and books largely pertained to the working class. The rhetoric in her work was very similar to the neo-Malthusian rhetoric espoused by The Malthusian League. In her lectures to working-class audiences, Stopes talked about how the wealthy and well-educated were adopting "rational" birth control methods. If the working-class women would follow their example, she argued, they would improve their own lives as well as "ease the load of the middle classes, weighed down by crushing taxes" (ibid). Stopes wrote that "contraception is obviously indicated, rather than the saddling of the community with children of a very doubtful racial value" (1923, quoted in McLaren 1992:93). She argued

that careless breeders would produce morons, and to counteract this possibility she prescribed sterilization for the “thrifless, unmanageable and the appalling prolific,[and] the hopelessly rotten and racially diseased” who were unable or unwilling to use available birth-control devices (see also Petchesky 1990, McLaren 1992, Schneider and Schneider 1996).

The stated mission of Stopes and her Malthusian League colleagues was to reduce the number of abortions by instructing women in the use of the cervical cap and diaphragm (Stopes’ methods of choice) as effective birth control methods. However, in their writings and lectures, both the League and Stopes focused on the importance of a happy husband and wife relationship and the importance of the family. Happy, smaller families, they argued, would become and remain economically secure and pass on the benefits of their foresight and prudence to their children.

As we have already noted, postwar development planners believed that improvements at the societal level would in turn induce fertility decline in “third-world” and other undeveloped countries. With the advent of urbanization, industry, and a sense of individualism, citizens of these countries would change their attitudes toward children. Neo-Malthusian-oriented fertility specialists and family planners, however, felt that a more direct approach was needed. Rather than wait for economic development to produce its “trickle down” consequences, they advocated the spread of birth control information and technology as necessary to reduce population pressure. In their view, in fact, if the pressure were not reduced quickly, the development efforts would fail.

A Pragmatic and Durable Theory

At the conceptual and theoretical level, "the demographic transition" has maintained a steadfast relationship with policy-driven family planning programs, largely due to its self-proclaimed ability to forecast population change in various scenarios and settings. Szreter attributes its survival directly to the well-funded family planning industry which continues to make full use of the theory's implications for programmatic justification and policy planning. As a consequence, the bond between the modernization paradigm and demographic transition theory was never really severed. Thus, first-world development specialists never relinquished the conviction that third-world peoples could be made to mimic behaviors characteristic of "modern" populations. Nor were the predictive failures of transition theory ever problematic. With a bit of tinkering, a faulty classic transition theory could be retooled to provide even greater explanatory power, even if in the process it forfeited some degree of predictability.

Szreter finds the longevity of the idea of "the demographic transition" remarkable in light of decades of accumulated evidence which should not only have discredited the concept but destroyed it (see Greenhalgh 1995). Demographic transition theory retains much of its popularity because it describes, explains, and claims to predict *the* demographic transition. Yet, for all of demographic transition theory's apparent empiricism, it posited no unidirectional causal relationships; instead it posited variables which interchange as "either dependent or independent, relative to any observable economic or cultural factor" (Szreter 1993:683). This "flexibility," which permits several

arrangements of causal relationships, in the end defies empirical testing. As late as 1973 Notestein was presenting a more refined version of classic transition theory in Europe.

Culture and the European Fertility Project

As Susan Greenhalgh points out, a definitive undermining of classic theory occurred as a direct result of the evidence provided by the massive, twenty-year long, Princeton University-based European Fertility Project initiated in 1963. It was directed by economic demographer Ainsley Coale, who assembled an impressive number of talented social and economic demographic specialists to produce data supportive of classical transition theory. Researchers, however, found no clear correlation between the theory's tenets and the historical pattern of fertility decline in Europe. On the contrary, the results of the study refuted many of the long-standing causal relationships that had been posited between economic status and fertility, particularly that of higher economic status and lower fertility. Under closer empirical investigation, the variables which were most expected to explain European fertility decline throughout the 700 provinces in the study proved incapable of doing so. These variables were education, urbanism, and industrialism. Widely believed to be causal, these factors proved irrelevant in rural Bulgaria where fertility fell under exactly opposite conditions (see Kertzer 1995). Given these and related failures, the European Fertility Project turned to culture and the diffusion of culture as decisive.

The findings of the European Fertility Project are detailed in Ainsley Coale and Susan Watkins' volume The Decline of Fertility in Europe (1986). Shortly after

publication of its findings, the Project's themes were elaborated in a variety of formulations. By using what Greenhalgh calls "quasi-anthropological methods," during the 1980s, John Caldwell and others promoted the notion of "cultural" explanations. "Cultural" factors were initially defined (see Coale and Watkins 1986) in terms of language, religion, and ethnicity, and assumed to coalesce within geographic regions. The regional approach stemmed from the observation that European fertility change seemed to have occurred in a pattern of regional blocs. These initial, narrow definitions of culture eventually gave way to a more elaborate notion of "ideational systems" which were seen as causes of demographic change. "Ideational systems" were not clear cut cultural markers; rather, they incorporated an interrelated system of values and beliefs which effected change. Hence, the research of cultural anthropologists was appropriated to bolster demographic explanations. Now, the previous economic deterministic explanations were replaced by, or supplemented with, cultural deterministic explanations.

W. Penn Handwerker, whose demographic work in many ways exemplified this shift from economics to culture, credits J.C. Caldwell's work on linking fertility reduction with decision-making at the household level as being seminal in the shift from economic to cultural explanations (Handwerker 1986, 1988). Caldwell's wealth flows theory, developed late in the 1970s, represents an attempt to add a bottom-up approach to what was essentially top-down theorizing. In its simplest form, Caldwell's theory posited that a family would be motivated to reduce the number of offspring upon the realization that children were becoming economic burdens rather than assets. This shift in thinking about the value of children occurred as family structures became more nuclear or "westernized"

and as parental attention to children increased dramatically. Specifically, Caldwell notes that

in traditional societies, it is argued, children are beneficial to parents from an early age as a source of labour; they are an investment for support in old age, an insurance against risk in a hazardous environment, and enhance the physical security and political influence of the family unit. In such circumstances, large numbers of children are either a conscious goal or deliberate limitation of family size offers non-existent, or such small advantages that a regime of natural fertility prevails. Modernization erodes these benefits either directly or by providing more attractive alternatives. The shift from familial to larger-scale mode of production reduces the labour utility of children, and the advent of mass education further decreases their availability for work...at the same time, monetization of the economy may heighten awareness of the cost of children in terms of food and clothes.

These costs are increased directly by educational expenses and, indirectly, by the lost opportunity for mothers to exploit the rising employment opportunities outside the home. Indeed...the changing value of mother's time, and its relationship to the cost of children, has strengthened the long-held view that the social status and economic independence of women may be an important intervening factor between economic modernization and fertility decline. The factors enumerated above are structural in nature and thus change is at a relatively slow pace.(Caldwell 1982:331)

Unfortunately, wealth flows theory remained a variation -- in this case a logically circular form of "economic rationality" -- of the quality over quantity theme.

In part due to the difficulties involved with operationalizing and testing his hypothesis, by the mid-1980s Caldwell had abandoned this theory in favor of explanations that were even more "cultural" (e.g., "improved women's status") though ultimately, equally tautological. In the late 1980s, Caldwell examined potential causal linkages between falling mortality rates, fertility rates, and population explosion -- conditions exemplary of stage two in the demographic transition. To him, "cultural"

descriptions were exceptionally useful in explaining situations where mortality was at variance with socio-economic circumstance.

Caldwell's (1986) analysis of the fall of mortality in "poor countries" makes abundant use of anthropological research. He argues that, in addition to economic inputs, "cultural" and other factors are highly important to mortality change. According to him, these findings challenge simple economic-based correlations between material resources and mortality. Caldwell's goal was to pinpoint specific non-economic factors that contributed to significantly lower mortality rates among the populations of China, Costa Rica, Kerala, and Sri Lanka. Another goal was to discover whether the introduction of similar measures into other "poor populations" would produce similar positive results. Caldwell declared that such evidence would challenge the Malthusian notion of linking mortality decline and available resources. It also challenged westernization/modernization interpretations of the demographic transition which distinguished between "traditional" underdeveloped societies and "modern" industrialized societies, and questioned the automatic linkage of high mortality levels with low per capita income.

Caldwell obtained his data from "participant observation" and from various conferences convened to debate the subject of poverty and mortality rates. According to Caldwell, the data revealed that the per capita incomes of China, Costa Rica, Kerala, and Sri Lanka were among the lowest in "third world" countries, yet life expectancies were 67, 74, 66, and 69 respectively (1986:172). To Caldwell, these findings clearly demonstrated that economic barriers could be surmounted, particularly in the area of reducing mortality. The high health rankings of Costa Rica, Kerala and Sri Lanka were attributed to "political

and social good will." China was deemed to have accomplished its high health ranking primarily through "political will." Caldwell explained "political and social good will" as meaning that, relative to the total budget of national resources, each of these countries had invested "exceptional inputs" in education, health services, and nutrition (ibid 173). They also experienced critical "breakthrough periods" defined as a period in which exceptional advances were made against mortality.

Caldwell (1986:173) next examined countries which he classified as either superior health achievers or poor health achievers. He noted that the latter group consisted primarily of Muslim countries, yet Kerala, which was a "superior health achiever" has a population that is one-fifth Muslim. The other superior achievers were Buddhist. Thus, he rejected simple religious determinism and declared that religion was important but not determinative. Factors more "determinative" were the degree of access to education (particularly among women), female autonomy (enabled by the employment market), and family planning. Caldwell especially noted that 44 percent of women in the countries in the superior health achieving group practiced family planning (1986:184). Another important observation was that a high proportion of superior health achieving countries were former British colonies. In the British colonies, education and health policies had always been emphasized and although the majority of improvements took place after independence, the bond of a common language prolonged the relationship between the former colonies and the motherland. Although not all former British colonies were high health achievers, this tie gave English-speaking Caribbean residents greater access to a variety of additional health benefits (ibid).

In trying to direct greater attention to cultural and ideational systems as influential to population change, Caldwell rejected a causal link at the individual level between per capita income and mortality; he nonetheless regarded economic inputs at the societal level as critical. In effect he argued that low mortality was not an "unplanned spin-off" of economic growth, but rather was a spin-off of "planned" interventions. In this regard, according to Caldwell, education, women's status, and family planning were key factors, and this realization held important economic implications for future demographic change.

Thus we see how cultural explanations, if not necessarily anthropological ones, came to play a large part in demographic explanations and how demographic transition theory and policy planning have remained linked. While demographers have borrowed descriptive cultural data from anthropologists in order to strengthen their explanations, in the last analysis, it is still not clear if demographers believe that a merging of demography and anthropology will be fruitful. As a subdiscipline of sociology, demography operates with a very different set of methodological tools than those used in anthropology.

Statistical computations are its mainstay and, while it has become perfectly respectable to borrow ethnographic data, it is not respectable to adopt anthropological methods such as participant observation within the context of extended field research. In fact, many demographers feel that too great an emphasis on "cultural particularism" would invalidate their fundamental methodology, i.e. macro/quantitative analyses. Consequently, despite demography's later refutation of "simple" economic determinism and its adoption of "cultural explanations," largely economic explanations remain dominant.

Fertility Change and Gender Equality

Although at the societal level, economic inputs and improvements in education remained factors important to those theorizing about the demographic transition in the 1980s, it was women's education that captured the greatest amount of interest. Education represented a means by which women became more productive and empowered. Convincing correlations were drawn between the level of education attained by a woman, her social status, and the likelihood of adopting modern contraceptive methods. This topic received significant attention from researchers, policy makers, and demographers. However, this body of literature also illustrated the attempt to move away from education as strictly an economic factor in order to place it more broadly within a cluster of traits loosely entitled "ideational" change.

Somehow, higher education levels appeared to give women more personal autonomy and improve their household, economic, and social status. It was also generally believed that women with higher education levels would desire to contracept -- with or without male approval -- and thus greater education would effect an ideational shift as well. Realizing that by giving birth to fewer offspring she would improve her family's financial circumstances, a woman would reject the prospect of being saddled with a large family as illogical and impractical. However, despite the publication of abundant literature on the subject, which suggested a causal relationship, strong statistical correlations between lower fertility and higher education levels were never found (Mason 1987).

Using an "eclectic approach." Karen Mason (1987) tried to generate some "ideas" about the causal relationship between fertility rates and gender relations, and to foster greater collaborative work between sociologists and demographers. According to Mason, the greatest obstacle to any analysis involving gender relations was the difficulty encountered when trying to operationalize gender inequality as an independent variable. She considered the term "gender inequality" an inherently vague and composite variable that contained a multitude of factors. Mason proposed using "controlled comparison," a methodology introduced by anthropologist Fred Eggan in 1953. Eleanor Leacock (1977) and Karen Sacks (1979) had previously analyzed the economic roles of women, their control over production, and their involvement in economic distribution and exchange using this method. Sacks examined "institutionalized power," that is, the power women attain when they are able to control the means of production. Leacock discussed the shift of women's work from the public domain to the private in a variety of settings. Mason's ideas ultimately reflect the work of both Sacks and Leacock in that she also assesses women's socio-economic levels in relation to their control over economic resources.

Mason's problems with operationalizing "women's status" were similar to those encountered by Mukhopadhyay and Higgins (1988) who had difficulty defining and explaining gender inequality cross-culturally.

We have not found a definitive explanation for gender asymmetry (universal or not). One of the profound realizations of the past ten years is that the original initial solutions -- the postulated "key determinants" and the major conceptual paradigms -- have also been found simplistic, too global, ethnocentric, and perhaps inappropriate to the phenomena under study. (1988:462)

Despite the definitional looseness of the term "female status," like Mukhodpadhay and Higgins, Mason searches for a theory that is broadly generalizable but comes to the conclusion that "good indicators of women's status may not be available." Thus, the question arises, how can the "sophisticated statistical analyses" and "controlled comparisons at the mid-level" be conducted if the variables themselves are unclear, and if female status is too complex to operationalize? In the end, faced with diverse "social contexts," researchers appeared unconvinced that there could ever be a "universalistic" formulation of a theory of gender relations and women's status, much less a theory tying these variables to fertility decline.

A. Lynn Bolles (1996) focuses more specifically on gender relations and the household. Adopting a political-economic perspective, Bolles draws on literature that analyzes the "nexus between the household and aspects of the national economy" and on the literature of feminist anthropology. This literature, Bolles writes, is notable for

its depth of vision, and its insistence on focusing on the interconnections between one unit of analysis to a large overarching frame of reference. This focus is on the ground, meaning the household is the smallest unit of sociocultural analysis. Individual actions are positioned always within the context of households, families, and/or domestic networks. In addition, these discussions locate women and these domestic groups into a broad historical, political and economic context. *The household rests as the core of a series of concentric circles that encompass any number of persons of the households, the neighborhood, the village, on up through the nation, the regions, the hemisphere, and the globe...* Decisions made concerning migration, fertility, domestic chores and allocation of food, clothing and education and so forth are gendered. Further, the gender of the decision maker may change under a variety of circumstances determined outside the household. (1996:107-108)⁵

To Bolles, it is by examining how men and women deal with the exigencies of daily living and, when applicable, with longer-term individual and/or household planning that researchers can more fully comprehend how women, men, and children negotiate various aspects of their lives. Bolles sees the state and its global connections as exerting enormous influence at the micro-decision-making level. However, social reproduction is also inclusive of highly gendered decisions; it is also inclusive of issues of race.

The "Diffusion" of Low Fertility

Did the idea of low fertility "diffuse" among Guadeloupean women first from metropolitan France and then from more "enlightened" and "westernized" urban women? And how did contraceptive technology spread through the Caribbean? The idea of "diffusing" modernity while promoting "morality" was integral to the process of French social engineering, which attempted to promulgate French culture and French values among colonial populations. Even before the European Fertility Project was conducted, the concept of diffusion was integral to demographic explanations of fertility change. But, the Project's findings revealed what appeared to be the diffusion of an orientation toward smaller families in geographically networked circles. These findings seemed to offer a micro- or at least mid-level analytic solution to the problems encountered by using a macro-level theory. As a descriptive mechanism, the idea of diffusion is clearly supportable; however, as a causal explanation it lacks teeth.

⁵ my emphasis

Nonetheless, in the late 1980s and early 1990s diffusionist explanations were common (see Watkins 1987, Cleland and Wilson 1987, Knodel and van de Walle, 1987) and quickly emerged as a viable explanation for the demographic "deviations" from expected patterns discovered by researchers associated with the European Fertility Project at Princeton. Demographic diffusionism was born as a direct result of the Project's observation that low fertility in Europe seems to have diffused from certain geographic centers outward to surrounding areas.

Demographer Susan Watkins, who worked on the European Fertility Project, has collaborated with anthropologists and is particularly receptive to diffusionist explanations. Watkins writes

recent empirical research has raised questions that challenge demographic transition theory. While structural changes account rather well for the leaders of the transition and for the pattern of differentials during the transition, there are notable exceptions. These findings cast doubt on the adequacy of economic development and mortality decline as comprehensive explanations. Most importantly, research both from historical Europe, and from the contemporary developing world casts doubt on the centrality of individuals in the study of reproduction. A focus on "purely individual" calculation cannot account for the stability of marital fertility before the transition, nor for the rapidity and pervasiveness of the declines. These patterns draw attention to mechanisms of diffusion and the role of social networks in shaping ideas and behavior. (1987:648)

Watkins sees diffusion along the lines of women's social networks as a major factor in the spread of contraceptive knowledge. Her comparative study of Jewish- and Italian-American women (1994) demonstrates how different attitudes towards sexual behavior, and its centrality or absence in women's gossip, make a significant difference in procreative outcomes. Watkins, however, retains a focus on marital fertility, which is

problematic in many "third-world" settings. And, although she speaks in the plural when she refers to ideational change, we still get the sense that she is referring to a single model of demographic transition. We also do not know if there may have been other motivational factors involved in the use of birth control or in the reduction of fertility in her case studies.

Philip Kreager (1993) discusses diffusion (defined broadly to include the dispersion of particular values, institutional arrangements, and products) and its role in international explanations of fertility limitation. Kreager labels the various strains of diffusionist thought as *embourgeoisement* -- a process by which members of lower-class groups change their family values by imitating middle-class patterns" (1993:5). As described by anthropologists Jane and Peter Schneider, the diffusion of the ideal of couples having fewer children did, in fact, happen in postwar Sicily. But, the Schneiders cite a host of other political, economic, and cultural factors as part of their explanation. This additional political-economic dimension is what Kreager and others charge is absent from demographic formulations based on diffusion. Kreager writes

first, they are not primarily diffusion theory; while networks and processes of dissemination are hypothesized to play an active role in shaping demographic trends, this role is heavily circumscribed by wider structural limitations set, for example, by the growth of institutions of government, market forces, and class relations. (ibid)

Kreager sees a further problem in the failure of diffusionist explanations to contextualize the process they attempt to describe.

For anthropologists, adopting a general diffusionist perspective represents a step back to what is essentially a largely discredited anthropological theory, rather than a step forward to an innovative approach. Also, diffusion *theory* may itself be a misnomer, since while it describes a process of fertility change it fails to supply motivation -- a problem shared by its anthropological precursor. Thus, missing from both demographic investigations of women's status and from diffusionist explanations is any analysis of the relationship between micro- and macro-political-economic circumstances.

Lowering Fertility: Internal and External Factors

When my cousin Yvette came home from Paris, all I saw was the fact that she was better groomed, more expensively dressed, and more well spoken [meaning she clearly enunciated her r's] than all the other girls with whom I went to school. Plus, she always brought me gifts of little luxuries, such as make-up, a blouse, perfume or perfumed soaps, of a quality that one could not find in Guadeloupe. I especially remember that in 1962, one month before the beginning of the school year, she brought me a wonderful leather briefcase for my schoolbooks and some tortoise shell barrettes. I was nearly fifteen, and perhaps a bit too old to show off as I did, but I remember that I was the envy of all my friends and classmates all that year. I later found out that my mother had given her the money to buy these presents for me but at the time I of course had no idea of this. What I saw was an incredibly rich, glamorous, and sophisticated girl only a little older than me, and I made up my mind that I would soon be in the same position.

I did not count on the fact that my parents had not nearly the income of her family (her parents were both teachers), nor were my grades anywhere equal to hers. Not only could my parents not afford to give me money to go to Paris but I did not have the academic aptitude that would earn me a scholarship or entry into a Paris college. I earned my high school diploma but without distinction and for four or five years while I was still in school I worked long hours at my parents' grocery store. I was the oldest daughter of seven children. At night my mother sewed for us and to make extra money and I was in charge of doing the cooking and overseeing my six younger brothers' and sisters' homework. In the morning I had to get up at 5 o'clock to dress them, help to make their breakfast before going to the shop to receive the daily deliveries. By time I finished high school I was seventeen. I had a regular boyfriend who worked in the fields but we had not had

sex and he thought I was a prude. In truth, this is partially due to the fact that both of us were tired all the time and neither of us had privacy.

All in all it was a miserable life from which I wanted to escape as soon as possible. I knew then that marriage was not the answer because I would only end up like my mother, with too many children, tired, and looking fifty by the time I was thirty. I knew my prayers would be answered and they were, because the government created BUMIDOM. By then my younger sister was sixteen and old enough to be my mother's helper. When I found out there was a chance that I too could go to Paris, the first thing I did was to break up with my boyfriend. By then I was 18 and he was always pressing to have sex. But he had no prospects, no hope of economic betterment, and I did not want to ruin it all by becoming pregnant.

My best friends had gotten themselves into situations which I did not want to have happen to me. One of my school friends was married and had already had three children in less than three years. Another friend (unmarried) was afraid to tell her mother that she had become pregnant and was pressured by her boyfriend to get an (illegal) abortion. She had it done by a local woman and after she became very sick. Neither of these situations was for me. Yes, my mother's life was very hard and I was miserable but made so by my mother's decisions and misery, at least not by my own. In my heart, I knew all along that I still had a chance, but my mother was very angry at me when I left. (Yvonne 58, life-history session one)

I first met Yvonne when I was administering surveys at a doctor's office in St.

Hélène. She was one of the few waiting patients who agreed to complete the questionnaire in the office rather than taking it home. Yvonne had also returned it directly to me rather than placing in the box that was provided. I immediately noticed that she had answered less than one half of the questions. According to her responses, she was fifty-eight, single, had three adult children, a high school diploma, had lived in Paris for ten years, and was now the proprietor of her own business. Yvonne was a reserved, stately, and well-groomed woman who could have easily passed for a woman in her late forties, and spoke some English. Unfortunately, she did not complete the questions pertaining to contraceptive knowledge or use, nor those pertaining to early family and household circumstances.

Several months later I met Yvonne again at the birthday party of her cousin. I was pleased but surprised when, upon learning that her cousin was one of my assistants, she agreed to allowing me to record her life history. Our interview took place in the living room of her modern and beautifully furnished three bedroom home. When I expressed surprise that she lived in such a large home alone, she explained that her daughter who was separated from her husband and lived in Guadeloupe, and her two sons who were currently employed by a construction company in St. Martin, often lived with her when they were not working. Yvonne told me that she had migrated to France in the mid-1960s with assistance from the French government.

Yvonne began her story excited, as if she had been transported back to the early sixties, a period she referred to several times as “The New Guadeloupe.” When I asked her what she felt was new about that era, she talked about stores, new schools, school uniforms, new textbooks, the advent of new magazines and radio programs (her family did not yet have a television), and the growth of new professional employment opportunities for men and women. Yvonne left Guadeloupe in 1966 shortly before her twentieth birthday. She explained that her one-way plane ticket on a charter flight was paid for by the government-sponsored migration program known as BUMIDOM which was set up in 1963.⁶ She recalled being excited by the flight, by the food on the plane, and being very impressed by the sophisticated “metro” stewardess. “For the first time in my life I felt

⁶Bureau for the Promotion of Migration from the Overseas Departments (*Bureau pour la Promotion des Migrations Intéressants les DOM*)

that I had a bright future. I was going to be trained for a job in Paris, and I was sure that I was going to be successful.”⁷

As I learned during the course of several other life history interviews, Yvonne was like many other Guadeloupean women who in the mid-1960s were influenced to make an "ideational" change. Having internalized the success of her cousin, whom she both deeply envied and cited as a role model, Yvonne recalls developing a sense of what she wanted and what she wanted to be. She says, "I am grateful now that my cousin came home to visit as often as she did though sometimes she irritated me when she did." Yvonne also credits her cousin with motivating her to avoid the failures and mistakes of her friends and she was very glad that she waited until she was older before having children. Life history stories like those of Yvonne help to shed greater light on how and why women during this period may have decided to delay or avoid pregnancy. And, at a very fundamental level, it allowed me to understand how micro-level decision making can be influenced by global and state connections.

Unlike anthropological analysis, demographic theorizing is heavily quantitative and always retains certain a priori assumptions (Nancy Riley 1994). For example, rather than determining *why*, the lion's share of attention remains on *how* and *when* fertility falls. According to Riley, anthropology is more interpretative than demography and also more receptive to political-economic standpoints. She challenges the field of demography to recognize that, although it often ignores the political-economic context, it is inherently

⁷Yvonne's life history concludes in chapter five.

politicized. Demographic investigations often provide data for local and national planning agencies making policy.

More recently, Candace Bradley (1995) has offered several useful suggestions for linking issues of women's status and empowerment with political-economic constraints and opportunities which I found were helpful to me in the study of fertility change in Guadeloupe. Bradley suggests that researchers should cease to automatically correlate women's education levels with fertility change. She also feels that education is used primarily as a gloss for "westernization." Further, noting the paucity of evidence that can be adduced to demonstrate a convincing causal link between women's education levels and fertility change, Bradley argues that men should be reinserted into the equation: "the empowerment of women through routes such as education ultimately depends on the availability of economic opportunities for both men and women" (1995:159).

Global and local interrelationships are important, but, one must ask, what is the role of "agency" when conscious and active measures are taken to prevent pregnancy at the individual level? Anthony T. Carter (1995) asserts that when the concept of agency is configured within theories of fertility change the result is often "unworkable." His alternative is to eliminate the distinctions between passive and active variants of decision-making, and he urges researchers to recognize and to acknowledge the hegemonic forces that envelop individual actors. In his opinion, demographers must do more than give lip service to microanalytic aspects; they also need to situate micro-level accounts of "agency" squarely within demographic theorizations.

Rational Actors as Psychics?

The "rational actor" concept was also part of the post-classic landscape of demographic theorizing. "Rationality," after all, is what distinguished the rich from the poor, and the industrious poor from the irresponsible poor in nineteenth-century England. Post-classic demographic analyses interpret rationality as presupposing some form of psychic ability on the part of "rational actors." Rational actor models as proposed by Mead Cain (1983) and others assume that the couple constitutes a cohesive, like-minded economic unit. Jane and Peter Schneider (1995) write that this model invokes the image of the couple as a "firm" -- a conflation of two points of view into a single decision-making entity. Drawing on their research on the fertility decline among the peasant classes in Sicily, they argue that

even if a married couple could, for purposes of analysis, be construed as a single decision-making unit, there is a further problem concerning the conditions under which -- rather than the presumption that -- such an individual, or dyad acting as one, would make rational fertility decisions. Rationality has to do with reason, calculation, deliberation in human action. So the term invokes the concept of planning prior to action -- literally, forethought or foresight. (ibid:183-184)

The Schneiders suggest an alternative framework in which to analyze social processes surrounding decision-making behavior, one which regards decisions as emanating from the dynamics of groups.

[T]his formulation shifts our attention to social groups -- small communities, social classes, and other reference groups -- whose members generate, and act in relation to, systems of value. In the domain of fertility, these systems may specify what features characterize a respectable, or worthy family. (ibid)

Clearly what is "worthy" or "respectable" in one society or community may be unimportant or construed vastly differently in another. Jane and Peter Schneider (1982, 1995, 1996) recognized that not only did demography need to shift its focus to the micro-level, but also needed to place the totality of related processes within a holistic context in order to fully determine the circumstances surrounding ideational change regarding the family.

Fertility and The Family: Some Unanswered Questions

In order to theorize about fertility change, researchers are trying to explain two puzzles. One relates to how ideas surrounding family size change within a society; the other concerns who or which individuals exercise "reproduction controls" in order to achieve desired goals and why. As is discussed at length in chapter 6, what appears to be the illusive link for demographers, particularly for developing, third-world, or traditional societies, is motivation.

The nature of family and kinship organization represents the second part of the puzzle, as family structures may be changed by, or exert change on, visions of modernity. This at times can cause explanations related to family structure to become muddled when one attempts to separate cause from effect.

The second major sociological thesis concerns the institutions of the family. When, as is commonly assumed to be the case in most traditional societies, economic, political, and social life is organized on the principle of kinship affiliation, the numerical strength of the clan or extended family is beneficial to its members and high fertility is encouraged. In the process of economic development, the primacy of kinship is eroded, and the family gradually stripped of all its functions except child nurture and emotional satisfaction...the

transition from corporate kinship systems to extended families and, finally, to nuclear families brings about a progressive reduction in the social and economic advantage of large numbers of children, and fertility falls (Cleland 1984:226).

We can see, perhaps, how the power exerted by a "traditional" extended kinship network may become eroded as its numbers decrease: however, even in "modern" societies, few families are stripped of *all* functions except child-care and emotional satisfaction. Many assumptions and conclusions are contingent on the researcher's definition of family. In searching for answers about "third-world" fertility, Cleland asserts that even though changes in the cost versus benefit equation of having children may not be as influential as originally thought, "the main lesson of the last twenty years is that birth control programmes will not achieve their objectives, except in the context of broader social change, *whether it be deliberately engineered by governments* or arise spontaneously as the by-product of the spread of education" (Cleland 1984:249) The implication is that new, Western-appearing family forms need to be promoted for fertility to decline.

Conclusions

The basic tenets of classic and post-classic demographic transition theory conform well to the logic underlying social and economic "development" programs in Guadeloupe. As elsewhere, these initiatives were designed primarily to relieve socio-economic, political, and demographic pressure. First-world concerns about political unrest (sparked in part by population pressure), limited local resources, stagnant or declining standards of living, and "traditional" family structure are not unique to Guadeloupe but were a post-

war theme of the Caribbean, of urban minorities in the West, and of other third world regions in general.

In chapter four, I discuss the analyses and interpretations of other non-European transitions that have been completed or are underway. I review the literature that describes and explains the late twentieth-century transitions that took place in Europe, and are broadly labeled “The Second European Transition.” I discuss how its characteristics, particularly those that pertain to women’s autonomy and changing gender relations, offer a better fit with fertility decline in Guadeloupe and with other recent non-European declines. At the same time, I argue that although the basic tenets of “The Second Demographic Transition” appear to be less Eurocentrically biased, this later formulation is unable to accommodate variations in non-European relationships and household arrangements, or change resulting from migration.

I will review how later theories about recent Eurowestern and third-world fertility change correlate increasing women’s autonomy with decreasing rates of fertility. I question why mothers and issues of maternity are emphasized, yet there are few analyses pertaining to paternity and men. Finally, I discuss the emergent collaborations between anthropology and demography in an effort to explain demographic deviations among non-western populations.

Chapter 4 - The Quest for Quality Over Quantity: "Traditional" Families and Modern Theories of Fertility Decline

Introduction

Unlike fertility transitions in Europe and the West, one distinctive characteristic of non-Eurowestern declines is their rapidity: "fertility transitions have been more rapid among the latecomers than among the firstcomers" (Watkins 1987:646). In addition, as Watkins notes, there is no discernible common characteristic among the latecomers. Countries in which fertility transitions are either in progress or have been completed differ in a multitude of ways including economic status, social structure, political arrangement, history, and culture. Nor have they been contained in one geographic area; rather, they have tended to occur in a variety of international settings. Moreover, the contexts of the recent fertility declines are dramatically different from their Eurowestern predecessors, and must be taken into account. In Guadeloupe, important aspects of the context include the policy of French assimilation, and Antillean's long history of exclusion from political power and the economic benefits of French modernity. Moreover, as I learned throughout the course of my research, Guadeloupean women do not believe that marriage is a prerequisite for procreation. Such factors are complex and are not easily amenable to quantification or analysis, particularly if one holds fast to prevailing demographic tenets.

Part of the process of French assimilation consisted not only of adopting the French language and culture, but also obtaining a good French education. For many Antilleans, educational success was an important stepping stone to upward mobility.

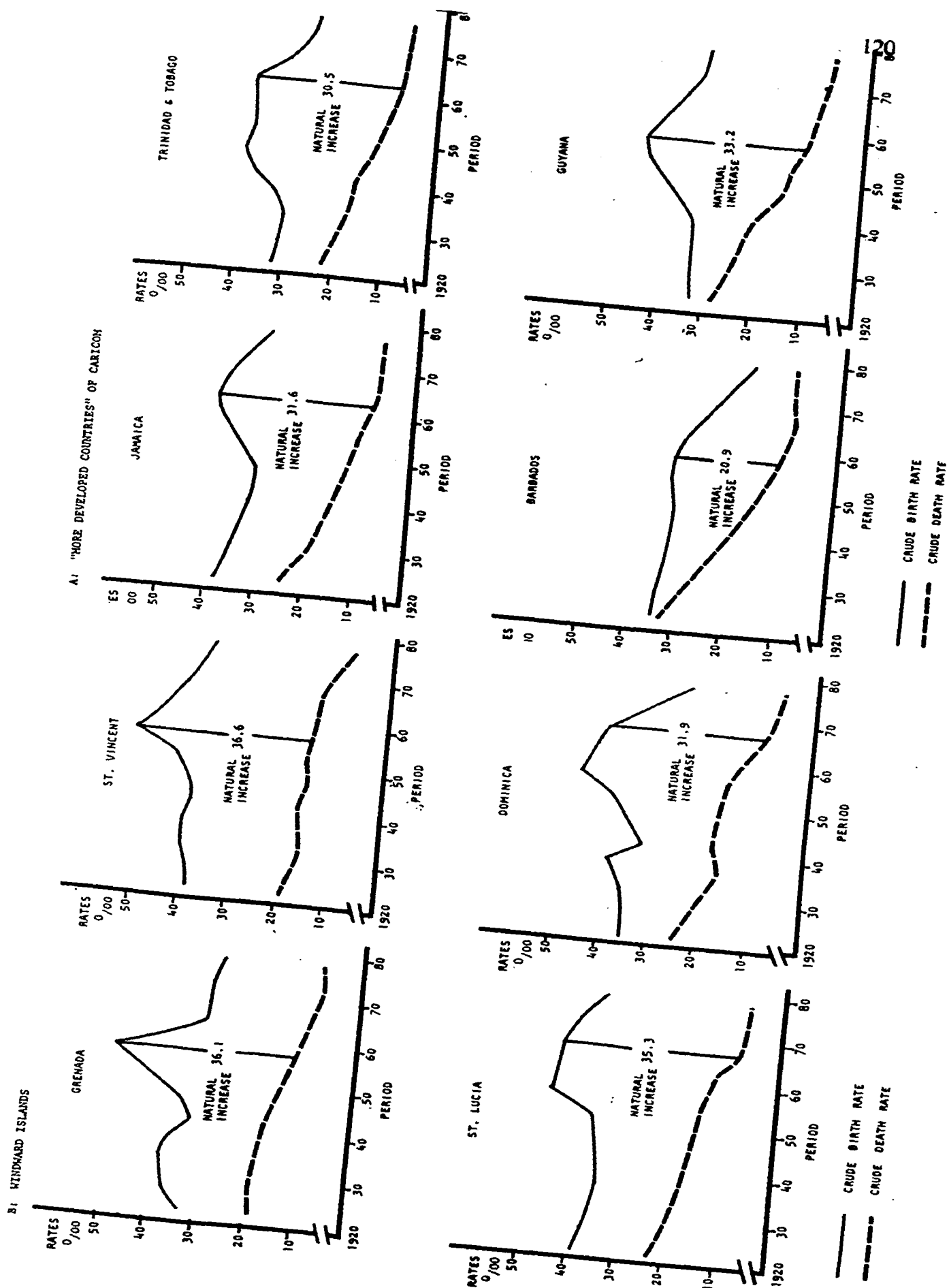
Regardless of one's status at birth, advanced education was the key to unlocking future earnings potential. In classic transition theory, macro-analyses would simply assess a country or region's per capita income. But, as Caldwell's study of dramatically declining mortality rates in "poor countries " indicates, evaluations made on the basis of per capita income can be wrong. According to Watkins, rejecting "purely individual calculation" as capable of accounting for the pace or pervasiveness of recent fertility declines requires that some other factor or set of additional factors be inserted into the equation. Watkins hypothesizes that these may consist of the degree of urbanization and the level of education, since "urban fertility levels were almost always lower than rural levels, and urban fertility was the first to decline" (1987:6540). I suggest that other factors that need to be included in this equation are how, when, or if individuals choose to form unions; the nature of the union; whether or not men and women feel that the socio-economic climate is conducive to procreation; and, what are the current social values vis-à-vis what constitutes personal and collective success.

Watkins states that although irrefutable, or even strong, empirical evidence supporting correlations between lower fertility and education and urbanization is missing, the findings consistently suggest that education and urbanization do influence fertility. These data identify literate urban dwellers who work in non-agricultural occupations as being among the first to reduce marital fertility. There are, Watkins observes, some important exceptions to this generalization, as in the case of Sri Lanka and Thailand where reduced levels of fertility were recorded among people who were rural. Similarly, another long-held tenet has also been demolished: women in salaried occupations do not, as

generally believed, exhibit significantly lower fertility levels than women who work in the informal sector or in family-run enterprises. Such exceptions are noteworthy enough to demand more specific explanation and study. They also contain important implications for analyzing fertility change among “third world” women and women of diverse ethnic, racial, and socio-economic circumstance in the West..

Watkins is an adherent of the theory of diffusion but she does not contend that the process of diffusion is a totally satisfying explanation. She writes that "postulating diffusion as a mechanism of fertility decline remains troubling. Just what was diffusing: new techniques, new family size ideology, or the legitimacy of controlling marital fertility?" It remains unclear if it is the behavior, the technique, or the emulation of Western models of family formation or of upper-class mores that is responsible for the shift from viewing children as assets to viewing children as potential liabilities in both a material and social way (ibid).

Watkins is clear, however, that the "transition from high to low fertility has been-- in every society that has experienced it -- a one-time event. It is a clear break with the past and so far has been an irreversible process that continues until low levels of fertility are reached" (ibid:645). As the charts below clearly indicate, fertility transitions in many Caribbean countries have been quick and steep. Included among these are fertility transitions in Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago.



Although the pace of various Caribbean fertility transitions has not been uniform, on the whole, the emergent pattern depicts only minor and temporary upward fluctuations to higher fertility levels. Thus, Watkins' conclusion that there is a need to consider additional explanations to replace the weak correlations found between low fertility and economic factors appears to be well justified. Economic conditions have, however, exerted enormous influence on Guadeloupeans' desire to become modern and are implicated in many modern demographic transitions. But economic conditions are intertwined with the desire for social mobility and are connected to their cultural context.

"Developing" Countries and Contraception: "Culture" as Complication

Do you want to know why it takes six or seven weeks to have a new telephone installed in Guadeloupe? Well, first you call up the telephone company and they take the order by phone. After you hear nothing from them for over a week or two, you call them back and they tell you to go the main office and to fill out a form in person.

At the office, you wait on line for hours while one or two agents take twenty minutes to conduct business with each person. Finally, you place the written order and you are given an installation date for two or three weeks later. Of course, on the date the telephone is to be installed, you wait at home but the installer fails to show up. You call the telephone company again, and you discover that the installer assigned to you was out sick but no one was assigned to replace him.

The telephone company now gives you a new date, for, let's say, a week later. This time someone actually comes, but after several hours of working discovers that he needs a new tool or an additional part, so he must come back later. At last, however, some six or seven weeks after your original order, you have phone service. Unfortunately, the next day the line goes dead, or there is so much static, the telephone is now totally useless. This time you must call the telephone repair department, and the process starts over.

The whole process is an abomination! In the metropole, two days after you place your order for a new phone, it is installed efficiently and correctly. Such efficiency is completely unknown here! France Telecom

*may work well in France, but not in Guadeloupe because its workers are Guadeloupean.*¹ (Joseph, age 61, return migrant)

While Guadeloupeans are extremely proud of their fertility decline, they are clearly not proud of other less "modern" aspects of their society, aspects which they are far more likely to criticize than to praise. Frequently, the object of complaint is not only the service or product, but also the Guadeloupean who manages or produces it. In fact, return migrants and people who have spent a great deal of time abroad frequently lament the lack of modernity associated with many services and products obtained locally. Yet, as I quickly discovered, if a person who was not born in Guadeloupe makes a similar complaint, he or she will be chastised and reminded that, after all, Guadeloupe is in reality a "third-world country." Incongruities abound. There is a modern sports arena although there is no sports franchise to use it. Guadeloupeans were critical about its construction, particularly since the work was done largely by metropolitan contractors, and most residents argued that it was an enormous waste of money. *Pole Caraïbes*, Guadeloupe's new international air terminal, which bears a strong resemblance to Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport, has replaced the old Caribbean-style airport but, while this new addition was praised by Guadeloupeans, many metropolitan visitors thought it unnecessary. I discovered this during the course of an unorthodox form of participant observation.

¹Joseph was a return migrant who had resided in Paris for thirty years. Here he is explaining to me why it took me two months to get a working phone installed in my apartment. After I asked for his help in the matter, I overheard him on the phone with the telephone company screaming at the customer service agent about the poor service in Guadeloupe and comparing it to the efficient service in France.

In 1996, while I was waiting on line at the new air terminal to clear immigration, I realized that I was being stared at by a stately older French couple. Since I had exchanged a few words in unaccented English with the only other American on the small American Eagle plane, I believed that they were trying to ascertain my nationality. To oblige them, I took out my American passport so that they could easily see it; I then gave my attention to a tattered copy of *The New York Times*. Seeing this, the woman seemed more at ease since she had now confirmed that I was an American. She and her husband remained a few steps behind me and I overheard them express in French their surprise at the new facility.

Admittedly, the new, ultra-modern, frigidly air-conditioned, glass and steel international terminal was a far cry from the hot, open-aired pavilions of *Le Raizet* airfield which served the island previously. In fact it is even more modern in appearance than Puerto Rico's sprawling, newly refurbished and expanded Luis Muñoz Airport, which serves as American Airlines' hub and connection with its Caribbean American Eagle service. I was surprised, however, at the vehement reaction that the new airport elicited from the French couple. "Incredible," the husband proclaimed as he surveyed the interior. "It's very beautiful," his wife answered. "Beautiful, yes, but why do *they* need such a luxurious airport? I find it outrageous that such an enormous amount of money was spent on *them* for an airport. What was wrong with the old one? This even looks out of place." The wife glanced at me nervously before answering. I looked her way, smiled guilelessly and returned to reading my paper. "Perhaps it is because Guadeloupe is now a hub, a lot of international traffic comes in and out of the island," she said. "Still,

I find it a senseless waste of money. *They* have no need of something like this," the husband sputtered. "This is not just modern, this is ultramodern deluxe!"

This ultramodern air terminal, almost certainly more beneficial to French and *béké* tourism and commerce than to black Guadeloupeans, however, represents an exception rather than the rule. Most Guadeloupeans will acknowledge that outsiders and residents alike must exercise a high degree of patience and understanding regarding the efficiency of local services and the quality of local goods. Guadeloupeans' reticence to proclaim their standard of living as "modern" is due to the fact that apart from low fertility and low mortality rates, education and health care systems that are respectably up to date if overcrowded and overburdened, and a new airport, there is little to boast about. Take communications, for example, *France Telecom* -- France's nationally owned and operated communications company (now partially privatized) -- operates and services the department's telephone system. Critics of *France Telecom* in Guadeloupe, such as the one quoted above, are numerous and vocal. Or, take transportation. A modern national highway connects the two wings (Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre) of this butterfly-shaped island and also runs along the island's perimeter. Yet traveling around the island can be difficult and even dangerous.

In Guadeloupe, after leaving the main highway, drivers must maneuver two-way traffic on a one lane road, and cliffside roads and roads at high elevation do not have guard rails. Even highway driving can become an obstacle course as drivers must avoid uncovered produce trucks which travel at ten miles an hour and the automobiles that speed past those slow moving vehicles. These uncovered trucks also are in the habit of

dropping bits and pieces of cargo such as bananas, sugarcane, furniture, and mattresses along the way. Urban areas are not exempt from similar hazards; drivers must beware of pedestrians, roaming cows, goats, dogs, and chickens, as well as cyclists (without helmets) and roadside vendors. Because Guadeloupe has no public transportation system, small fleets of well-worn individually owned minibuses take people (slowly) to their destinations. This means that automobile drivers must look out for buses (which often swerve to the side and brake quite unexpectedly) and for passengers embarking or disembarking at designated and non-designated stops along the road.

Also, because only a fraction of the population own cars, hitchhikers, particularly market women and school children, line the roads hoping to flag down a ride. Most drivers have neither a license nor insurance coverage and relatively few cars display the sticker indicating that they have passed the legally mandated inspection. Drivers know that even if they are speeding, driving illegally, or driving a non-inspected vehicle, they are unlikely to be stopped or ticketed by the local police. In fact, such an undertaking would require the participation of nearly the entire police force and put about fifty percent of the driving population behind bars. It is then little wonder that statisticians cite Guadeloupe as having a traffic accident rate and an automobile-related death rate nearly five times higher than that of metropolitan France. Clearly, it would be difficult to classify traffic and driving conditions here as "modern."

First time tourists and visitors often remark that they are surprised to find that some Guadeloupean people live in such "primitive" conditions. For example, in Paris, I met the German-American wife of a Guadeloupean-born businessman, who now

permanently resides in New York. She admitted being glad that her husband was "really raised in Paris" where most of his friends and family now live because she much preferred to visit them in Paris than to visit his mother who still lives in Guadeloupe. The wife claimed that while she had initially wanted their daughter to get to know her grandmother, she did not think she would ever return to the island. During her one and only visit (in 1994) she was appalled to discover that her mother-in-law's home, which she shared with an assortment of relatives, was "more like a hut with running water and electricity." She found it incongruous that this "hut" contained several modern appliances such as a color television set, a cuisinart, and a washing machine, yet lacked basic necessities such as glass-paned windows, hot water and a bathtub. "Guadeloupe," she declared, "is really a backward country which my husband tells me that even Guadeloupeans want to leave."

Often, Guadeloupe is referred to as a "developing" country, yet one wonders about this label. No new industry has been introduced and the unemployment rate climbs while the agricultural sector shrinks; consequently, it is not quite clear how the department is "developing."² There is a consensus among most scholars that, economically, Caribbean countries are not "first world" or "third world" but are more appropriately classed with "second world" nations. When ranked according to per capita income, they lie midway between the richest and the poorest countries of the world. At times, however, some aspects of living (and driving) conditions in Guadeloupe may more closely resemble conditions one would find in India or Africa. In fact, often when

² Contemporary development and unemployment issues are discussed in greater detail in chapters 7 and 8.

Guadeloupe is described by visitors, residents, and social scientists, it is as a "third world" country (see Sunshine 1988).

Demographic researchers, who endeavor to be more precise, also evaluate cultural factors. Family and kinship organization is frequently used as a marker and, often, many Caribbean countries and territories, such as the French West Indies, are classified as falling midway between "modern" and "traditional." Some demographers have argued that anthropological research could be more helpful in assisting them to ascribe rankings in the "cultural" arena (Frank and McNicholl 1987:229). But to demographers, anthropology's body of kinship and family studies, for the Caribbean and elsewhere, is idiosyncratic. Religion, broadly defined, was among the earliest cultural factors used to "explain" demographic differences. In "third world, "developing" or other non-western countries, religion as explanation was used quite extensively, but later it was reduced to one among a nexus of factors broadly labeled cultural (Caldwell and Caldwell 1987:410).

In Africa, which became a magnet for family planning initiatives and demographic experts, one cultural factor -- the taboo against post-partum sexual relations -- appeared to have the effect of lowering cumulative fertility, but within the context of a high fertility society the difference was difficult to discern. Schneider and Schneider note that post-partum taboos and other cultural proscriptions did, in fact, exert some influence. Summarizing the findings of demographers and anthropologists in Africa, they write that "as a consequence of such measures (and of terminal abstinence when a woman became a grandmother), West African women probably averaged seven births spaced four years apart -- fewer than the Hutterite women of the 1920's who, with their average of eleven,

constitute the standard -- maximum -- for demographers" (1996:52). Drawing on research conducted by Ron Lesthaeghe, Paul Alexander and others, Schneider and Schneider also point out that local cultural rules regarding abstinence from sexual relations following birth were disrupted in many regions of Africa by the introduction of cash cropping.

By the late 1980s, demographers recorded that the average total fertility in rural Kenya, for example, was eight births per woman. They also believed that the high birth rate was encouraged by extended family members, who considered numerous offspring religiously, socially and/or economically valuable. John and Mary Caldwell (1987) declared sub-Saharan African more resistant to lowering fertility "than any other region in the world" (1987:409). In their opinion, high "cultural rewards" encouraged the persistence of high levels of fertility even though economic circumstances seemed to dictate that having fewer children would be more prudent. In his wealth flows theory, Caldwell had earlier posited that as families nucleated or westernized, parents would realize that children were becoming economic burdens rather than assets, and would be motivated to reduce their fertility.

Later, Charles Hammerslough (1992:54) noted that in rural Kenya, the difference between desired fertility and actual fertility seemed to widen. According to him, survey results from the 1989 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) revealed that total births per women fell from a high of 8.1 in 1973 to 6.7 in 1989 (ibid). Among women who did not use contraception, survey statistics indicated that 65 percent desired to use it and 49 percent desired no more children. These results signified to Hammerslough that there was an enormous "unmet need" among women to learn about and have access to

contraception, and that the transitional shift from "uncontrolled" to "controlled" procreation was, in fact, beginning to take place.

When investigating the cause of persistently high fertility rates in Kenya, Odile Frank and Geoffrey McNicholl cite "cultural configurations" (1987:209) as probable causes. Frank and McNicholl speculated that the low efficacy of birth control was not related to "passivity" or even to lack of knowledge about birth control methods. Rather, it was due to the social relations of support inherent in these societies. In their estimation, few generalizations could be made about the Kenyan context that might be elsewhere useful because Kenyan cultural traditions were particularistic and "deep-rooted." They argued that in high fertility societies, dyadic nuclear family "units" are likely to be "embedded in a more elaborate kin group, sometimes with significant decision-making powers" (1987:212) in the form of control over jointly held assets. Frank and McNicholl also implicate the regional legal system as influential on marriage and family responsibilities, on the division of labor and property, and on inheritance matters, the latter especially as they affected women's status. They observed that in some instances women were legally and economically bound to men and male relatives, and that children ensured continued family affiliation and economic support for women. As will be later discussed, legal codes and inheritance rights as they pertain to family members have also been a highly debated topic with regard to Caribbean people.

Frank and McNicholl argue that when policy planners attempted to implement programmatically linked fertility change, they failed to take sufficient account of the differences among developing countries. Distinctions they considered important were to

be found in "cultural" factors which made third world and developing countries not only heterogeneous but also much more complex than they outwardly appeared. Frank and McNicholl saw anthropological research as too microfocused on local institutions.

Anthropological research, which might have contributed so much here, retained for the most part [though with some distinguishing exceptions] its traditional concerns with kinship terminology, statecraft, age grades, and other such esoterica. (1987:229)

Frank and McNicholl posit two scenarios as possible end results of current Kenyan demographic developments. Either

that of convergence of all [social] systems to a single outcome -- to the family structure assumed to be most compatible with modern, urban-industrial society and most favorable to joint decisions to have small families...emotional nuclearization...the expectation that constant exposure to the image of the small, cohesive family (typically, the Western nuclear family) conveyed through film, television, and print media will promote the strengthening of conjugal bonds and weakening of lineage ties and obligations

or

the erosion of whatever lineage dominance still remains without its replacement by conjugality. Family structure in the Caribbean--say, Jamaica or Trinidad, both low-fertility societies by African standards but characterized by visiting unions rather than by husband/wife dyads--illustrates that outcome, albeit reached there through the violence and trauma of slavery rather than through any gradualist process of social change and demographic transition. (1987:231)

In the second scenario, the description of "Caribbean family structure" sounds very much like British social anthropologist's mid-twentieth century characterizations of Caribbean families as "matrifocal" with male "marginality" and high "illegitimacy." It is precisely from the literature of this period of anthropological thinking that classical demography "borrowed" its cultural glosses.

Frank and McNicholl note that Caribbean fertility declines have not taken the route of gradualist change; yet rapid, not slow, fertility decline was a deliberately intended outcome of policy planners' programmatic initiatives (see also Lesthaeghe 1992).

Caribbean fertility dropped steeply and quickly as had mortality which benefited from medical and scientific advances tried and perfected among European populations. In fact, a pattern of steep and rapid transition is the pattern exhibited by most twentieth-century demographic transitions (Segal 1969, Dumas 1975, Cleland 1985, Lesthaeghe 1991).

Frank and McNicholl expressed doubt that Kenyan couples would emotionally or physically nucleate. To them, the most likely outcome was scenario two, in which single-family residential households dominated, but, like Caribbean societies, without conjugality and without detachment from extended familial relationships. Here, in my opinion, Frank and McNicholl missed the perfect opportunity to de-link fertility and union status. Instead, they posited that real fundamental shifts in attitude towards lower fertility would be found among women with a higher degree of "personal" autonomy brought about by increased education *and/or* economic self-sufficiency. This position is similar to Cleland's argument and is little changed from McNicholl's (1983) earlier analysis of "local contexts," where he argues that the "expansion of formal education, reduction of inequality of income distribution, and enhancement of the economic position of women" (1983:4) were, if not causes of change, at least highly influential inducements to change.

Although studies have failed to find a strong correlation between women's autonomy or increased educational levels and low fertility, a number of contemporary demographic analysts act on the assumption that such a correlation does indeed exist.

This is somewhat in contrast to earlier theories of demographic transition that assumed a correlation between low fertility and small nuclear families. Nonetheless, one senses that what Cleland, Frank and McNicholl mean is that women will become more autonomous within the confines of dyadic relationships rather than they will make decisions which result in men playing no permanent role in women's immediate and/or long-term future.

From Child King to Queen Mother: "Second World" Transitions

If there is no statistical correlation between nuclear families and low fertility, how and why do "third world" and "second world" women decide to have fewer children? Ronald Lesthaeghe's model of a second Western demographic transition offers another perspective from which to view non-European population change. Although its characteristics are not entirely in concordance with the Guadeloupean context, the concept of a second demographic transition is, like its predecessor, European based. Yet, it is less Eurocentric because it must take into account a greater degree of population heterogeneity, and less gender inequality.

Lesthaeghe argues that in many countries in Europe, during the 1960s and 1970s, fertility transitions coincided with the rapidly developing women's movement. According to him, contrary to the "child-king" era,

it inaugurates a period of adult-centered preoccupations with more self-fulfillment and hence with more attention being paid to the quality of the dyadic relation between partners: children are still very important, but their position at the top of the pyramid is not self-evident anymore (1991:3)

While on the surface it appears that he continues to focus attention on stable and legal marriage, Lesthaeghe also emphasizes that high divorce rates and a high percentage of couples cohabiting without legal marriage are also characteristic of the 1960s and the 1970s.

A change in the nature of gender relations is an important feature of the period, one which takes place throughout Europe and the West. Lesthaeghe dissects the power relations between men and women within societies and focuses on those which offer greater female autonomy. In these dyadic relations, greater autonomy for both partners characterizes the nature of unions. Lesthaeghe explains in greater detail that

the notion of individual autonomy, as already defined, has in se nothing to do with individualism and egocentric behaviour. It simply means that the individual no longer takes externally supplied norms and morality for granted, and stresses his/her own freedom of choice. It can therefore equally manifest itself in emotional domains as in that of economic rationality and utility maximization. The quality of personal relationships in a dyad is intimately linked to giving and taking. (1991-2:5)

Lesthaeghe does not completely reject individuals' aspirations to material gains as a factor. Yet, the fact that individuals are all the more likely to reject "externally supplied norms and morality" is compatible with Caribbean-based data, given that Caribbean residents appear to resist adopting Eurowestern conjugal nuclearity.

In Lesthaeghe's analysis, a couple's decision to have children represents one among several life options, and ranks with, rather than above, other personal goals. The hallmark of the first transition is early stopping behavior, when the couple decides to stop having children before the wife reaches menopause. In the second transition, couples

and/or women may decide not to have children at all. This difference signifies that fertility change is internally and externally induced as individuals construct their own frames of reference and are influenced by, and participate in, the social and economic circumstances which surround them.

Lesthaeghe's second demographic transition connects well with Candace Bradley's discussion of fertility change in which she examines potential gains and losses in opportunity costs for women. Lesthaeghe continues to refer to "marriage," which we infer is legal marriage, but his shift of focus from quantifiable/material differences to qualitative/ideational change brings into prominence sexual roles and relations rather than fertility outcomes. According to him, another reason why female autonomy constitutes an important distinction between first and second demographic transitions is that

increased female employment and increased female wages lead to reductions in gains to marriage and to rising opportunity costs for women. As a result, marriages are postponed and fertility declines. (1991-2:3)

Wages, we infer, can consist of earnings from either the formal or the informal economic sector. Also, when Lesthaeghe refers to marriage we do not consider it as a linchpin, but rather, as another factor.

On the whole, Lesthaeghe's analysis is compelling, but there are other interpretations and analyses of twentieth-century fertility declines that distinguish them from the first. In fact, demographer Jean-Claude Chesnais (1996) agrees with Lesthaeghe that a high degree of female autonomy is an important factor in the late twentieth-century declines. Yet, he also observes that a higher degree of female autonomy does not always

inversely correlate with the lowest fertility rate. To illustrate this point, Chesnais compares the postwar fertility declines that took place in Italy and in Sweden. One would assume from economic indices of each country such as per capita income, and cultural factors such as household nuclearization and female autonomy, that Sweden would be placed ahead of Italy in lower fertility. Since 1981, however, Italy's total fertility rate has been sharply lower than that of Sweden, and in 1995 stood at 1.17 while Sweden's rate stood at 1.74 (Chesnais 1992 p.730).

Chesnais's comparison between the fertility declines in Sweden and Italy highlights other variables that could also affect fertility change. In the late 1930s, Sweden instituted a policy of free choice with respect to reproduction and made provisions to insure universal access to contraception and family planning services. The policy was balanced with a system of family allowances to ease the economic burden of childrearing.

In the 1960s, Sweden's low interwar birthrate provoked a labor shortage, drawing women into the labor force more extensively than in other European countries. Sweden is also committed to educational and employment equality, and women are found at every level and occupation in the workforce. Roughly eighty-five percent of all women work (ibid). However, childrearing allowances have enabled two-fifths of all working women to work part-time. As elsewhere, modern Swedish women do not want to sacrifice professional advancement for family responsibilities, and in 1974, Sweden expanded the concept of maternity leave to one of a family leave that provides extended time off from work for both men and women. Chesnais points out that Sweden not only has a higher birth rate than Italy, but also a much higher rate of extra-marital births -- roughly 50

percent in comparison to Italy's eight percent (ibid:735). Chesnais also notes that several demographers argue that Italians have a "low tolerance for nontraditional patterns of behavior and family forms" (ibid:735).

The objective of Chesnais' analysis is not to refute the importance of women's economic and social autonomy in matters of fertility. Rather, he highlights the impact of differing state policies and practices, entitlement systems, and the social context with regard to fertility behavior -- in other words the economic and socio-psychological environment that may or may not be conducive to childrearing.

Differences notwithstanding, in Italy, Sweden, and throughout western Europe, birth declines during the late twentieth-century have been dramatic. Women have gained a great deal of personal autonomy, a greater degree of choice in matters of reproduction, and more options in the area of employment. Concomitantly, western European countries have experienced increased rates of divorce, extra-marital pregnancy, and greater diversity in household arrangements -- conditions vastly different to those of the first European fertility decline (ibid).

The emphasis which Lesthaeghe and Chesnais place on women's freedom of choice in career, marital, and reproductive matters is compatible with circumstances facing Guadeloupean women. In Guadeloupe, women are circumscribed by economic factors and inspired by the prospect of achieving upward social mobility; nonetheless, they now have greater choices regarding career options, living arrangements, and different forms of contraception. Personal success in Guadeloupe, however, is as much related to individual economic and/or social success as to "family matters." Martin King Whyte (1996) makes

a similar observation regarding China where an individual's success both within and outside of a family business reflects positively on the family as a whole. He argues that "loyalty to the family is a very strong source of motivation and performance" (1996:9)³

And, although it would need further fine tuning to be more closely compatible, the identification of a second western demographic transition is at least helpful since aligning Caribbean demographic transitions with earlier ones in Europe requires a number of conceptual substitutions. In the "first" European transition, using marital fertility as a baseline marker poses the most immediate and difficult problem. If the important determinants of fertility are the establishment of a neolocal, nuclear family through marriage, and the age and spacing of children within that marriage, then the equation inevitably is Eurocentric. For example, until the 1990s, nearly all studies of Caribbean social structure and family claim as dominant a pattern of "visiting," "non-legalized" liaisons or consensual unions between men and women. In fact, as will be discussed in chapter 6, "problems of illegitimacy and matrifocality," or the image of unstable and transient coupling, seem to be pervasive for the region. When Lesthaeghe revisits the issue of late marriage as the linchpin of the first European transition, he notes that illegitimacy was a negligible factor. It appears, in other words, that cohabitation and consensual unions were relatively unknown family forms during the years of *the* demographic transition in Europe (Segalen 1992:234, Watkins 1992:274)). In contrast, we now see that welfare policies such as those of Sweden and other Scandinavian

³The focus of Whyte's discussion are debates on the extended family as an obstacle or an asset in economic development.

countries appear to “have a positive influence on procreation within consensual unions as they alleviated opportunity costs for mothers” (Lesthaeghe 1991:15). Moreover, other characteristics of today’s Europe are “the disappearance of restrictions on sexuality” (ibid) and a rise in the number of consensual, and single-parent households. In these respects, European and Caribbean populations seem to converge but such recent developments also support the argument that the analyses of family and fertility should be and need to be separated.

In nineteenth-century Europe, the home became the center of material and ideational lifestyle improvements in which women took charge of the family and performed a variety of tasks such as ensuring nutritional abundance, designing new housing arrangements, and creating decorative comforts. The focus of women's attention was also on raising children as symbols of an overall improved standard of living and expanded socio-economic mobility. Lesthaeghe refers to the period as the "child-king" era -- the period which exalted the man bringing home the bacon and the woman staying home and tending to the needs of their offspring. On the other hand, in the late twentieth century (second demographic transition), gender relations are more symmetric. Women have a greater degree of equality in male-female household relations, and greater autonomy in the society as a whole. Here too, we come closer to Caribbean practices. I would nonetheless contend that there is a substantial case for separating the characteristics of the second demographic transition from a postulated third.

The Double Workday: Female Autonomy in the Third World

In Eurowestern countries, increases in female autonomy and equality have been linked to increases in women's education and levels of participation outside of the household. On the other hand, historically, Caribbean and minority women have worked as an economic necessity and would choose not to work if they could be supported by their male partners.

Given that in the past, nearly all Caribbean women have always worked (see Bolles 1983, Mullings 1996, 1986; Massiah 1989, 1986; McClaurin 1996; Barrow 1998)⁴ and have rarely had the luxury of male partners able to fully provide for household needs, the idea of a second demographic transition offers a better fit with Guadeloupean society in which children, although highly important, have never been enthroned as they were in the "child king" era in Western Europe. A focus on the family has been a constant feature of Caribbean life, and although couples and individuals make decisions apart from the family, it is important that the outcome of their decisions reflect well on their family.

Contemporary Guadeloupean women view their modern day choices as being very different from those of their mothers and grandmothers for whom work was mandatory, as was caring for numerous children. Modern women say that they want to work because they are better educated, better trained, and find the notion of confining their activities to

⁴Bolles discusses IMF and World Bank structural adjustment and its impact on women. Mullings' (1986) study of black women at the turn of the century emphasized that, unlike their white counterparts, black women entered into waged labor at an early age and remained in the workforce throughout their life span. Momsen (1993), Barrow (1998) and Massiah (1986, 1989) demonstrate that entrepreneurial activities, mainly in the informal economy, constituted the bulk of women's waged labor in the Caribbean. Irma McClaurin (1996) discusses the problems of underemployment and unpaid and undervalued work among Belizean women.

childrearing and domestic duties unappealing and unrewarding. However, as Guadeloupean adults increasingly strive for personal/individual success and begin to adopt a singles' lifestyle, this "ideational shift" does not pose a threat to the integrity of the extended family system. For example, in Guadeloupe, a weekly shopping excursion in town or at the *centre commerciale* is as much a social event as it is a practical necessity. It is an opportunity to exchange news of events and happenings in the lives of individuals and families. In this context too, it is clear that individual achievement *enhances* overall family worth, adding to a family's cultural capital. If anything, it provides family members with "bragging rights." Family members are now able to chat about successful relatives and a network of far-away relatives, though those relations may reside only "temporarily" abroad.

For example, I found Guadeloupeans' conversations to be filled with phrases like, "my son who is in college in California," "my daughter and her husband who live in Montreal," "my nephew who works in Switzerland," etc. While many migrants may bring home "gifts," most sojourners or permanent migrants do not remit cash to family members in Guadeloupe. Quite the contrary, financial support is far likelier to be the other way around. But these world travelers contribute greatly to family prestige. Collectively, these issues relate more closely with the characteristics described in the second demographic transition and offer a better fit to the context of the Guadeloupean fertility decline, with the important exception that family still matters in ways that go beyond the Eurowestern context.

Although on the surface the “Second Demographic Transition” is still Eurocentric, its axiomatic base is more flexible and takes place during a period when Eurowestern populations are far from homogeneous. Lesthaeghe argues that demographers need to more closely examine gender relations -- especially the level of equality between men and women -- attitudes towards children, and the type of family formation that constitutes the "social structure" of a society. However, on this point I would further argue that it is also important to keep in mind that social structures both condition and are conditioned by the political-economic context and that a social structure is very much an abstract concept rather than a real thing. Kinship relationships and family formation are important components of demographic change. But whether a person belongs to an extended or a nuclear family, family honor may also result from not having children or having very few children while being individually successful.

Configurations of Kinship: Neolocality and Extended Families

Caribbean scholarship has had to make the choice either to accept the conventional ideological construction of the family as a co-resident, stable unit of husband and wife with their immature children or to redefine the family according to Caribbean meanings and realities. Both alternatives have characterised investigations of family patterns in the region. (Christine Barrow 1996:x)

Barbadian sociologist Christine Barrow observes that from their inception, scholarly studies about Caribbean culture have been preoccupied with investigating West Indian families. As discussed earlier, all writers, she argues, emphasize the importance of the family but not all have agreed on “what family is and what it ought to be, the difference being due mainly to the varying weight of ethnocentric bias”(1996:xi). Filled

with terms such as “promiscuous” to describe sexual relations, and “deformed” to describe family relations, in Barrow’s opinion, over half of the fifty-year-old literature on the Caribbean family is negative and stereotypical (1996:x). Because Caribbean societies are so complex, “family systems” have consistently defied scholarly analyses, though it is quite clear that they are well-understood by those who subscribe to local and culture-specific values.

One characteristic of nearly all Caribbean people is the fact that the family matters. Yet a question arises in many academic disciplines as to what constitutes a “family.” Differences in the type of family formation and asserted distinctions between “traditional” and “modern” family models figure prominently in this research. The habitual dichotomization of models is, I would argue, more figurative and fictional than literal. It is heuristic here only from the perspective of demonstrating weaknesses in stereotypical portrayals of non-industrial peoples and in relation to demographic transition theory. In practice, Guadeloupeans, as well as many other populations (“western” and “non-western”), engage in and refer to both “traditional” and “modern” patterns of family formation. For some, family form is a conscious emulation -- or rejection -- of a specific model or lifestyle, but for the vast majority it is a response to socio-economic circumstances, specifically to limitations on available living space. Importantly, for all people, how a family is form and is rooted in their culture. Further, rarely is family formation static; individuals as well as family groups may move closer to or further away from one or another model at different times. “Kinship” connections,

broadly construed, are always important to West Indians, but "nuclearity" is an "imported" concept and has a shorter lineage and fewer connotations.

Appearances are often deceiving, and, as I have discovered at first hand, what appears to be "nuclearity" may actually be a case of multi-locality. An apparent separation of households can give casual observers the illusion that what they are witnessing is a case of family nuclearity. In reality, cooperative alliances created for economic and/or social purposes are built into, and are a necessary element of, the richly textured pattern of people's lives. Descriptions of types of family formation could be inordinately misleading without further investigation. During the course of my research, in only a few cases was I able to document families that exhibited a consistent pattern of "western" nuclearization, i.e., emotional as well as physical and economic separation of husband, wife, and children from other family members. These cases usually involved families that had migrated from another island or country. In some of these instances nuclearity and separation from the other family members were deliberate attempts to leave a situation or circumstance that had become untenable. One case in point is that of a Martinican woman named Josette who moved to Guadeloupe after a bitter divorce.

Josette said

I had to get away from my ex-husband and his family. His relatives were making my life hell and trying to turn my sons against me so that they would live with them. Moving to Guadeloupe seemed like a perfect solution and so far it has worked. Unless they have business here, Martinicans do not come to Guadeloupe, and although it is hard being on my own, at least no one can bother me. (Josette 42, Martinican)

From the outside, Josette and her two sons appeared to be a perfect example of a neolocal household without extended family ties. However, I quickly found out that even in this instance, Josette's older brother, Henri, later followed, and he in turn married a Guadeloupean woman. Since both Josette and Henri had children and greatly relied on each other for financial, childcare, and emotional support, a new extended kinship network was soon formed in Guadeloupe.⁵

Similarly, Haitian and Dominican migrant families in Guadeloupe often appear to be nuclear and unconnected to larger kinship networks. In reality, they are usually part of a wider network of fellow migrants, stay-at-home relatives, and fellow Haitian immigrants. Language and legal status are important factors. A large percentage of Haitian and Dominicans speak *Kréyol* but do not speak French, and if they are also illegal residents, this serves to prevent them from integrating within Guadeloupean society. Having married Guadeloupeans and/or entered into economically lucrative activities or niches, a number of Haitians and some Dominicans, particularly those who migrated earlier, are both legal and middle-class. Recent arrivals, however, are much less likely to become upwardly mobile. Recently, emerging concerns about rising crime rates and overpopulation have prompted government officials to become more vigilant with regard to illegal immigrants. Dominican youth in particular are cited as the primary source of elevated crime rates. Moreover, formal and informal economic opportunities are

⁵All members of Josette's family traveled between Martinique and Guadeloupe frequently. Her sons even more so since they often visited their father and their paternal relatives. During the course of my fieldwork, her eldest son decided to attend the University in Martinique and was dating a young Martinican woman regularly. Josette and Henri also had friends and relatives in Paris whom they visited approximately once a year.

becoming scarce for even legal black residents. Immigration status aside, Dominicans' primary language is English which has become the dominant language in the global market. Given that Guadeloupeans seem to have as much difficulty learning to speak fluent English as Americans have learning to speaking fluent French, it is conceivable that economically productive Dominicans who are involved in legal enterprise may soon exert greater influence. Currently, they remain largely confined to activities related to agricultural, market vendor, and household/domestic work.

For the moment, recently arrived immigrants who choose to deliberately detach themselves and live in a nuclear family arrangement, in actuality become part of a reconstituted network of friends and fictive kin with whom they share close relations and who count on each other for socializing and in time of economic need. For example, one of my life-history subjects was a thirty-six-year-old woman from Dominica named Rose who lived in a "shack" type dwelling with her Dominican husband and their two children. Both she and her husband spoke *Kréyol* and English but not French, even though they had lived in Guadeloupe for eleven years.⁶ Their dwelling was situated in the midst of other similar dwellings all occupied by other Dominican families. When Rose and her husband were at work, their two children, who attended primary school, were looked after by Rose's neighbors who were from Dominica but not related. According to Rose

I never have to worry about my son and daughter. There's always someone in our neighborhood who will look after them and feed them if necessary when I work late. I think my neighbors are a better family than my relatives at home. They make sure that my children are home from school and have started their

⁶Nearly all citizens of the neighboring independent country of Dominica speak both English and a local variant of *Kréyol* which helps facilitate informal conversations and transactions.

homework. There is an old Haitian couple who lives near us and raises chickens, and they have become so close to us that my children call them Grandma and Grandpa. (Rose 36, illegal immigrant from Dominica)

Such "family" formations do not correspond neatly to dichotomized and stereotyped portrayals of either West Indian or Eurowestern models of family. But, given that many westerners also live close to parents, grandparents, or siblings, and often rely on them for physical, emotional, and/or economic support, perhaps the concept of western nuclearity needs definitional revision.

In the French West Indies, there is also a minority population of white native-born *Blanc Créoles* or *Békés* whose influence is enormous and for whom kinship is configured along different lines. Their social system is more caste-like and they have their own "system of value."⁷ They do not dilute their lineage by intermarrying with the Black population; they consider illegitimacy a "stigma" and steer their offspring towards marrying within the *Béké* community. Thus, White elites have retained their social and economic power through systematic endogamy. Like many outsiders, they too would stigmatize illegitimacy, plural paternity, and matrifocality. In the final analysis, types of family formation represent peoples' response to the exigencies of daily living, as well as reflect the culture of which they are a part.

Often, the term household unit is substituted for family unit, or the two terms are used interchangeably. Problems arise here due to the focus on residence and co-residence which, in the Caribbean, is apt to change frequently. Yanagisako (1979) notes that

⁷The *Béké* and *Blanc Créole* communities are discussed in greater detail in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

despite the fact that such concepts are given narrow scholarly definitions, "in actual usage more is usually meant. Generally the term [household] refers to a set of individuals who share not only a living space but also some set of activities. These activities, moreover, are usually related to food production, consumption, sexual reproduction, and childrearing, all of which are glossed under the somewhat impenetrable label of 'domestic' activities" (1979:164-165).⁸ Concerning cross-cultural and intrasocietal variation, general labels given to family formation often vary; "ideal models exist but are rarely achieved"(ibid:167).

In order to reconstruct past household histories, Yanagisako recommends asking people to recall previous living conditions and to record "the histories of individuals and families through retrospective accounts" (ibid:168). This is a fruitful device, but I have discovered that memories can be selective and can be revised, particularly when the recollections are of overcrowded living conditions that lacked electricity and indoor plumbing. People in general and Guadeloupeans in particular seem to block memories associated with being poor.

Often Guadeloupean acquaintances (usually in informal circumstances) admitted that earlier in their lives they had shared tight residential quarters with several family members in homes that did not have modern facilities. Later, the same individuals "forgot" these details when responding to questions about past living conditions within the context of survey questionnaires and life-history interviews. A few middle class

⁸ As will be discussed in chapter 6, British social anthropologist Raymond T. Smith (1956) creates a list of six primary activities or "functions" which he estimates take place in a household or "domestic unit."

respondents whose circumstances have improved in the last few years denied ever having lived in less than modern conditions. When questioned closely some people admitted that they *may* have lived in rather modest housing for *temporary* periods such as when a new home was under construction. The actual number of co-resident household members may also be difficult to pinpoint when the individual components lead highly mobile or migratory lives, and when the number of "visiting" children, cousins, and godchildren must be taken into account.

As elsewhere in many non-Eurowestern settings, determining household relationships in contemporary Guadeloupe can be as confusing as trying to reconstruct past household records. When traveling along the roads, drivers will occasionally pass "modern" two-story homes next to hastily constructed shacks that lack electricity, bathrooms and running water. Sometimes they are occupied by Guadeloupeans but frequently by Dominican or Haitian immigrants; at first glance it is hard to determine which. One also sees shack-like dwellings as well as simply constructed one-story structures of cement blocks complete with plumbing and electricity (as evidenced by television antennas) that appear to house two or more generations. Both types of dwellings are equally likely to be inhabited by solidly working-class families rather than by inhabitants on the brink of poverty as many casual observers believe. Even "modern" homes may be occupied by parents, grandparents, adult and young children. Equally, families who are conjugal, neolocal, and/or nuclear (in appearance) often live next to, across from, or down the road from homes occupied by other relatives. Front porches

may team with playing children who may be sisters and brothers, cousins, or neighbors, and who may reside there or belong to different households.

Who's Minding the Children?: Caregiving and Parenting in Guadeloupe

As elsewhere, some Guadeloupean women earn money or trade favors by taking care of friends' and relatives' children, and senior citizens often find themselves as part- or full-time caregivers to grandchildren. As in France, Guadeloupe has several infant care facilities, but also as in France, there are not nearly enough to accommodate the demands of its population. Although I knew that various forms of surrogate parenting were prevalent in Guadeloupe as in other parts of the Caribbean, often, I found it difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of some of these relationships. In fact, the young niece of my neighbor provided me with one of the most complex examples of “multiple kinship ties” that I have ever encountered in my somewhat sheltered and overwhelmingly Eurocentric existence.

Like many middle-age Guadeloupeans, my fifty-one year old neighbor, Marie-Ange Clermont, took care of her seventy-eight year-old mother who lived with her full-time. Since Marie-Ange was childless and worked during the day, generally, elderly Madame Clermont spent most of the day in a rocking chair on the front porch staring rather lifelessly at passing traffic on the road. However, I noticed that Madame Clermont became much more animated whenever her granddaughter, Marie-Ange's niece Nikki came to visit. The first time I had greeted Nikki, I thought that she was a rather sullen and moody teenager, and I was mildly shocked to see how animated and cheerful Nikki

became in the presence of her grandmother. As no other girls her age lived in the immediate vicinity, I was also rather shocked that Nikki visited several times a week.

Gradually, I developed the habit of stopping by to exchange greetings with the three generations of women when I came home in the evening. After a few months, Nikki developed the habit of asking me about my day, and soon she suggested becoming one of my “subjects.” I agreed, especially since I had no clue to whom she was referring when she talked about her “adoptive” mother, and I knew that she lived with her mother, Marie-Ange’s sister who was very much alive and well. I was also curious to learn why Nikki talked about her father in front of her grandmother but never in front of her aunt. In fact, rather early in our friendship Nikki had explicitly asked me not to mention our conversations about her father in front of Marie-Ange. Nikki told me that

I was raised by my grandmother while my mother worked in France. My parents were not married and I understand that when I was born my father was married to another woman and had another family. But growing up I saw my father often, at least once a week and I have always had a good relationship with my half-brothers and sister. I have a younger sister, she is ten years younger which is not the same as growing up with someone your own age. Our father is the same, and I am not sure why my mother had another baby with the same man ten years later, especially since I know that the family was disapproving. I especially adore my [half]brothers but I can't talk about them around my aunts because I know that they were angry when my mother became pregnant when my father was married to someone else. He was not married when my mother became pregnant with my sister.

I asked Nikki about household financial circumstances when she was growing up, and if she had any regrets about being separated from her mother. She told me that

my mother has always been serious about her career. She has a good job and I understand that when I was growing up why she had to live in the metropole, it was for work. I did not mind since I love my grandmother and my "adoptive"

mother very much, almost as much as I love mother. My adoptive mother was young and fun to be with. Actually she was my grandmother's neighbor when my Grandmother had her own house and lived in Basse Terre. My "adoptive mother" looked after me when my grandmother was working. Sometimes I would stay at her house for weeks, and since she was young and did not have any children, we were almost like sisters.

Now my mother has been transferred to Guadeloupe and we (my sister and I) live with her. My father still has not remarried and pretty much lives alone, but he sees all of his children often, and he has dinner with us every weekend. He and my mother get along very well and still seem to have a romantic relationship. In fact, every Saturday night my mother dresses up before my father comes for dinner, and considering that my mother is almost 50, I think that it is very romantic that they are still romantic all these years. I know that she does not need his money. We live in a very nice house, and I have a television and computer in my room. Actually, I'm sure that my mother makes a lot more money than my father, but he seems to do well. He owns his own construction company but she works for the government. When she transferred back to Guadeloupe she got a raise because of the salary differential. She is also a university graduate but my father is not. He does seem to be a happy man, though I don't think he has ever been away from Guadeloupe for very long. Perhaps that's why he is happy. When my mother worked in the metropole she always looked sad when she came home to visit. She brought gifts and talked about her life and shopping but when she was not looking I would watch her expression and she always looked depressed, like her mask slipped off. It seems to me that each time she came home for a visit she was more subdued and serious, certainly not as lively as when I was younger. Now she is more abrupt, much more serious, much more intense, I think, except on Saturday nights when my father comes to visit.

My grades are good and I would like to go to medical school in France. I am sure that I can earn a scholarship. when I mention this to my mother instead of being excited or proud she looks as if she wants to say something, that she's holding some comment back. I am almost sure she would prefer that I went to the university here, but there is no medical school here, or like my cousin, if I went to school in Canada, or even the United States. She and my aunt love San Francisco and New York. She never really talks about Paris anymore unless it is about business.

I thought I knew what I wanted to do, go to Paris for medical training but now I'm not so sure. The only subject I have a lot of trouble with is English, but my mother has hired me a tutor, from England. She tells me that before I begin to make decisions and choices that I need to improve my English.

One of my cousins just had a baby, and my mother is the baby's godmother. My cousin is only nineteen, four years older than me. I am sure that it is not for me, and the father of her baby already has two children. I must get my diploma and go to the university first. I am sure that I could also really improve

my English if I came to stay with you in New York next summer. My [half] brother wants to go to New York too. Do you really have 70 TV stations in New York? I was going to stay with my cousin in France next year but my mother won't pay for my ticket. I am sure that if you invited me to New York that she would pay for me to go. (Nikki, age 16)

Before I actually starting recording Nikki's life history, it took me a great deal of time to understand the exact nature of her family relationships, and often I got the names of her sister and stepsister, and godmother and adoptive mother confused. For example, I initially thought that when she referred to her "adoptive" mother, that she had indeed been legally adopted. To complicate matters, at times she referred to the woman who had cared for her in her mother's absence as her "foster mother."

I also learned from Nikki that Madame Clermont, who was 76 and a widow, had given birth to eight children, two of whom died in infancy leaving four daughters and two sons. Three daughters lived in Guadeloupe, one daughter lived in France, and both sons lived in Belgium and were married to Belgian women. Collectively Madame Clermont had only six grandchildren and two of her daughters, both past childbearing years, had no children at all.

Since she had no cousins who were living in Guadeloupe, or to whom she was even close, Nikki told me that she was happy to be part of another family and that she enjoyed her extended family very much. Yet, she also admitted that, at times, her complex family life made the idea of escaping Guadeloupe, even if it is only a temporary escape, very attractive. In her words "sometimes they all get on my nerves." She was always begging me to take her home with me, and finally, during her summer break in

1998, I relented but was surprised when she begged me to also invite her (half) sister. It seemed that Nikki looked forward to escaping from her own younger (full) sister, who she claimed drove her crazy and allowed her to have little privacy or freedom.

Against my better judgment, Nikki and her (step)sister were my houseguests for a month. I fully expected them to squabble like teenaged (half) sisters, particularly since Nikki was the younger of the two, always into mischief, and quite outspoken. Although I yearned for peace and quiet, by the end of their New York City visit, it was clear that they were true best friends and seemed closer than (full) sisters. Remembering my own youth and experience growing up with a younger sister, I wondered if the reason why they got along so well was because they did not have to live together on a full-time basis. At the end of their stay, both Nikki and her stepsister had acquired yet another "aunt."

The complexity of Nikki's kinship and family organization would seem to resonate with what many French and Antillean social scientists have described as "quasi-matrifocality," *matrifocalité*, and/or *pluralpaternité* (see especially INED report 1987.) Given the public nature of French president Francois Mitterrand's sexual alliances, however, one could equally argue that plural paternity and quasi-matrifocality are national -- not just Antillean -- phenomena.

Anthropological research is able to capture complex relationships, such as Nikki's extended family, through ethnographic research and by gathering life history data (and in my case with very patient and repetitive explanation). However, Nicholas Townsend argues that demographers privilege "definite categories and precise relationships" over the vague and often imprecise terms utilized by researchers concerned with culture. He also

feels that the only reason that these vague terms have been "recruited into demographic models" is to "suggest, define, and justify the use of a variety of independent variables" (1994:3) and to reduce the enormous amount of residual variation that remains "after traditional economic variables have been employed" (ibid).

Several problem areas have posed great difficulty for demographers theorizing outside the framework of Eurowestern fertility change. One is the issue of "premarital fertility," considered a demographic as well as a "social problem." Also, in the collection and analysis of fertility data, as Townsend notes, men are overwhelmingly excluded while investigations of fertility change are almost exclusively based on marital fertility. Conceptualizations of "parenthood" broadly construed as a social rather than as a biological process are also generally absent. "Fertility," he writes, "depends for its analytic power on the unambiguous connection of each child to its biological mother" (ibid:5). In contrast, Townsend's collection of data among the Tswana in Africa reveals that biological paternity is not a necessary requirement for a man to be ascribed social paternity. An offspring's paternity may change as the result of the death of a biological parent or the mother's remarriage.

Sexual activity that takes place outside of legal marriage presents another problem to demographers. Townsend notes that

in many societies clandestine sexual relations between men and women not married to each other produce offspring who are raised as the children of men who are not their biological fathers. Sexual relations outside marriage may not be clandestine, they may even be the norm, and the strongest contender for a universal characteristic of marriage is not the exclusivity of a bond between a man and a woman, but the establishment of a relationship which provides a culturally accepted and legitimated social position for children. (ibid:6)

Townsend discusses "fosterage" as a term frequently employed to cover a multitude of diverse social arrangements involving the care and upbringing of children by "parents" other than the biological parents, noting that in Africa it is more common than adoption. Similarly, in Guadeloupe, I found that many people had lived as, or had reared children as, "godchildren," or as in the case of Nikki as "adoptive" children. Godparenting implied an official religious relationship whereas adoption, which also occurred, could be unofficial or could be sanctioned by the state.

In a re-examination of the issues of kinship and family formation, anthropologist Georgia Kaufman (1993) calls much needed attention to the divergent interests of anthropologists and demographers. Kaufman points out that demographers use the family and kinship as micro-analytic units to explain macro phenomena and to construct abstract models. This analysis is relevant to problems one faces when attempting to collapse diverse types of sexual unions into a unitary package approximating legal marriage.

Kaufman argues that frequently there is little regard for precisely which unit of analysis is selected, and units are often interchanged. For example, a demographer may substitute, depending on the problem under investigation, family, household, or individual behavior. But, Kaufman notes that "from an anthropologist's point of view this is bad practice"(1993:1). Whereas "anthropologists have tended to be passionate about distinguishing between the many different kinds of families ...demographers have been, to say the least, loose with their use of kinship and family, or overly simplistic assuming

that marriages and families are all stable, long term, cyclical and nuclear...families exist, as real and social phenomenon, but The Family and Kinship do not" (1993:2).

The intractability of demographers, as Kaufman earlier points out, revolves around the object of their investigation *which is really the process of reproduction rather than kinship or the family*. Since legally sanctioned marriage still represents the linchpin of procreative change, many demographers quite willingly treat any form of regular sexual union as a viable substitute for marriage. Kaufman notes that anthropologists on the other hand

are concerned not just with the control of procreation, but also with the social relations that are formed through reproduction and marriage...one of the products of anthropological research is the understanding that there is little that is natural about human reproductive behavior. The choice of a partner, the age, timing and place of mating are highly circumscribed by cultural norms. It is not that we lack biological imperatives, it is that the biological drives are funneled into prescribed channels of behavior. (1993:4)

Kaufman demonstrates how mating patterns in sub-Saharan Africa and in Brazil represent two cases of a clear contrast with the "European Marriage Pattern." Her Brazilian research revealed that a large percentage of women were living either in multi-generational, female-headed households or without a male partner or family head (1993:9). Kaufman also found different patterns of procreation and sexual frequency among the two types of household situations. Moreover, although many Brazilian families in her study *appeared* "to be simple, nuclear families they are rarely neolocal and often live on the same plot of land as their parents" (ibid:8).

As I experienced in Guadeloupe, problems can emerge even in the classification of household arrangements and family formation when actual circumstances are not closely observed, questioned, and thoroughly investigated. Kaufman concludes by advocating for "studies of historical and contemporary 'third world' demography that take a variety of cultural, social and economic variables into account...[since] aggregate data can never be fused to extract meaning from social fabric" (1993:16). Also, careful attention needs to be paid to the type of family, the household composition, and the sexual relationship *above and beyond causal connections to fertility change*.

Clearly, contemporary relationship and household arrangements are complicated, not only in the third world, but increasingly in first-world settings. What implications do these "messy" and non-Eurowestern circumstances contain for demographic theorizing?

Townsend argues that

demographic theory has made fertility both a cause and an effect in the way achieved fertility feeds back upon contraception to produce parity-specific control as the major feature of fertility declines...[but] births cannot be unproblematically attributed to the women who bore them if we are interested in either the causes or consequences of these births...Sexual relationships are subject to cultural norms and rules, creating new social units and linking existing ones. Children are born into a nexus of social links, and the way they are socially positioned transforms this network...a person's fertility is a description of a web of relationships to offspring, to other kin, and to a range of social groups and institutions...A broad approach to the distribution of fertility in all its aspects will allow, among other benefits, a more realistic treatment of the externalities of childbearing, of intergenerational relations and equity, and the relationship of the family and the state. (1994:14)

Townsend and Kaufman's argument in favor of expanding demography's narrow focus (and opening up the definition of reproduction from an exclusively biological

process to one that is inclusive of social relations) resonates well with recent political-economic anthropological approaches to the study of fertility change.

Anthropological "Explanations" and Demographic Theory

Ostensibly engaged in the study of human behavior, the various disciplines parcel out the subject among themselves. Each then proceeds to set up a model, seemingly a means to explain "hard," observable facts, yet actually an ideologically loaded scheme geared to a narrow definition of the subject matter. Such schemes provide self-fulfilling answers, since phenomena other than those covered by the model are ruled out of the court of specialized discourse. If the models leak like sieves, it is then argued that this is either because they are merely abstract constructs and not expected to hold empirical water, or because troublemakers have poked holes into them. (Wolf 1982:10)

Until recently, when demographers were faced with the data from post-hoc analyses of the European fertility transition and with the challenge of predicting, describing, and explaining "second" and "third world" fertility transitions, anthropologists had only been minimally involved in the theoretical aspects of populations studies (see, for example, Schneider and Schneider 1984; Harris 1987). Now, anthropologists appear to be some of the "troublemakers" poking holes in demographic theory, while simultaneously acting as important resources. Tom Fricke and Alan Thornton (1994) write that anthropologists' recent involvement in demographic theorizing is mainly due to the fact that demographers are experiencing an "epistemological crisis." According to Fricke and Thornton, the current crisis has been unfolding in stages since the 1970s when demographers realized that long-held demographic theories no longer predicted or explained recent demographic change. Demographers' initial reaction to this crisis was to

partially incorporate "cultural" explanations into demographic studies (see Cleland and Wilson 1987); before long, quasi-anthropological methods that attempted to investigate more diverse ground-level processes were routinely incorporated. In other words, demographers' use of anthropological research has been primarily for the purpose of "enhancement," or to explain why their statistical data were creating "noise."

Predictably, not all demographers are pleased with this new "cultural" dimension to demographic research. Many have expressed extreme concern over the fragmentation of the discipline of demography and the current trend of "borrowing" which, in their minds, only dilutes the "scientific" foundation of their work. McNicholl notes that, globally, demography has in effect become the "policy arm" of family-planning enterprises, and that policy considerations may have weakened both its neutrality and policy stance. However, the mainstay of demographic analysis, which is a focus on overarching structure rather than individual "transactions," should not be sacrificed for the sake of momentary convenience. In McNicholl's opinion, demography as a discipline "on the alert should move a bit like an amoeba, sending out pseudopodia to envelop and ingest interesting-looking pieces of subject matter," but demography needs also to retain "a clear-sighted analytical program that seeks to detect individual-level transactions that generate macro-level structure" (1992:409, 413).

McNicholl's concern is with whether demography can "ingest" an anthropological agenda yet still be scientifically grounded and continue to conduct the statistically valid and highly analytic theorizing for which it is famous. This concern was, in fact, foreshadowed by Kingsley Davis (1977). Drawing on Davis' work, McNicholl feels that

although emic (from the subject's point of view) data can be recorded, the etic (from the researcher's point of view) analyses and interpretations of actors' discourses remain at the heart of demographic explanations and theory.

The disciplinary interests of anthropology are served by emphasizing distinctions among cultures, not parallels, continuities, and convergences. Interest in what informants have to say should not obscure an equal interest in what informants are unaware of. Analytical power, Davis has noted, requires an observer to construe a situation 'both as the actor sees it and as the actor does not see it.' (1992:409-410)

In essence, McNicholl argues that the disciplinary goals of anthropology and demography are not compatible. While he agrees with the *idea* of recording accounts of individual behavior and investigating various institutions, he stresses that individual and micro-level details should not cloud macro-oriented analytic thinking, and that these data are not relevant to demographic theory. According to McNicholl, a local institution may be "sui generis" but it is also highly durable and observable even if it emerges somewhat differently in response to a different scenario. However, in his estimation each such institution can be analyzed objectively from the "objective" perspective of the researcher rather than from the idiosyncratic vantage point of the "native," and "in each case, moreover, a deterministic explanation of how it came about, with no place for accident, could be fashioned" (ibid: 410).

Despite his reservations and admonitions about the use of anthropological research or micro-level data, McNicholl notes that "the methodological ingredients are here for rich explanatory accounts of changing demographic regimes, interweaving historical contingency, social dynamics, and cultural idiosyncrasy" (ibid). McNicholl's

argument for a retention of focus on structures and institutions, or the "etic" perspective, bears striking resemblance to the arguments put forward by British social anthropologists of the 1940s and 1950s for whom the functionalist or structure-functionalist approach was more scientifically grounded than, and theoretically superior to, the eclectic approach which was the cultural orientation of American colleagues.

McNicholl envisions that government pressure operating in the form of "interventionist social policy" will result in "behavioral stability" and will "limit the diversity of family and fertility patterns." I would argue that based on contemporary trends, the prospect of government limiting fertility or family diversity are dim given that governments now face continual pressure to legally recognize diverse family and union forms including, in many countries, same-sex relationships and same-sex parents with children. My own research, as well as the research of others, illustrates that in spite of vigorous interventions, kinship relations and family formation patterns in non-European territories continue to be at variance with Eurowestern models. Research also indicates that migration at the societal and individual level can greatly influence change. Certainly, without benefit of ethnographic research, I would have never clearly understood complex family relationships like those of Nikki.

Yet, McNicholl (1987) appears undecided about whether "cultural" factors merit theoretical integration or whether they should be reserved exclusively for use as "amoebic" explanatory embellishment. A crucial point for him is that demographers must remember not to lose sight of the "bigger picture." In his summary he writes:

There are evident risks--of diffuseness and "softness," principally--to be avoided in seeking new means to reclaim old ground. Rounded explanation, cross-disciplinary range, awareness of theoretical frontiers and historical contingency, and the critical stance that an outsider can bring to self-regarding disciplinary cultures can all work in favor of demography as serious social science as well as (not to be scorned) a neat ordering of events." (ibid:414)

McNicholl's blessing of the marriage between demography and anthropology appears to be cautious and he seems more in favor of a cohabitation of the two disciplines rather than a "marriage."

Unfortunately, by removing the potential to abstract broad generalizations from a macro-focused set of data, and regarding culture as more than ephemera, demographers believe that they will miss the opportunity to offer scientifically grounded explanations to population officials or to give policy planners pragmatic direction. To many demographers, not only is "culture" messy but so are configurations of multi-directional causality which must also include micro- and macro-level political and economic factors. In other words, an anthropologically oriented political-economic approach to demography seems too radical a departure from the clean linear modeling and "stages" of classic transition and theory. If so, I am unclear as to how demography will, in the future, be able to conceptualize or theorize about fertility behavior in families such as Nikki's.

Conclusion

The second demographic transition is distinctly a late twentieth-century phenomenon which, in the area of gender relations and individual values, describes several characteristics that differentiate it from the first demographic transition. Certainly it

reflects and accommodates more diverse types of household arrangements.

Notwithstanding its flexibility to include less Eurocentric variations of kinship, the second demographic transition does focus on dyadic male-female relationships and on legal marriage as the theoretically ideal unit of analysis. Thus it is not truly compatible with Caribbean data.

Demographers and anthropologists would agree that kinship and social structure have a long and illustrious history in the social sciences, particularly within the field of anthropology. And although some demographers have criticized this literature as too micro-focused or idiosyncratic, they have nonetheless used it recently to account for demographic variance. Some demographers have borrowed selectively when their research data do not match theoretical expectations, while others have attempted to incorporate anthropological explanations more systematically into their formulations. On the whole, these adjustments have been made because previous theoretical explanations have not worked. This has not prevented many agencies and government program planners from continuing to make policy recommendations based on outmoded modernization premises, and the link between population policy, family-planning programs, and demographic theory remains strong. Can demographers and anthropologists utilize variations in kinship and family formation as important factors in explaining reproductive choice and fertility behavior? The answer, I argue is yes, provided that we steer clear of dichotomizations and facile presumptions, and, if family formation and fertility cease to reign as the Siamese twins of fertility analysis.

Anthropologist Michael Peletz (1995) reviews the history of anthropological studies of kinship and concludes that as a distinct field of investigation it has fallen on hard times. However, because it continues to be contained within larger processes, he argues that "the study of kinship is alive and well and still vital to the discipline [of anthropology]" (ibid). In demography as in anthropology, we need to construct what Susan Greenhalgh refers to as "whole demographies," that is to consider the whole picture by which family and kinship alliances are framed. When fertility behavior is examined from this perspective, that is apart from rather than as the inevitable outcome of family formation, it becomes much easier to understand why, as in Guadeloupe, the intensive inculcation of Western values seems to have exerted great influence in reducing fertility, but has had little or no effect on substantially modifying people's orientation towards family formation.

This study of Guadeloupe's impressive fertility decline, considers the interaction of a range of factors bearing on a "whole demography: the installation of family planning programs and the spread of birth control technology; the spread of French assimilationist ideology; the celebration of all forms of modernity and the denigration of nearly everything traditional; how race and racisms are connected to emigration and immigration; the ongoing dichotomization of "legitimacy" and "illegitimacy"; old and re-emerging scarcities in land, housing and employment, and the continuing marginalization and/or exclusion of black Guadeloupean workers. It devotes equal time to examining the contexts of families, and preferences and accepted forms of union status, as it devotes to the analysis of fertility. Other important factors considered in addition to those commonly

considered external, are “internal” factors, or the aspirations and ambitions of Guadeloupeans themselves.

Chapter 5 - Political and Economic Transformations After Emancipation

Introduction: We Are All One, Sometimes

You are coming back from Martinique!? But why in the world would you want even to go there? Martinicans are a stuck up lot, they never lower their noses out of the air. Let me give you an example. When a Martinican arrives here at the airport he says to me "Driver, I am from Martinique, how do you get to such and so?" You see, it is important for Martinicans to let you know right away that they do not know their way around, and that they are not Guadeloupean. They think they are superior -- but of course! -- they are from Martinique! (From a Guadeloupean Taxi Driver)

You are an American but you are living in Guadeloupe!? Why would you want to live there? Guadeloupeans are all backward and all you will see are cows, goats and chickens. Am I not right? Worse, there is nothing to do. I think you have made a bad choice. (From a Martinican Taxi Driver)

Yes I know that we are only thirty minutes away from Guadeloupe by plane. Perhaps, one day I will visit there. People tell me it is beautiful but it is a also country [sic] with a great many problems. For example, here in Antigua you will see people having barbecues with all kinds of meat -- pork, beef, goat, chicken, lamb...but I have heard that Guadeloupeans stay in the kitchen and make stews with very little meat, and that meat is very expensive there. In Antigua we have too much meat and our government tried to arrange a trade agreement with Guadeloupe. But no, Guadeloupeans must get their beef and pork from France. In Guadeloupe, I hear you see many cows even in people's front yards, but they are largely symbolic, like money in the bank, or sometimes Guadeloupeans use them to make blood sausage. They do not kill and eat the whole cow, no, they import beef from France for three times the price of ours. Guadeloupeans are colonized two ways, in their mind and economically. (from an Antiguan taxi driver)

I know St. Martin is part of Guadeloupe. But we will soon do something about that relationship. I was born there but I would never go back to Guadeloupe to live. In St. Martin, at least there is a lot to do, it's a thousand percent better than Guadeloupe! I went back to visit my parents for two weeks and it felt like two years! If I don't stay here, I am planning to get a job in the United States, because there I will have opportunities, in Guadeloupe there is nothing! (from a St. Martin taxi driver)

Yes, I speak Kréyol, and it is very similar to the Kréyol they speak in Guadeloupe. But, I think that it is all we have in common. We Haitians are a proud people, perhaps poor in dollars, but rich in spirit and in community feeling. The Guadeloupeans must hold their breath in fear that the French government will one day cut them off! If that happens, they will be in much worse shape than Haitians. Guadeloupeans are like zombies who live in fear from one day to the next but with no history of yesterday and with no dream for tomorrow.
(from a Haitian-American New York taxi driver)

Everyone who has lived in, worked in or has traveled extensively in the Caribbean is familiar with such declarations of national differences between and among the region's inhabitants. Still, however acutely they define their distinctions, when pressed, people of African-Caribbean descent invariably will talk about the people of the region as a family--one which shares many inherited traits.

Unfortunately, the area's colonial heritage created a social hierarchy of class and color distinctions, and created island insularities that resulted in fierce national loyalties which continue to be visible today. On a more promising and positive note, the 1990s may very well have been the first decade to display an intraregional and inter-island spirit of Caribbean community and cooperation. LIAT, the regional airline has reported that there is a tremendous growth in profit resulting from intra-regional vacation travel by Caribbean residents. So much so that now LIAT Airlines annually publishes a very popular, glossy, color travel book that details packages for vacationers and honeymooners, and a brochure for Caribbean residents planning conferences.

Often, I have encountered Guadeloupeans who animatedly describe vacations they have taken in St. Thomas, Barbados, St. Lucia, and the British Virgin Islands as well as discuss other islands they plan to visit. Surprisingly, quite a few have also been to, or

plan to visit, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. In fact, two of the most popular travel/study trips offered by both the Martinican and Guadeloupean branches of the University of the French West Indies are those to Cuba and the Dominican Republic. I have discovered that the French in general, and French West Indians in particular, appear to be more adventuresome than their English- and Spanish-speaking neighbors and are far less likely to be deterred from visiting a destination by actual or perceived language barriers. Conversely, French Tourist Board representatives, small travel agents, and the people themselves say that Guadeloupe is rarely the destination of choice for other Caribbean vacationers.

For social and economic reasons, the younger generation of French West Indians dream about going to St. Martin and/or to destinations in the United States and Canada. However, despite the fact that the northern islands of St. Martin and St. Barthélemy are administrative territories of Guadeloupe, I was quite surprised to find that few middle-aged or older Guadeloupeans, for vacation purposes at least, have ever been there--nor do they want to go. Even more surprising was the high percentage of Guadeloupeans (both old and young) who have never been to Martinique, and vice versa. Apparently, while economic ties among the DOM territories are strong, social relations among DOM residents are relatively weak. Further, a great deal of antipathy (based on color, class, and/or perceived differences in sophistication and "modernity") exists among French West Indians, even more so than that which exists between Guadeloupeans and other Caribbean people.

This chapter will detail the changes that set the stage for the ensuing transformation of fertility decline in the French West Indies. I look at the progression of political and economic change, and at events which fall broadly under the category of material change. First, I review the pre-independence history of the French West Indies, the early stages of French assimilationist ideology in the Caribbean, and the assimilationist aspirations of French West Indians; second, I re-examine the process of economic change and economic development from the postemancipation period through the post-World War II period; third, I examine the complex set of forces surrounding West Indian emigrations to Britain and France -- their differences and similarities -- and evaluate their demographic impact; fourth, I begin to examine how theories formulated to explain African-American traits formed the basis of explaining social problems and “deviant” practices among West Indians; fifth, I discuss why and how, after slavery, France regulated population and attempted to eradicate the traditional model of family values in order to reaffirm a colonial doctrine of white supremacy, in this case subsumed under the heading of national cultural assimilation.

In Search of Upward Mobility and Equality

The French Revolution was premised on the belief that the replacement of elite and dynastic rule with a government for and by the people would result in a more egalitarian society. Modern French political struggles have been characterized by populist-based political activism seeking to uphold this revolutionary ideology. At times, this has resulted in government by coalition to insure that it remains representative of major factions and minor interests. Such an arrangement may appear confusing to citizens accustomed to having one political party control the presidency and the Cabinet. Yet this politically diverse arrangement is projected as embodying the principles of the Republic of France.

On the surface, French West Indian political struggles appear to reflect the pattern of metropolitan politics so much so that, in the nineteenth century, non-white Antilleans aligned themselves with the principles of the New French Republic in the hopes of eliminating local white rule. Financially prosperous *Mulâtres* aspired to social equality with whites, while blacks aspired to share in *Mulâtre* prosperity. To achieve their objectives blacks and *Mulâtres* expediently joined forces but an awareness of race and color lent an additional dimension to these putative class struggles. There has been a racial undertone to late twentieth-century Guadeloupean politics as well, and although the populist objectives continue to center around making social and economic gains, remaining inequities are more likely to be openly ascribed to race rather than class.

In fact, French West Indians have grappled with problems of race, color, and class from the eighteenth century to the present. For nearly two hundred years, French West

Indians have aspired to erase all traces of material and social difference between themselves and white inhabitants of metropolitan France. On the surface, skin color served as one seemingly indelible marker, an eternal barrier to true “Frenchness” and social equality. Yet, French West Indians shared an important social belief concerning skin color, one that was common to nearly all Afro-Caribbean people. Skin color was socially mutable. Darker complexions could be lightened and its attendant social barriers could be razed in one of several ways: a) by marrying lighter or white; b) by amassing substantial wealth; c) by obtaining a highly ranked and well remunerated civil service position; d) by acquiring advanced education, and/or by entering a respected profession such as law or medicine (see Robotham 1998:311).

French West Indians subscribed to this shared set of beliefs with one important difference. In English-speaking Caribbean countries, the social hierarchies were largely intra-island specific. French West Indian nationalist struggles assumed racial overtones whereas English-speaking West Indians were more preoccupied with both color and class. In the French West Indies it was not enough to be recognized as an important Guadeloupean or Martinican among only Guadeloupeans and Martinicans. For years, intellectually gifted and/or economically elite *Mulâtres* migrated to Paris. Here they sought to accumulate a significant amount of social capital in addition to acquiring a good French education. They aspired to be perceived as “cultured” citizens. In fact, the dominant motivational force for climbing the socio-economic ladder was to become French and subsequently, to be recognized as equal and important in the eyes of white metropolitans. For example, when, in the late 1930s, Aimé Césaire returned to

Martinique as a man of letters with a university degree, he was applauded for the fact that his linguistic and literary abilities were as good as or even better than other important French writers. Phenotypically, Césaire was a *Nègre* -- a black man, yet his skin color became inconsequential in the face of his scholarship, sophistication, and widespread recognition. In fact, middle and upper-class *Mulâtres* encouraged him to run for political office and financed his campaign.

Among Martinican blacks, Césaire was a black man, among *Mulâtres*, he was a cultured man and consequently one of them (Pallister 1991). In the eyes of nearly all Martinicans, Césaire's metropolitan experience and university diploma had elevated his status. He had become an eloquent and important man and was recognized as such in the (metropolitan) circles that mattered. Ironically, Césaire's concept of *Négritude*, in which he attempts to elevate and validate "blackness" though celebrated elsewhere, had few supporters among French West Indians. To them, "black pride" was a cause best championed in Africa (ibid). And, as both his supporters and detractors noted, Césaire's literary works were written not in *Kréyol* but in French (see Confiant 1993). Even in the face of some very vocal opposition to his poetics and politics, Césaire remained in elected office in Martinique for over fifty years (Confiant 1993, Moutoussamy 1993, Diggs-Thompson 1994).

Whatever tactics were employed to erase cultural and color differences between metropolitans and French West Indians, at no socio-economic level was the process really successful. In the eyes of white metropolitans, they remained West Indians or black

Frenchmen. And, until recently, Martinicans and Guadeloupeans have rejected settling for a “double identity” as both French and West Indian. Burton observes that

one became French to the precise extent that one abjured West Indian-ness, or to put it differently, the identification with the Other (France) required a prior negation of the (West Indian) self. Between 1848 and 1946, the vast majority of coloured French West Indians were more than prepared to sacrifice West Indian-ness for the sake of French-ness (Burton 1994:3).

Burton notes that recently, however, West Indian-ness has resurfaced among French West Indians with a vengeance (1994:3). He sees this as due to the fact that Caribbean cultural characteristics may have been muted, or took refuge underground, but were neither eradicated or suppressed by French assimilation (ibid).

West Indian or French West Indian

As blacks from the Caribbean, Martinicans and Guadeloupeans are collectively labeled West Indians, but their socio-political status is more similar to American blacks. Although they are natives of a predominately black territory, they constitute a racial minority within the French nation, and appear to have as much in common with African-Americans as with West Indians from independent islands of the English-speaking Caribbean. I asked French West Indians if they felt that they also embodied the more positive qualities generally attributed to their English-speaking neighbors, who have been mythologized for their business savvy and entrepreneurship, and focus on property ownership (see Kasinitz 1992). Many respondents said that education is important to French West Indians but land scarcity and high unemployment more frequently results in

economic marginalization. Unable to accumulate savings, an increasing number of French West Indians rent apartments rather than own their own homes, and young adults continue to live with parents for as long as possible.

Older Guadeloupeans contend that many of their “countrymen” are too enamored with obtaining immediate gratification in the form of commodities and things. This, they argue, is a direct result of depending on metropolitan financial assistance as well as the outcome of being direct targets of vigorous consumer marketing campaigns. The French West Indies is home to an extraordinary array of upscale boutiques and metropolitan-owned consumer chains whose ostensible purpose is to attract tourists but which obtain most of their business from low-and middle-income residents. The desire to own things appears perhaps more prevalent than the desire to own property.

On the other hand, French West Indians often give one the impression that they regard their social status as higher than both African-Americans and other West Indians. This is due in part to the fact that as French citizens, by extension they are part of the European community which to them makes them superior to other West Indians and to all Americans, particularly to American blacks. For example, when visiting New York, several French West Indians told me that they were surprised to see so many young African-Americans working as cashiers in the local supermarkets and as servers in fast food restaurants. Several were surprised to see so many English-speaking West Indian women engaged in childcare, eldercare, and other household and domestic positions. On one visit to the United States, my Guadeloupean landlady and her sister declared vehemently that “no self-respecting French West Indian woman would willingly accept

such a position. In your neighborhood, it is odd to see a black woman who is not employed to push a baby carriage or a wheelchair, how bizarre.” I also noted that when Americans inquired as to their nationality, they always responded “French.”

When I asked other middle-to-upper-class Martinican and Guadeloupean women if they felt that domestic employment in a white household was beneath the dignity of French West Indian women, all emphatically agreed. I was surprised when the reaction was nearly the same when I posed the question to West Indian women of more modest means. But, during my research I interviewed several French West Indian women who had admitted (albeit grudgingly) that rather than to return to the Caribbean, they had accepted employment as domestic servants in France.

Yet, French West Indians have not had to contend with “structural adjustment” resulting from World Bank or International Monetary Fund involvement in their economy, or with such enormous fluctuations in employment opportunities and currency values as did residents of other countries which had to borrow from Western sources. Not only does a French education continue to be free, but many students receive an allowance for school supplies and expenses. All French mothers of small children, regardless of marital status, are eligible to receive a government stipend if she chooses to be a full-time mother.

One characteristic that French and English-speaking West Indians do seem to share is that they are products of far more rigorous educational systems than are found in the United States. West Indian parents urge their children to apply themselves to their studies and to obtain the highest educational degree possible. As noted earlier, women in

particular are willing to make enormous sacrifices to ensure that their children receive the best educational opportunities possible. Another commonality I have witnessed is an obvious concern for skin color and the tendency to describe blacks by complexion tone and/or hair quality rather than by other physical characteristics. And, regardless of their own dubious status in the metropole, French West Indians share with their English-speaking brethren an abhorrence of social divisions defined by race. They too perceive of the American social structure to be extraordinarily racially divided. Yet, as I discovered, they were unwilling to admit the degree to which West Indians were subjected to racism in France.

From Assets to Liabilities

It was in the postslavery period that colonial masters and their white representatives first defined the stratified hierarchies and solidified the relations of power and superiority that would favor the white population. The highest percentage of people of African descent was concentrated in Caribbean territories controlled by England and France. For both countries, reproduction among the black populace was no longer advantageous or desirable, and France and England were faced with several challenges with regard to the governance and administration of their black colonial subjects.

Although the issues involved are complex, for the sake of discussion they can be categorized under three major themes. One theme concerns colonial profits from agro-related tax revenues, from shipping monopolies, or from crops being produced; those profits fluctuated and were uncertain. In England, more and more capital was invested in

industries, while France focused its efforts and capital on the expansion and modernization of agro-enterprises at home, including that of European beet sugar. But, the fact that the population of their colonies was overwhelmingly black led France and England to adopt similar positions and strategies. There were, however, some differences. France's middle-class nationalism proclaimed itself to be egalitarian regarding all French subjects and in theory, French West Indians became beneficiaries of this egalitarian ideology. Yet, in practice, the position of French and British officials and local elites was nearly identical regarding how they viewed non-white Caribbean subjects and how they proposed to solve their "black problem." And, when we look at the processes surrounding the dissemination of birth control technology, we will also see that French West Indian officials relied heavily on the literature and technology available in neighboring English-speaking West Indian territories.

During the nineteenth century, population issues in industrializing England and agrarian France were paralleled by issues pertaining to production and reproduction in their Caribbean colonies. Prior to emancipation slaves had counted as assets, but upon emancipation they suddenly became huge liabilities. By the twentieth century, England and France, having largely resolved their concerns about the reproductive habits of their own citizens, turned their gaze toward the burgeoning population problems in their Caribbean territories. Britain had to contend with growing labor unrest in the West Indies and with bitter and destructive anti-colonial movements, not only in the Caribbean but in other parts of its colonial empire. Until emancipation from slavery, by contrast, the main

preoccupation of metropolitan officials and the planter class was blacks' productive capabilities within the realm of plantation output and profit.

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité in The French West Indies

With the exception of a very brief British occupation, the islands of the French West Indies have been French dependencies since 1635, when they were settled by French plantation owners and farmers who considered their move to the colonies to be permanent. Since 1635, there have been several changes in French policy towards the *vieilles colonies*. The instability and revolutionary changes of the French government over the years left palpable traces in the history of the French Caribbean territories of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Political instability in France resulted in the islands remaining resolutely under the control of the white plantocracy, as during this period *Békés* had little metropolitan interference in running day-to-day affairs.

In contrast to what was taking place in the French West Indies, in France the French Revolution ushered in an era of middle-class nationalism which held that all members of the Republic shared equal and joint interests in the governing of the nation (Greenfeld 1992:185). Social and economic differences and an uneven process of urbanization soon led, however, to French society being alternately dominated, particularly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by rural and small-town interest groups and by leaders representing the interests of a powerful urban commercial bourgeoisie. (Derbyshire 1990, Ardagh 1969)

The French Revolution resulted in a considerable transformation of the class system in France, but did little to improve conditions among the non-white population in the colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Here, a plantation system of stratification had developed which placed *Grands-Blancs* or *Békés* (Martinican plantation owners) and *Blancs-Créoles* (Guadeloupean plantation owners)¹ at the top of the social ladder. They were followed by *Petits-Blancs*, a group consisting of less affluent whites who were small land owners, administrators, overseers, shopkeepers, and merchants. Below the *Petits-Blancs* were the *Mulâtres*, who were also shopkeepers, merchants and small land owners, and at the bottom were the *Nègres* (Acheen and Rifaux 1981:197).

Martinique and Guadeloupe had a significant *Mulâtre* population also known as "free coloreds" or *Gens de Couleur*. Economic accumulation was the only area of their lives not restricted. *Mulâtres* were engaged in various local business enterprises, services and service trades and many succeeded in amassing significant wealth. Because these enterprises dealt largely with liquid capital and were rarely tied to land ownership, *Mulâtres* were often financially more prosperous than many whites. As both *Mulâtre* prosperity and numbers increased, Whites, who feared their growing influence, contrived complex laws and local statutes to ensure the social and political suppression of the non-white population. The oppressive and often trivial statutes subjected blacks and *Mulâtres* to a long list of restrictions and exclusions among which were dictates

¹ The terms *Blancs-Pays* and *Blancs-Créoles* which are synonymous, were used historically to distinguish members of the white planter class in Guadeloupe from those of Martinique. *Blancs-France* was used to distinguish metropolitan born Whites from the white West Indian-born planter class. Today, the term *Béké* is applied to a white elite in both Martinique and Guadeloupe.

concerning dress and manners. These statutes were degrading, and they intruded in both personal and public life (ibid).

Even while imposing restrictions on Blacks, French planters themselves had to contend with a number of intrusive economic measures. Trade, largely involving export crops such as coffee, rum, and sugar, was tightly controlled by an *exclusif*² agreement with France. Further, although the plantocracy controlled the bulk of the land, *Petits-Blancs* who were traders in equipment and farming supplies had liquid capital which they lent to planters at exorbitant interest rates. The economic future of the white elites looked dim since the *exclusif* was lifted only at times when war made all forms of trade between the metropole and the colonies impossible. For white planters, these wartime periods, which were their most profitable, only highlighted the magnitude of the financial loss caused by crippling and restrictive economic ties with the metropole. As C.L.R. James writes

The [white French]colonist wished to shake off these shackles as Britain's American colonies wished to shake off theirs. Thus if big whites and small whites were in permanent conflict with each other, they were united against the Mullatoes on the one hand and against the French bourgeoisie on the other. They could persecute the Mullatoes, but against the French bourgeoisie they could do nothing but rage. Long before 1789 the French bourgeoisie was the most powerful economic force in France, and the slave-trade and the colonies were the basis of its wealth and power. (James 1938:34-35)

While they may have chafed under harsh trade restrictions, however, the planter class managed to retain social and political-economic control in the colonies.

²The "exclusif" agreement stipulated that planters could trade only with metropolitan France, and further required that all goods be transported on French ships. The agreement made it legally impossible to conduct intra-Caribbean trade or trade with North America.

The final abolition of slavery in the French West Indies was decreed on April 27, 1848. The "Schoelcher Decree," as it was called, *in theory* bestowed political equality on all inhabitants of the islands (Abenon 1992:222) but its implementation was left in the hands of the local governing whites. As a result, enforcement of the decree which would have granted political suffrage to *Mulâtres* and *Noirs* and threatened the existing governing structure, was indefinitely delayed. Thus, the planter class prolonged its hegemony and was able to block challenges to its political authority by refusing to relinquish control (Acheen and Rifaux 1981:198-200).

During this power struggle between planter and *Mulâtre* interests, the political relationship between the French West Indies and France wavered between autonomy -- de facto if not de jure -- and centralization. In 1852, under Louis-Napoleon, universal suffrage in the Antilles was rescinded but was restored less than two decades later. Freedom for slaves in the French West Indies came relatively late.³ By comparison, slaves in the English-speaking West Indies were granted their freedom by 1834. However, the extension of voting rights to all (male) citizens, without regard to property ownership, education, or gender, made the French West Indies politically unique in the post-emancipation period.⁴ The racially progressive political climate was due primarily to a reformer and abolitionist by the name of Victor Schoelcher who had lobbied on behalf of full emancipation in the mid-1800s (and for whom the abolitionist decree was named).

³ In Haiti, due to violent uprisings and the massacre of white planters, a French general was forced to abolish slavery in August 1793, but this local decree was the result of duress, was not approved in Paris, and did not apply to Martinique or Guadeloupe. Here, in 1794 under brief British rule, slavery was continued. The speculation that Napoleon was trying to reinstitute slavery in Haiti led directly to the Revolution.

⁴ Female suffrage was not granted until 1944.

Schoelcher gained support and admiration in the French Legislature and was appointed Under Secretary of State to the Ministry of the Navy. With jurisdictional powers over the colonies, Schoelcher was able to convene a commission on the emancipation issue, and the result of that commission's work was a written decree which proclaimed that

the Republic rejects distinctions in the human family...it is making reparation to these unfortunate people for the crimes which it committed against their ancestors and the land of their birth by giving them France as their Fatherland and all the rights of French citizens as their heritage, thereby bearing witness that it excludes no one from its immortal motto: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. (quoted in Ferguson 1999:170)

After Louis-Napoleon's fall from power, citizenship was conferred by the Third Republic in 1871 and political equality was reaffirmed (ibid). The 1870s and 1880s saw a significant increase in the numbers of *Mulâtres* elected to local governing bodies and an increase in their financial strength. In fact, in 1882, some sixty-four years before departmentalization, the locally powerless General Councils, dominated largely by *Mulâtres*, collectively issued a resolution in favor of assimilation and political integration which read:

Whereas it is essential to remove the humiliating differences that exist between the colony and a French department--differences that expose the patriotic population to the oft-repeated charge of evading the responsibilities and impositions inherent in French citizenship--[the Conseil General] renews with still greater force the wish already expressed on 24 November 1874 and requests that Martinique be forthwith constituted as a French department. (Lucrece 1971:98)

All inhabitants of Martinique and Guadeloupe were French citizens, and citizenship conferred the right of all adult males without restriction to vote in all public elections and to hold office. However, while they maintained a high degree of visibility,

under the colonial regime, non-white elected officials were merely figureheads with little actual power. In 1935, the *Béké-and-Blanc-Créole*-dominated Chambers of Commerce, which politically controlled both islands, categorically rejected any *Mulâtre* proposal that advocated assimilation and departmentalization. White elites argued that assimilation would destroy the "unique quality" of Antillean society and would stifle the "cultural specificity" of the islands and their inhabitants (Hintjens 1991:39).

However, the planter class was not able to counter all measures proposed by *Mulâtres*. Like the British planter class, after the abolition of slavery, *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles* attempted to import agricultural laborers from Portugal, Africa, China, and India. As it was supported by the French government, Indian immigration to the French West Indies was the most common, particularly between 1874 and 1885. Blacks charged that the immigrant labor force posed a critical threat to local employment while the white plantocracy protested that imported labor was needed to preserve the economic viability of the islands. Choosing to support *Noir* interests, *Mulâtre* politicians challenged migrant labor by arguing that foreign labor contributed to lower wages among native manual laborers. In other words, the practice of importing labor ran counter to the interests of local black laborers, who were striving to earn a living wage. This united anti-immigrant stance resulted in a massive protest, the stoppage of work by black laborers, and finally the termination of Asian and Indian labor immigration during the last part of the nineteenth century, well before the practice had ceased in the English-speaking West Indies.

As a result of the combined *Mulâtre* and *Noir* opposition to renewed immigration, the East Indian population remained too small to present a serious challenge to either *Noir* or *Mulâtre* interests. In fact, until recently, East Indians have tended to remain predominantly in the agricultural sector, and neither Asian nor East Indian residents have attempted to organize in opposition to the black population.

Even in the face of politically powerful white opposition, *Mulâtres* continued to build support for assimilation among all segments of the black population and managed to keep the issue alive for nearly seventy years until these efforts culminated with departmentalization in 1946. Assimilation became the main objective of the *Mulâtre* and *Noir* inhabitants, with *Mulâtres* particularly eager to be able to vote in French elections and run for meaningful public office. Nearly all of the non-white population (including East Indians and Asians) wanted to end the domination of the white plantocracy. On the other hand, in order to retain their hegemonic version of the island's "cultural specificity," autonomy was the cry of the local planter-class-dominated councils and of the influential and wealthy white inhabitants. The "assimilative" orientation of blacks continued to persist well after departmentalization.

In fact, in order to advance the possibility of achieving total assimilation, *Noirs* and *Mulâtres* enlisted in the French army in great numbers during World War I. A contingent of 51,618 soldiers was assembled from France's *vieilles colonies* of Guadeloupe and Martinique. By the end of the war 39,918 had been reported dead or missing (Abenon 1992:170). To inhabitants of the islands, fighting and dying for "one's country" was the symbol and proof of one's high level of French patriotism.

Additionally, though outnumbered by whites, many *Mulâtres* who held positions of high visibility in local politics such as in the local councils, used the argument about wartime sacrifice to further spread the assimilationist/departmentalization doctrine among non-white inhabitants (ibid 171).

The early political party system among non-whites was closely patterned after the system existing in the metropole. The PCF (*Parti Communiste Français*) strongly advocated the assimilation and adaptation to French culture of the colonial population. Led by *Mulâtres*, by 1935 branches of the French Communist Party were flourishing in Guadeloupe and Martinique with members strongly supporting the institution of a political structure based on French law rather than on local, racially biased decrees. The political goal of local activism was the complete and full integration of the French West Indies with metropolitan France (Abenon 1992). In the minds of *Békés* and *Blancs-Pays*, the only hope of preserving their hegemony was to convince France to grant them either complete autonomy or independence. By contrast, black inhabitants of Guadeloupe and Martinique saw departmentalization as the only effective way to reduce the power of the planter class and to acquire the full rights of French citizenship.

To give evidence of their "Frenchness," both *Mulâtres* and *Noirs* advocated the use of the French language and the adoption of French religion and customs. Catholic missionaries made frequent visits to Guadeloupe to preach, baptize, and marry former slaves. It was during the early decades of the twentieth century that official registers recorded the highest number of marriages (primarily in group form) and baptisms within the Catholic religion (Boutin 1992:130). Although the number of public schools was still

small, French, the official language of the Republic, was stressed not only in *Mulâtre* households but in all non-white households. Religious and national holidays, such as Bastille Day, were widely celebrated and strictly observed. Guadeloupeans' cultural and religious conversion during the last part of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century set the foundation for the "do as if we were French" era which began in earnest after departmentalization (Bebel-Gisler 1980).

Since 1789, France has had fifteen different constitutions. Power has alternated between the Left (favoring a democratic, representative, republican-type legislature with strong local governments) and the Right (advocating strong, central, autocratic and executive control). Throughout the Third and Fourth Republics (1870-1958) political instability prevailed (Laserre, 1973). During the Fourth Republic (1946-1958) there was a succession of twenty-six separate cabinets and fifteen prime ministers and a legislature that remained dominated by small-town and rural interest groups. The political turmoil erupting over the military crisis in Algeria hastened the overthrow of the Fourth Republic. Charles de Gaulle and a right-wing majority were elected by seventy-nine percent of the population in a referendum held in 1958; at the same time, the constitution of the Fifth French Republic was drawn up, and some semblance of stability was established. During this period, the West Indians in the English-speaking Caribbean were casting their votes in favor of the ill-fated Caribbean Commonwealth Federation.

Exodus and Exile in The French West Indies

In Paris, the "on the job training" I received, was in the bowels of a large hospital where I was put to work doing the hospital laundry. The special housing arranged for me was with three other girls in a cramped and dark apartment in a community just on the outskirts of Paris called Bagnolet. There we felt cut-off and alienated from home, and were cold and shivering most of the time since what little clothing we had did not suit the weather. A large percentage of Bagnolet was then middle-class and blue-color white, although there were a few Africans, Moroccans, and other Asian immigrants.

Within the first year we were there, one of my roommates became pregnant by the son of a local baker whose store we did not even shop at since his father, the [white] proprietor, made it clear that our business was not welcome. Although she denied it, I truly believed that my roommate thought that this boy would marry her, can you believe it! Of course he did not. After my roommate gave birth to a baby girl, she sent her baby back to Guadeloupe with a distant cousin to be raised by her grandmother.

Eventually all three of us dropped out of the [BUMIDOM] program but when we quit our sponsored hospital jobs we lost our government housing. To save money, two of my roommates and I accepted live-in jobs as domestics with rich white families. Here we were housed in rooms the size of a broom closet, worked 6 1/2 days a week, and made even less money than before. Our third roommate did not fare so well. She (we heard) ended up becoming a putain [a prostitute/streetwalker] working for some rich Lebanese in the Pigalle district. I never told my family what I really did in Paris, not even my sisters, and led them to believe that I was a nursing assistant in a hospital.

Five years later I found better employment as a stock girl in a big department store, but when I was 28, I returned home to Guadeloupe for the funeral of my mother, and I never went back to Paris. At least in Guadeloupe I am at home in my own skin. Here I became involved with two [Guadeloupean] men. One relationship lasted for nearly three years, the other for nine years but neither wanted to get married. By the time I was 38, I had three children. I said to myself, oh no! I am becoming my mother. Finally I gave up on men and, after I started my own dressmaking business [financed by a former partner, a professional man who was married], I settled in as a very content single mother, at last I am my own woman. (Yvonne 58, return migrant, session two)

A week after we had begun, I was finally able to complete my interview with Yvonne, the woman in chapter four who had followed the example of her revered cousin and through the BUMIDOM program migrated to Paris. It was evident from the change

in the expression on her face, the tone of her voice, and the manner in which she began to speak that the rest of her tale would not be as glowing as its beginning. In fact, she started the story with her eyes closed, but unlike before when she finally opened her eyes, I noticed that this time she looked past me rather than directly at me.

After passing the physical examination (which included a pregnancy test) and the psychological testing (an interview with a "counselor" to determine if she was "well adjusted"), a now twenty-year old Yvonne was put on a flight with about fifty other program participants (mostly young) and finally sent to Paris. As long as Yvonne remained in the position she was assigned to by the government, she remained in the BUMIDOM program and could avail herself of other benefits that if offered such as housing, job placement, and psychological counseling. However, when she left her job in the hospital laundry, she also ended her ties to the program, which made working as a live-in domestic initially appealing since domestic work usually provided housing. Yvonne volunteered few details about her Parisian life other than to say that she was happy working in a department store but far less enamored with living away from Guadeloupe. I gathered that those years were difficult, since she told me that she had not returned.

The examples set by previous non-sponsored migrants, like Yvonne's cousin Yvette, inspired thousands of young Antilleans (and later their family members) to set their sights on France. Metropolitan France was symbolic of all that was modern and cultured while the Antilles symbolized only further downward mobility, poverty, or at best a life of frustrated stagnation. Between 1954 and 1962, *before* the creation of

BUMIDOM, some 38,000 people emigrated from the DOMs and settled in France. Though many of those claimed to have lived in Paris, only 14,000 actually did so. The remaining 24,000 lived on the outskirts of the city or were scattered throughout the provinces (Constant 1987:16). Yet, the reality of their circumstances, no matter how modest, did not prevent this earlier privileged group from exaggerating (and in some instances fabricating) the benefits and comforts associated with their new lives. Further, as educated Antilleans soon learned, the ability to list metropolitan work experience on one's curriculum vitae was an advantage in the competitive Guadeloupean job market. Most potential employers, whether Antilleans or "metros," believed that having European work experience was indicative of the likelihood that a person would be better trained, more industrious, and more professional than a Guadeloupean without such experience.

The conditions of emigrants who self-financed their journey differed substantially from those who were sponsored. Non-sponsored migrants aspired to professional posts or higher education, a goal that many managed to achieve. Sponsored latecomers, on the other hand, were forced to accept unskilled or semi-skilled manual or domestic labor shunned by the majority of metropolitan French *and* by the upper classes of Antillean society alike. They were more likely to be "resettled" in the huge and drab *banlieue* housing developments built on the outskirts of Paris and other cities to house Africans, Arabs, and Asians.

However, Guadeloupean society was a creation of France, and since French West Indians had never been exposed to any other foreign culture but French, when they did

experience metropolitan racism many were initially in a state of shock and denial. Until recently, metropolitan France was the center of the universe for most French West Indians. Paris was the city to which the majority of older Guadeloupeans aspired to move, and even though there has always been racism in France, Guadeloupeans did not feel that racist sentiments were directed at them. In their eyes, French racism and its attendant hostility focused on Algerians and on immigrants from Africa not on French Antilleans. Further, living in a French society afforded them a degree of linguistic comfort, a sense of cultural familiarity, and was a source of pride. French West Indians experienced relatively few pro-independence movements compared to their Caribbean neighbors. Even the most militant activists of the 1960s and 1970s more favored a form of modified political autonomy rather than full political and economic separatism. Until recently, they also rarely participated in regional activities or participated in regional conferences.

In fact, the overseas colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique have always existed in a state of near isolation economically, socially, politically and linguistically from their regional neighbors. As *vieilles colonies*, Martinique and Guadeloupe have maintained close ties to France for over three hundred and fifty years. Yet, largely due to the effects of colonialism, the lack of local development along with agricultural devolution was no less a problem in the French colonies than in their English-speaking counterparts. All residents of the French West Indies were made citizens of France in 1870, but the political, economic, and social hegemony of the white planter class effectively blocked the exercise of constitutional rights by blacks.

By the early 1920s, in the English-speaking West Indies, political sentiments supporting independence emerged and just before World War II they intensified. As did West Indian soldiers from the English-speaking Caribbean, French West Indians encountered racism in the metropole, but even so, they favored assimilation over independence. Socio-economic conditions were no better than those of their Caribbean neighbors, and to make matters worse, the socio-economic decline occurred without any intervening action on the part of metropolitan officials. Although the French Government proclaimed that, regardless of skin color, all of its colonial peoples could be "assimilated" into the world of French civilization, development remained a low priority for many years. The hope of being the beneficiaries of improvements in local economic conditions motivated French West Indians to overwhelmingly support departmentalization.

After approving departmentalization in 1946, French West Indians were beguiled by visions of social and economic equality, and truly believed that closer political ties with France would result in greater equality in the more tangible aspects of daily life. But, between 1946 and 1956, as elsewhere, government initiated socio-economic improvements ground to a halt. By the time the French Government refocused attention on the French West Indies, it needed immediate solutions to defuse an explosive situation resulting from population pressure and social and political unrest (Hintjens 1991:40).

According to Jean Dumas (1975), by the late 1950s, Guadeloupe's problems were fundamentally the same as those of the English-speaking West Indies. The French government mapped out economic plans, numbers one and two, which covered the post departmental period (1946-1958), yet, because of the political turmoil in France, little of

substance was done. Similar to conditions in the English-speaking West Indies, overpopulation and massive unemployment had captured national attention, but there were no regularized migratory flows to the mother country as existed between Britain and its Caribbean territories. Until the 1960s, emigration to France was a wholly self-financed venture except in the case of intellectually gifted students who earned academic scholarships to study in Paris, or for men who were required to perform national military service.

In light of these circumstances it is not surprising that 1956 and 1957 were tumultuous years in the French West Indies, characterized by profound disenchantment with departmental status and vocal and bitter anti-colonial sentiment (see especially Césaire, 1956). Few activists wanted a complete break with France, but nearly all factions wanted greater equality in economic matters. Anti-French demonstrations were violent as local black political leaders became increasingly outspoken in their criticism of the DOM relationship with France. By the end of 1957, fearing increased volatility and the escalation of violence, the French government formulated economic plan number three which, when operationalized, would cover the years 1958 to 1961. The text of the plan contained a chapter entitled "*problème du surpeuplement: les migrations*"⁵ which reported that the French West Indies were dangerously overpopulated and that this only exacerbated economic problems. A commission was appointed to devise ways to augment emigration by "several thousand people per year" (Sunshine 1985).

⁵the problem of overpopulation: migrations.

Economic plan three also contained a chapter entitled "*action directe sur la fécondité: faut-il limiter les naissances?*"⁶ But on this point, at least publicly, the legislature imposed severe limitations on any proposed (official) action. The original recommendation was that a birth control program be initiated as quickly as possible; however, planners were aware that even if they were able to initiate such a program, it would take considerable time to achieve results and thus it would be incapable of solving the immediate problem. While the idea of promoting birth control through public facilities was soundly defeated, the plan was eventually operationalized by utilizing facilities and practitioners who were mobilized under private auspices. In the end plan three proposed that, until fertility rates could be modified, the most effective and immediate solution was outmigration. Plan three also proposed that an emigration program with an annual emigration goal of 6,500 people from each DOM was needed in order to insure that the current population levels remained in check (Dumas 1975:7).⁷

Thus, the goals of a massive emigration program were outlined in the late 1950s, and operationalized early in the 1960s. Detailed plans for the creation of the oversight agency (BUMIDOM),⁸ and its emigration objectives were outlined in economic plan

⁶direct action on fertility: is it necessary to limit births?

⁷*de toute les solutions au surpeuplement, l'émigration est donc actuellement la solution la plus efficace. Toutefois les effectifs qu'il serait nécessaire de faire émigrer son très importants; pour maintenir les populations a leur effectif actuel qui paraît déjà dépasser l'optimum permettant d'élever le niveau de vie moyen de la population au niveau souhaitable il conviendrait de faire émigrer annuellement, et ceci jusqu'à ce que la fécondité de la population restante se soit modifiée, un effectif de l'ordre de grandeur de l'excédent annuel de la population, soit au moins 6.500 personnes dans chacune de deux Antilles (Dumas 1975:7).*

⁸*Bureau pour la Promotion des Migrations Intéressantes les DOM*

four. In many ways the establishment of the BUMIDOM program can be viewed as a means of "active intervention in family formation" (Carter 1995:59) of the highest order. And, as will be discussed in the following chapters, it was explicitly designed to be just that.

Land Reform and the Postwar Landscape

Despite a growing pattern of rural-to-urban migration, metropolitan officials believed that they also needed some kind of rural-based intervention which could lessen the monopolization of Caribbean land. Development specialists proposed land reform as another means towards achieving the goal of elevating the standard of living for rural residents. Government officials throughout the West Indies believed that land reform would provide a means and motivation for those who aspired to sustain their families by engaging in agricultural work. The limitations were that much of the available land was of poor quality or required significant investments of labor and money.

Prior to the war, declining profits forced many plantation owners to turn over the title to some or all of their land as payment of property taxes. As a result, France and Britain possessed large parcels of land which, for the most part, remained idle. French officials decided to use these government holdings to institute postwar land redistribution programs for "qualified" native residents. The established qualifications generally

included age (usually owners were required to be under 50), financial stability, prior agricultural experience, and a willingness to adhere to established farming guidelines⁹.

The French hoped that "land reform" would not only improve subsistence productivity, but also, by mandating that the land be used for the continued production of export crops, that it would enable small agro-entrepreneurs to become financially self-sufficient. In the end, rather than trying to reverse the Caribbean's fixation on export crops, land reform reinforced this orientation (Thompson 1997:125). It did so, moreover, during a financially precarious period when Caribbean products were declining in value and profitability. At the same time, branches of national banks were established to induce people to save. The emergence of formal banking introduced Antillean residents -- particularly those in fledgling artisanal or agricultural enterprises -- to the complications of lending as well as to the intricacies of passbook savings.

In Guadeloupe, land reform was a success in the case of a few small property owners who were subsidized by the French government which set up strict farming guidelines and crop quotas (Graham 1969). Nonetheless, small producers tried in vain to compete with estate production. Further, although land reform somewhat reduced the monopolization of property, it could not improve the prices paid to small farmers for their crops who found themselves unable to bargain for better prices with wholesale

⁹ Suzanne Graham (1969) notes that there were three land reform schemes in the French West Indies: in 1961, 1963, and 1964. Some of the land involved was previously government owned, while other large parcels were purchased specifically for the land reform program by SICAAP - The Society of Collective Agricultural Interests for the Acquisition of Property. SICAAP also arranged for low cost government financing and equipment purchase and subsidized production of export crops. In the French West Indies, "qualified" purchasers could not already own more than four hectares, had to be below the age of 45, and were required to demonstrate that they had family members willing to help work acquired lands.

conglomerate buyers. Clearly, price monopolization worked to the detriment of small producers, since their options were limited in the sales of their produce (Thompson 1997:120).

Another major reason why land redistribution programs failed was the critical shortage in available housing. With new housing unable to keep pace with the growing population, much of the redistributed land was subdivided many times over among family members and, in the end, functioned only for habitation needs. Such subdivision resulted in related family members living in close proximity to one another, a phenomenon that was prevalent throughout the Caribbean before as well as after the institution of land redistribution programs. Government officials soon realized that with housing at such a high premium, more immediate solutions were required to siphon off surplus population (see Don Hoy 1961).

Migration and Demographic Change

Of all the changes that were exciting during the 1960s, perhaps the most exciting event in our family was when my mother purchased our first television set. The next big event I remember was when my father bought a new car to replace our old beaten-up truck which embarrassed me immensely when we had to drive into town. (1997, Odine 57, Guadeloupean)

In 1961, I remember when my mother actually bought my graduation dress at a store in Point-à-Pitre. You laugh, but it was a big deal for us, back in those days. My mother said that buying a dress was cheaper and easier than trying to sew it herself. Since she had to feed and clothe eleven of us, getting a new store-bought dress was like someone else buying a new house. My sisters were jealous and I did not care about the economical reasons for buying it. All I cared about was that I looked like the girls I saw in [French] magazines and that I no longer felt like and looked like a country peasant. (1997, Florence 52, Guadeloupean)

Migration from the Caribbean to western metropolises was used as an adjustable valve to ease population pressure by regulating the flow of English-, Dutch-, French-, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean people based on production needs and reproductive circumstances. Western nations satisfied their labor needs and decreased Caribbean population pressure by siphoning off "surplus" people. Unlike "surplus" populations in nineteenth-century industrial England that migrated to the colonies as indentured servants and "poor" landowners, Caribbean migrants of the 1950s and 1960s were from the more literate and economically affluent segments of society. A high percentage of mid-twentieth-century migrants were women¹⁰ (see Bolles 1996, 1986; Massiah 1986, 1989; Colen 1986). This mid-twentieth-century movement is in sharp contrast to the labor

¹⁰Domestic labor and healthcare accounted for a large percentage of employment opportunities for female migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean.

migration of predominately Caribbean men which took place around the turn of the century. These men were attracted to the earning possibilities offered by big projects such as railroad construction, mining, log and cane cutting, and the building of the Panama Canal, which required largely unskilled or semi-skilled workers.

Migration is only one of the reasons why social and demographic change among Caribbean peoples seems to pose both a challenge and a puzzle. It is a critical component of population studies, particularly for population growth projections, but it is much less integrated into demographic transition theory. Yet, understanding how, when, and why migration took place in the Caribbean, and understanding the impact of this movement is critical to understanding the region's demographic change.

Migratory movement is an important aspect of Caribbean population change in general and of fertility change in Guadeloupe in particular. We have only to consider how many migrants of the 1960s and 1970s were young and fertile women. The absence of migration from much fertility transition theory distorts the accuracy of macro-level analyses and precludes the potential for theorizing about fertility at the individual or micro-level. There are some newer studies which analyze post-settlement fertility among migrant women (see for example Bean and Swicegood 1985, Stephen 1989, Gurak 1980, Kahn 1995) but these studies are less concerned with those women who were unable to or chose not to migrate, and they do not closely examine the fertility consequences for the sending area. When a high percentage of an emigrating population is young and fertile, migration has broad implications for population change.

The Impact of Caribbean Labor Migration

The West Indian postwar landscape underwent enormous change, and to many, the most welcome aspect of postwar modernization was the advent of new stores and the influx of machine-made clothing and new consumer commodities. Unfortunately, the economic boom was accompanied by a population boom and by the late 1950s, a means by which a portion of the population could be "relocated" on either a temporary or a permanent basis. But, the volatile ingredients of the population time bombs had actually been assembled during the second half of the nineteenth century. Within fifty years, roughly between 1840 and 1890, the populations of the English-speaking and French West Indies had doubled. Between 1890 and 1920, heavy labor migration (predominately, male) to the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States, and Latin America kept the pressure somewhat in check. At the time of the Great Depression, however, nearly all migratory outlets had been closed off. Deteriorating conditions worldwide exacted a heavy toll on Caribbean residents whose fortunes, individually and collectively, were so closely tied to the West.

Despite the existence of Caribbean balkanization and regional insularities, twentieth-century population containment and development programs were closely intertwined. More to the point, tracing the web of interconnections between production and reproduction, particularly from the perspective of national and local government officials, allows us to understand the rationale underlying national development programs. For example, the installation of population controls was a response to concerns about overpopulation and to widespread fears about political instability in the Caribbean.

Unfortunately, Caribbean industrialization projects initiated in the 1950s were only minimally successful in absorbing surplus labor. The effect of the large-scale emigration to European metropolises was both positive and negative as repercussions of this massive exodus resonated throughout Europe and in the Caribbean. In anticipation of tighter controls, high local unemployment prompted some 66,300 West Indians to enter Britain in 1961. In 1963 only 2,077 were granted entry under work permit quotas, and by 1972 this number had dwindled to 61. In fact, in 1973, *return* migration resulted in a net loss of some 2,130 West Indians from Great Britain (Freeman 1992:188).

Guengant and Marshall chart the dramatic decrease in migratory labor needs, abysmal local socio-economic conditions, and -- another exacerbating factor -- the repatriation of thousands of Caribbean-born migrants who after the war became social undesirables and economic liabilities in Europe. Due to the virtual halt in out-migration during the 1940s, population specialists had originally predicated an imminent population explosion. However, migration did begin again in the 1950s and continued until it was legislatively halted (in the case of Britain) or until metropolitan conditions severely diminished its appeal.

Table 1
Total Migration Rates for the Caribbean Region 1950 - 1989
in thousands

Country	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	Total Net Loss
Cuba	- 10.0	- 475.0	- 226.6	- 19.6	- 727.5
Dom. Rep.	- 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	- 110.0	- 832.9
Jamaica	- 165.1	- 289.5	- 270.8	- 246.5	- 971.9
Trin. & Tobago	- 0.4	- 110.0	- 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	- 17.8
St. Vincent	- 9.3	- 20.0	- 15.1	- 13.1	- 57.5
St. 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
St. 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	- 34.4
Surinam	- 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 Guyane	- 2.5	- 8.2	- 7.9	- 25.7	- 44.3
Caribbean Islands	- 856.2	- 1644.2	- 1413.1	- 1202.8	-5116.3
13 Caricom Countries	- 231.1	- 564.6	- 608.7	- 538.6	-1943.0
All Islands	- 863.2	-1724.0	-1651.8	-1346.9	-5585.9

From Guengant and Marshall 1985:33

In addition to massive out-migration, a pattern of intra-regional movement was established before the close of the nineteenth century as people moved in search of work and better socio-economic situations. The net population decrease resulting from open migratory outlets was able to alleviate population pressure. Between 1950 and 1968 alone, Segal estimates that the Caribbean region lost some fifteen percent of its population or, in absolute numbers, some 1.5 million people. Since 1950, Guengant places the total figure of out-migration close to six million emigrants (1996:3). As the table above indicates, the loss of Caribbean populations to migration was enormous and played a significant role in the social and political-economic context of nearly all Caribbean countries. Further, the dynamics of Caribbean population change involved not only one but several critical elements including migration, mortality and fertility, education, healthcare, consumerism, economic development, and the creation of new political ties with England and France.

The Economic Complications of Population Control

During the 1950s, the escalating costs of continuing to support rapidly growing Caribbean populations weighed heavily on the minds of French and British government officials. Long before the introduction of birth control technology, metropolitan officials resolutely believed that exhorting women to practice birth control offered the only effective and permanent means of bringing Caribbean population growth under control. Population control specialists were provided by outside non-profit organizations such as the Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (Nag 1974:119; Ebanks 1974). They confirmed colonial officials' beliefs that reducing the fertility rate through the spread of contraceptive technology offered the only effective solution to the problem of rapid population growth. Faced with huge budget deficits, a lack of operating capital, and concomitantly, a lack of bargaining power, Caribbean officials were frequently pressured to follow these recommendations, even if they themselves were ambivalent. As Paul Demeny writes

In the aftermath of World War II, decolonization, the Cold War, in recognition of the stake of the West and in particular of the United States, in the political stability and economic progress of the third world, government officials directed attention to the precariousness of the natural resource base relative to population size in some of these countries, hence to rapid population growth as a potential hindrance to development. (Demeny 1992:231)

Until the mid-1950s, the subject of Caribbean “over-population” was not yet explicit among either colonial officials or local government leaders. Instead, Caribbean leaders focused on fiscal-based economic problems associated with shortfalls in operating capital for infrastructure maintenance and improvements, the expansion of social services,

and the creation of employment. Moreover, for at least a decade following World War II, the population of many Caribbean nations was believed to have been negatively "checked" by the high fatality rates among the combatants they contributed to the armed forces of Eurowestern countries. Also, the postwar economic boom, whose effects briefly extended to the Caribbean in the form of temporarily revitalized and profitable agricultural sectors, had created a false sense of economic security. Unfortunately, as European nations returned to their normal prewar agricultural output (as in the case of the beet sugar industry in rural France), the profits from Caribbean agricultural production once again plummeted (Thompson 1997:124; Payne and Sutton 1993:9). This reversal of fortune put many inhabitants out of work, halted economic growth, and sent tax revenues spiraling downward. Male Caribbean workers, accustomed to finding metropolitan employment opportunities plentiful, lost their jobs when returning European servicemen were given preference in hiring. This spurred a wave of return migration which only exacerbated declining economic conditions by exerting additional pressure on the region's shrinking pool of employment opportunities and on the underfunded welfare and social service systems. Large inadequacies existed in housing, roads, sanitation, and food production for local consumption.

Most important, pressure was evident in relationship to land. Postwar increases in agricultural production had been in export crops such as sugar and bananas, and reversing this "export orientation" was difficult. Even after land reform, land remained at a premium and the largest parcels of real estate were controlled by estate/plantation owners or had been amassed by large agricultural conglomerates in the business of

mechanized farming. Available land was usually of the poorest quality and often exorbitantly overpriced, which put it out the reach of all but the middle class and the wealthy. The monopolization of land prevented families and individuals from acquiring land on which they could support themselves through agriculture-based entrepreneurship (Thompson 1997:124). Employment opportunities in salaried occupations existed but were limited to low-level civil service posts for the newly educated, a few factory or assembly type jobs, and seasonal and temporary work in the shrinking agricultural sector for the less fortunate unskilled laborers.

In response to increasing socio-economic deficiencies in their colonies (and faced with ever increasing transfer payments for social services) metropolitan officials resumed the implementation of standard of living improvements which had been interrupted by the war. An improved education system was an important component of many Caribbean development and modernization schemes. New schools were constructed, schooling was expanded, and education levels and literacy rates rose. Unfortunately, the expansion of education also prompted many local residents to eschew the manual labor of the agricultural sector and to relocate in urban areas in order to obtain other "cleaner" or "more dignified" types of employment.

The successful transformation in the standard of living proved ultimately to be a double-edged sword for population growth. Demographic pressure also increased as a direct result of declining mortality rates. For example, among the earliest projects funded were initiatives to increase the scope and quality of health care both to rural and to urban dwellers. Improvements in this sector eventually paid large dividends as basic vaccines

and medications, long available in the metropolises, were more systematically distributed throughout the Caribbean through an improved network of clinics.

Initially viewed as a highly positive improvement, the formal installation of public health programs was actually a significant factor in rapid population growth. In nearly all islands, even rudimentary public health programs accomplished in twenty-five years what it had taken over one hundred years to accomplish in Europe. Officials had first set out to eliminate the most common tropical diseases such as malaria and worms. Next, large scale sewage and drainage systems, and sanitary facilities were constructed. Inoculation programs were introduced. When the doors of vaccination clinics were first opened to the general population, inoculation rates were low, but, as greater resources were devoted to health awareness and education, the rates steadily increased (Segal 1969). At the beginning of the nineteenth century roughly 25 percent of all infants born in the English and French West Indies died before their first birthday. By 1950, this rate was reduced to 15 percent (Handwerker 1986:403, 1989:76). By the end of the 1950s, metropolitan officials watched in alarm as improvements in health created unforeseen and unplanned outcomes. "Stage one" population growth, in which high fertility offset high mortality, was now replaced by "stage two" conditions. Thus, pre-existing high fertility rates outweighed the newly lowered mortality rates and this imbalance served to accelerate population growth.

Medical specialists observed that the region was located in a climate zone naturally conducive to good health; for example, occurrences of respiratory-related illnesses were significantly less than in Europe or in the Americas. In the 1960s,

countries such as Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and Curaçao had life expectancies nearly as high as those in industrialized nations, and, except for Haiti, the average per capita income placed most territories at mid-range between the poorest and the wealthiest nations (Claypole and Robottom 1992, Segal 1969).

During the postwar period, changes in epidemiology had a significant impact on mortality rates; but, not only did mortality fall dramatically at all age levels, unfortunately, so did emigration. The cessation of labor-related intra-Caribbean and European migration resulted in men becoming more home bound. Although the nascent tourism industry absorbed a small percentage of this surplus labor, many residents remained unemployed. A situation of chronic high unemployment among a significant segment of the population quickly developed and the majority of those chronically unemployed and underemployed were male. Women remained marginally better positioned in the labor market, including migratory labor, because of the continued demand for Caribbean domestic workers (see Colen 1986, Enloe 1989, Bolles 1986, 1996, Diggs-Thompson 1998, 1999). Women were also more likely to earn a small living from market-related activities, small enterprises, or some combination of the two (see Momsen 1993, Massiah 1986, 1989).

In 1962, the population crisis in the English-speaking West Indies was compounded by the fact that emigration to England was officially halted by the British Commonwealth Immigration Act. At that same time, sponsored migration to France from the Antilles had just begun. This period coincided with the height of the Cold War. With a nearby, Castro-led Cuba in which Communist ideology was firmly entrenched and

seeking to expand its influence, metropolitan officials felt that economic development (in the form of export-led industrialization) coupled with vigorous family planning programs had to be instituted before population pressure translated into political and economic disaster. Yet the family-planning movement, as it then existed in the United States and Europe, was oriented towards the concerns of married women desiring to postpone, limit, or space births. The next order of business for government officials was the vigorous promotion of legal marriage and the Eurowestern model of the conjugal nuclear family.

Focusing on the Caribbean Family

In the introduction to My Mother Who Fathered Me (1957), Edith Clarke pointed out that family systems of any society contained both internal and external features. The first referred to the family's internal construction and consistency, whereas the second pertained to how the family was contained within and articulated with the wider social system. But in order to analyze external systemic connections, Clarke felt that it was essential to have detailed knowledge of the internal social and political-economic context under investigation. (Clarke 1957:xv). Unfortunately, studies of this period concentrated less on internal political-economic influences and more on the internal shortcomings of family and mating practices of the West Indies.

Although their work is separated by some forty years, both Edith Clarke and Christine Barrow criticize the ethnocentric orientation of analyses of "the Caribbean Family." But one would think that scholars' orientation to the subject would have altered dramatically in the intervening forty years, and that the conditions which gave rise to their

prominence should have ameliorated significantly. Theoretical perspectives have changed and, on the whole, the socio-economic circumstances of West Indians have much improved since the mid-twentieth century. Nonetheless, the sense that West Indian families are different, still slightly dysfunctional, and that mating patterns are to a degree immoral vis-à-vis Western standards persists essentially because mating and organizational practices have endured remarkably intact. More relevant is the fact that although contemporary West Indians live under conditions much improved over those of the postemancipation and postWorld war II eras, an aura of economic uncertainty still prevails. Education levels have risen dramatically but a high percentage of West Indians remain unemployed, underemployed, or employed only seasonally, a condition that perpetuates their economic insecurity and fiscal dependence on the West. Yet, when the crisis of Caribbean population growth was proclaimed in the late 1950s the emphasis was placed as much on taking social action as on effecting economic change. Given the prevailing "Caribbean" pattern of "extended families" and more importantly of consensual unions and "visiting" relationships, planners knew that there would be difficult socio-ideological obstacles to overcome.

Conclusion

A comprehensive review of regional literature reveals that throughout the entire Caribbean, social and economic fears and concerns of metropolitan officials were the same. For many colonial officials, political volatility and the lack of economic viability

spelled disaster. Populations everywhere were growing too rapidly, and everywhere employment opportunities were disappearing.

Nonetheless, Caribbean people displayed remarkable allegiance to their colonial or neo-colonial motherlands. Even though the characteristics of Caribbean societies aligned poorly with those of Europe, until recently, inhabitants worked hard at becoming European. Yet, the imprint of slavery, and of political and economic domination and exploitation, in the end proved to be indelible. Nor were white elites willing to relinquish hegemonic control. The inculcation of European "culture" and western notions of "family values" resulted in only partial and selective emulation.

In the French West Indies, initially, the colored or *Mulâtre* class strove to effect socio-economic equality by valiantly trying to become truly French, and, by the middle of the twentieth century, the doctrine of assimilation had become the motto of modernization. But migration was both a "top down" and "bottom up" process as moving to the metropole involved planning. The desire to "assimilate" is also what inspired many young adults like Yvonne to leave Guadeloupe and to seek their fortune in the metropole.

Chapter six seeks to clarify conditions and circumstances that pertain to Caribbean social, cultural, and contraceptive change. In chapter six I examine the problems one encounters when attempting to understand or to explain the concept of "Caribbean Identity" and I discuss where and how French West Indians fit into this schema. Also examined is the dichotomization of "modern" and "traditional" social models and how Caribbean people negotiate the space between the two. I review the

history of "bastardy" and look at how this issue formed the centerpiece of Caribbean family law. I examine the history of Caribbean family studies and review the circumstances under which Caribbean women (and men) became the targets of the new (European) morality.

Chapter 6 - West Indian Societies and Identities: Bottom Up and Top Down Perspectives

Accustomed to ethnic and cultural differences, to the movement of peoples into and out of their midsts, to migration itself as a way of life, to industrial tempos imposed on agricultural economies, and to the common contrasts between the lives of the privileged and the lives of the poor, Caribbean folk often seem more prepared for the modern world than other so-called Third World peoples. (Mintz and Price 1985:10)

Introduction

The processes of Caribbean conquest, colonization, and settlement, first by Europeans and later by African slaves, Asian and East Indian indentured servants, and less affluent European whites, created a pattern of social and economic organization, and color and class stratification, peculiar to colonial domination. An export orientation that was dictated by economic profitability, as well as frequent sexual liaisons between whites and non-whites, left indelible socio-economic marks.

Notwithstanding their internal differences and their African *and* European heritage, native-born inhabitants of the Caribbean region have, in both the scholarly and popular literature, been collectively cast as “the other.” Although geographically speaking they are North Americans, Caribbean islanders have been depicted as racially, economically, socially, and temperamentally different from their Eurowestern kin. In the past, Caribbean “otherness” was attributed to a racially-based variant of intellectual and psychological inferiority. More recently, it has been both self- and externally-ascribed as exotic in an effort to attract Western tourists, but, even these messages are mixed. Brochures invite potential vacationers to immerse themselves in what are often described

as unique cultures and climate but also assure them that facilities and accommodations are modern and up-to-date.

To a discerning and sensitive eye, the islands do possess enough unique features to inspire interest among even intra-island vacationers. More often than not, however, outsiders view Caribbean cultures as more alike than different and believe that differences are minimal whereas residents emphasize that each country has a distinctive political, cultural, and linguistic identity. Thus, as much as the notion of a common Caribbean identity has been favored by scholars, insularities deliberately instituted by colonial powers, have led inhabitants to self-ascribe as English, Spanish, Dutch, or French and later as Barbadian, Jamaican, Haitian, Martinican etc.

Theorizing Caribbean Cultural Complexity

For the most part, the Caribbean region has been essentialized; its diverse religions, cultures, and societies glossed as "the Caribbean," a fixed entity -- an undifferentiated and monolithic culture -- complex, although generally seen as culturally, politically, and economically homogenous. To be evenhanded, one would have to acknowledge that among scholars and residents, the concept of a monolithic Caribbean community has as many critics as supporters (see also Allahar 1992). It is also now well established that the term "West Indian" refers specifically to Caribbean people of African descent. Scholars, particularly those born and educated outside of the West Indies frequently generalize about what appears to them to be a widespread emulation of European values and lifestyles. At the same time, most acknowledge that, until recently,

the ability to fully adopt a modern European lifestyle has been well beyond the reach of the bulk of the region's inhabitants.

Scholarly explanations and theoretical interpretations of West Indian societies can, at times, seem as diverse and complex as its peoples and cultures. Rex Nettleford (1994) considers the Caribbean to be geographically, socially, politically, and economically "the crossroads of the Americas" but adds that it lacks a central reference point. Unlike other regional areas, the region lacked a thriving indigenous population or culture. In fact, the pre-existing native populations were decimated and their cultures deliberately erased to make way for a new hybrid of Western society.

To Nettleford, hybridity, heterogeneity, and fragmentation are the region's primary characteristics, but to him these are as much strengths as weaknesses. He notes that despite the implication of homogeneity, the region is highly Balkanized, with no single political center, official language, religion, or even singular model of kinship and family structure. English, French, Dutch, Spanish, and several variants of Creole exist side by side. Religious beliefs include Catholic, Orthodox Hindu, Muslim, Pentecostal, Televangelical, Voodoo, Zion revivalist, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Shango, Rastafari and a multiplicity of syncretisms and variants. But, in Nettleford's opinion, multiculturalism "engenders among individuals the capacity to operate on two or more levels, sequentially or simultaneously, in dealing with the quixotic, multifaceted social phenomena characteristic of the crossroads where disparate elements meet, contend and have their being" (1994:3).

Political orientations in the Caribbean have been equally complex and include parliamentary and bicameral political systems inherited from Western European colonizers as well as several combinations of political ideologies such as Jamaica's experiment with "democratic socialism" (see Stephens and Stephens 1986). Marxism-Leninism politically grounds Cuba, and for a short period provided an ideological basis of experimentation for Maurice Bishop's regime in Grenada. Nonetheless, despite various conflicts, the region has been relatively tranquil politically. Diane Austin (1990) feels that this stability is due to "conflict contained by domination" which she asserts characterizes the English-speaking Caribbean, but the pattern is similar in the French West Indies as well (1990:223).

Before the end of slavery, and again in the early part of the twentieth century, black inhabitants often staged vocal and violent demonstrations in the name of freedom. Yet, since the 1960s, populist demands for *full* autonomy have been relatively muted. Contemporary political associations with European metropolises continue primarily for reasons of economic practicality. Countries that once argued for independence are now rethinking the issue in light of the vulnerability of their economic circumstances and the potentially negative consequences of breaking free. For example, when prodded, residents of other islands who are scornful of French West Indian "neocolonialism" often admit that they believe that economically, at least, the French West Indians are fairly well off, thanks to the full range of benefits they are now accorded as full-fledged French citizens. Many West Indian migrants (particularly Haitians and Dominicans) have selected Guadeloupe as a settlement destination, but rarely for social reasons. Rather, it is because

they believe that in comparison to their economic prospects at home, Guadeloupe has more to offer.

Inter-island dialogues over common goals and economic interests have increased significantly but slowly. Despite these budding economic alliances, there are few cultural bridges which tie the region together. No tangible unified construct of a single West Indian nation exists yet there is a natural acceptance of West Indian culture and values as ideationally different from Eurowestern values. The enormous external and internal pressures affecting many islands result in a continuum of values and a range of practices that should be resistant to facile dichotomizations. Yet, behaviors and practices of Caribbean, particularly West Indian people continue to be dichotomized as either modern or traditional.

Many observers would argue that at the dawning of the twenty-first century, Caribbean people are still not quite "modern." To government officials -- particularly those who are metropolitan-based -- Caribbean people occupy two worlds, one traditional and the other, on the surface at least, decisively modern. This dualism has less to do with "transnationalism" than with the structure and the historical context of Caribbean societies. Even without "transnational" movement, many inhabitants experience the advantages and disadvantages of "modernity" and "traditionalism" in their own backyards. Further complicating the situation is the fact that most West Indian territories are socially, culturally, religiously, and even linguistically complex (Trouillot 1992; see also Allahaar 1993, 1994; Thompson 1997). "Caribbean" anthropology (to the extent that it exists) is even more fragmented than the region it purports to study.

Due to the aforementioned realities, theoretical analysis must incorporate some very complicated and, at times, confusing issues. According to Trouillot (1992)

the real debate is not over whether heterogeneity exists, but about where to locate it and -- quite literally -- what to do with it. The answer to that question turns on one's idea of what Caribbean societies are about and, equally important, on one's theory of culture and society...the inescapable fact of Caribbean heterogeneity poses fundamental questions for anthropological theory that most anthropologists choose to ignore. (1992:25)

But structural-functionalist and pluralist studies of the 1950's identified the West Indian family as the primary determinant of Caribbean society. R.T. Smith argued that the cause of family disorganization was poverty and class exploitation. An alternative approach was the closed corporate community study, for example, Michael Horowitz's Morne Vert: A Village in Martinique (1967), and Miriam Slater's The Caribbean Family: Legitimacy in Martinique (1977), which she herself describes as narrowly focused (1977:38). More macro-oriented scholars of the 1970s, (see Mintz 1959, 1985; Steward 1956) considered the economic base--plantation economy/metropolitan-periphery connections--as decisive. They anticipated the work of Caribbean-born Edouard Glissant, Raphael Confiant, Donald Robotham, Christine Barrow, and a host of other local scholars who both participated in and observed the complexities of Caribbean life.

Robotham (1998) recently argues, for example, that it is of critical importance to distinguish the relations of power, the patterns of development, and the globalization process taking place in the Caribbean from those of other "second world," "third world," and/or "developing" regions. He writes

in the first place, we are dealing in the Caribbean with different ethnicities--African-based ones--that occupy a different position in the global ordering...What is more, the white and Anglo-American/European identities have established self-definitions much more deeply driven by the historical experience of plantation slavery and the slave trade. These experiences have shaped the definition of whiteness and white hegemonies in deep contrast and contradistinction to blackness and black subordination, as an entire hegemonic complex and structure. (1998:307)

A number of scholars (see Austin 1983, Robotham 1991) have criticized constructs such as "plantation complex" and "plural society" on the basis that they inadequately differentiate terms such as culture, society, ideology, and values. In particular, the plural society model, they argue, fails to recognize values seemingly propagated *within* various color groupings but shared by others. Also, it is highly likely that class-assigned values might be rejected by some members of the group. Instead, as Austin argues, all value systems *should* be considered equally legitimate and reflective of the interests that they serve (1983:223). This case not been the case for Eurowestern scholars, most of whom have been preoccupied with analyzing West Indian value systems associated with mating and procreation.

British Family Studies

Primarily because they were conducted by researchers whose only frames of reference were Eurowestern norms and deviant urban minorities, a great deal of the literature about Caribbean family life is overwhelmingly ethnocentric. Like mid-1950s urban Afro-Americans, West Indian fathers were denigrated as ephemeral figures in family life, while West Indian women were vilified as imprudent, irrational, and immoral breeders

of illegitimate children. Another characteristic is that although early studies claim to focus on class, the overtone of this literature is racial and is grounded by a Malthusian orientation exalting Hajnal's concept of The European Marriage Pattern.

Few European researchers took into account the fact that the pattern of marriage and mating predominant in Europe was merely, like other imported institutions, grafted onto societies that faced a very different set of socio-economic circumstances. There was a strong preoccupation with conjugal nuclearity further requiring that parents assume legal responsibility for the social and economic welfare of their children and of each other. Many early twentieth-century scholars were also evolutionists and believed that West Indians were naturally closer to the lower, more savage end of the evolutionary scale. Still others subscribed to a concept of the "white man's burden," fervently believing that in spite of past history, "natives" could indeed progress.

Yet, frequent reference to social practices aside, initially, how West Indians mated, procreated, and organized their families was generally of less interest than the prevention of violent labor and anti-colonial riots, particularly such as those that swept through Jamaica in 1938. To quell social and political unrest, a good percentage of prewar and early postwar literature on West Indian people resulted from studies mandated by colonial officials who wanted to assess the living conditions of a fairly recently emancipated black population. The early objective was not to research the cause of rapidly deteriorating living conditions but to assess how they could be sufficiently improved so as to prevent discontented blacks from rioting. On-site inspections were typically conducted by members of government-appointed commissions. The most

renowned of these commissions, the Moyne Commission, appointed by the British Colonial Office, consisted of a team of investigative commissioners headed by Lord Moyne. The Commission, which conducted research on local conditions, was appointed after the violent and destructive riots of May 1938 riots similar to those occurring on several British-held Caribbean islands. Its task was to carry out a comprehensive investigation of all aspects of life in British-held Caribbean territories and to make a complete report.

Each of the various government-mandated investigations focused on one particular aspect of political or economic activity. The Moyne Commission was charged with visiting all British-held territories in the Caribbean and listening to people from all walks of life. It investigated trade union demands and workmen's compensation issues (a particularly volatile topic), health, housing, education, and employment, and made recommendations on the issue of self-government. Commissioners found serious inadequacies in all aspects of West Indian life. They also realized, given the severity of conditions, that the most serious problem facing West Indian governments was that they lacked sufficient money to make any appreciable improvements in the lives of black inhabitants (Claypole and Robottom 1992:119-121). Another problem was that West Indian social values and traditional practices, like those of Afro-Americans, seemed to condone illegitimacy and casual sexual unions.

The Idealization of Legitimacy: Bastards and Other Burdens

The most important legal rule concerning the physiological state of kinship is that no child should be brought into this world without a man -- and one man at that-- assuming the role of the sociological father. (Malinowski 1930:137-138)¹

The convictions set forth in British functionalist anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski's famous "Principle of Legitimacy" only reflected long-standing beliefs and tenets central to Eurowestern moral values. These tenets formed the foundation for analyzing social practices among Caribbean people and for formulating a new code among former slaves whose mating practices should now emulate those of the West. Indeed, one could speculate that if Eurowestern social values and mating practices had been thoroughly assimilated by non-white Caribbean-born peoples, the region would have attracted scant scholarly attention. However, the process of assimilation to Western values has been incomplete and selective, particularly in the area of mating and procreative practices, making Caribbean peoples vulnerable to considerable intellectualizing as to the cause of this difference.

A particularly unsettling West Indian trait was the apparent absence of negative social sanctions against "illegitimate" births since the subject of "bastardy" had long been a concern of European social commentary. Its lineage dates from pre-Malthusian days when the Church of England, via the parish system, doled out "poor relief" to local inhabitants (Hendrix 1996:27). Post-hoc demographic analyses of eighteenth- and

¹from Bronislaw Malinowski, "Parenthood, the Basis of Social Structure." 1930 in, V.F. Calverton and S.D. Schmalhausen (eds.) NY

nineteenth-century Europe reveal low rates of illegitimacy; nonetheless, those overly concerned with illegitimate procreation persisted in being so, supported by dark Malthusian warnings. These sharp warnings enabled industrial capitalist interests to succeed in effectively countering the arguments of English "do-gooders" who wanted to increase the system of poor relief. Laissez-faire capitalists pushed forward their agenda of reducing or curtailing poor relief by asserting that a too generous system -- a system that supported bastards -- would be counterproductive to individual recipients and to society at large (James 1979:126-136).

During the period of slavery the "*Code Noir*"² was used throughout the Caribbean to legislate the rights and duties of slaves, the relations between slaves, and the relations between slaves and slave owners. Reminiscent of the Malthusian rhetoric, dogmatic proclamations of moral certitude regarding the "proper" foundation upon which to establish and to support a family targeted turn-of-the-century Caribbean populations. The motivation behind making residents declare responsibility for offspring flowed from the expectation that a modern family revolved around legal marriage.

In the French West Indies, the presence of priests and other Catholic missionaries extended back to the period of slavery and the tenets of Catholicism permeated, to a greater degree, the religious life of both white and non-white inhabitants. In the English-speaking Caribbean, the prolonged influence of Western missionaries occurred relatively late resulting in the retention of African-based religions within the population. After

² The *Code Noir*, originally passed by the French Government in 1685 ostensibly to regulate the treatment of slaves, was several times amended to also impose a slate of restrictions on *gens de couleur*, or freed slaves who were gaining in economic importance. (see Claypole and Robottom 1992:113-116).

emancipation, missionaries formerly rebuffed by white colonials, marched onto various Caribbean soils to regularize and to regiment the population by preaching doctrines which had been finely tuned in Europe³. Inhabitants for whom marriage was forbidden were now told that it was the only "proper" channel of sexual activity (Clarke 1957; Barrow 1996). According to these new teachings, couples should neither marry nor engage in sexual activity until and unless they were financially capable of providing for themselves and for prospective offspring.

The new doctrines proclaimed that it was morally and legally incumbent upon the male partner to follow through on what he had started. Caribbean men, accustomed to "paternal alienation" (Barrow 1996:248) were now told not only to produce and to reproduce as before but were ordered to marry the female objects of their affections and to remain attached to the newly formed family. For the recently liberated male slave for whom abrupt detachment rather than permanent attachment had dominated the fabric of gender relations, the new dicta of provide, procreate, and stay put represented a radical departure from the past. Yet (in the interests of religious and moral values) missionaries were determined to make this happen, if necessary by officiating at hastily arranged mass wedding ceremonies.

In 1839, The Act for the Encouragement of Baptisms and Marriages set the stage in the English-speaking Caribbean for stipulating that children were the financial

³The reception of missionaries from different sects by local planters and planter class interests wavered, during different periods, between being welcoming, lukewarm and hostile, depending on local social unrest. At times, some missionaries were accused of inciting anti-colonial sentiment, while at others they were seen as exerting a good influence on ex-slaves by making them more docile, rational, and/or tolerant of labor-related discipline. Missionaries were also responsible for setting up the earliest black schools (Claypole and Robottom 1992:7-8).

responsibility of their parents. To encourage slaves to marry, several inducements were offered, including the use of a cottage, extra free time, and a reduction of work assignments (see Barrow 1996:253).

Not only were young parents and couples admonished to be fully responsible for their offspring, but the introduction of the Maintenance Law enacted by the British colonial government in 1869 required that grandparents assume responsibility if parents were unable or unavailable to care for their children. Likewise, it became the responsibility of children and grandchildren to assume financial responsibility for parents and grandparents. The extension of this law made a man responsible not only for his own children, but *for the legitimate and illegitimate children of any woman with whom he was cohabitating*. The basis of this thinking was to be found in the English Law of Torts, which deemed that a man accepted a woman "as she was."

In Jamaica, the official registration of births was not required until 1878, at which time it was revealed that approximately sixty percent of all births took place outside of marriage, making these children *filius nullius* or no one's children in the eyes of English law. A committee (consisting of white elites) was formed to discuss the issue and to make recommendations. The problem of financial responsibility was of utmost concern and thus the committee recommended the legalization of "common law" unions and mandated that a father's name be listed on all birth registrations. The committee's idea was that unless a named father could successfully contest paternity, he would be liable for child support (Boxhill 1985:14). However, despite the fact that for some fifty years slaves were encouraged to legally marry, no provisions were made for dissolving legal

relationships between non-whites until 1879 with the passage of the Divorce Act. This act focused particularly on economic support; essentially it gave the local court the power to issue maintenance, custody, and education orders for children to parties involved in divorce proceedings (Gibson 1984:68-69).

Meanwhile, in the French West Indies, in the early 1900s, missionaries actually officiated at post-hoc "group" marriages (Chauleau 1979).⁴ As in the English-speaking West Indies, any man living with a women and her children was tacitly assumed to be financially responsible for all her offspring (Barrow 1996:60, Boxhill 1997:92). Here, the law contained within the Napoleonic Code which distinguished between legal and non-legal children, and which restricted legal inheritance to legal heirs only, was finally revamped in 1972 (Lewis 1972)⁵.

The new law abolishes the difference previously drawn between "natural children" of unmarried parents and children born of adultery....The new law provides that anyone who had sexual relations with his [the child's] mother during the legal period of conception...must pay support. But mothers who "engaged in debauch" are excluded...The law also eliminates the "presumptive paternity" of a married woman's husband when the child is born more than 300 days after an order of non-conciliation is issued in a divorce case, whether or not a divorce is granted. (Slater 1977:160).

"Women who engaged in debauch" was a reference to prostitutes. Family laws made a major distinction between "unrecognized" children and "recognized" children.

⁴Catholic missions during the early 1900s consisted of traveling missionaries who moved from commune to commune staying at each one for several weeks at a time. They held mass preach-ins, and public singing festivals. The clergy were noted for their colorful attire (usually denoting the religious season). These missions used highly learned and well-schooled clergy in order to produce maximum effect. Major missions were held in 1923 and regularly thereafter. Common-law couples were urged to marry in group ceremonies which, due to their impromptu nature, allowed a couple to avoid the expense of an obligatory *fête* (see especially Liliane Chauleau 1979, *The Daily Life of French West Indians during the Period of Schoelcher*, Boutin 1992, and Slater 1967).

Even before the legal reform, recognized children could inherit property, whereas unrecognized children could not. Naming practices followed similar lines; for example, recognized children assumed the father's surname while "unrecognized" children were given the family name of the mother.

By the mid-twentieth century, Eurowestern scholars who analyzed relationships among West Indian men and women involving sexual contact firmly believed that they should be legal rather than causal or consensual. No longer private property, the offspring of West Indian sexual relationships were suddenly characterized as "bastards" of absent or invisible fathers who were able to escape financial responsibility for their children. To be sure, illegitimacy and bastardy existed in the West but, except among lower-class African-Americans, here it occurred as the exception rather than the rule.

In the mid-1950s, most Western countries had fully developed public assistance programs for metropolitan citizens, but in the United States a theme pervading much social commentary was the allegation that most relief recipients were black. The British had no welfare program for their Caribbean subjects but the French had a generous entitlement program available to metropolitan citizens, and by law, had to be extended to French West Indians. They were concerned that if a full slate of entitlements were extended to their Caribbean subjects, a situation similar to the American problem would develop.

⁵Flora Lewis, "French Reform of a Napoleonic Law Gives Illegitimate Children Full Rights": The New York Times, August 5, 1972.

Typologizing the West Indian Family: A Retrospective

The prevailing type of West Indian family which is encountered over and over again in all the colonies is very loose in organization. It is rarely founded on the ceremony of marriage, and the relationships between its members are very casual indeed...in the majority of cases the relationships between the sexes which lead to the procreation of children are temporary...(T. Simey 1946:53)

The fact of illegitimate birth is one completely taken for granted. An illegitimate child does not consider himself disadvantaged thereby, since legitimacy is an exceptional status rather than illegitimacy. This cannot but have a most important bearing on the development of personality. (ibid: 84)

Virtually every major French demographic study of Antillean fertility and family formation in some way incorporated the themes and explanations proposed by North American scholars at mid-century. When trying to explain the issues of matrifocality, illegitimacy, multiple partners (or neo-polygamy), and family organization many missed the subtle and not so subtle substance of these debates. The goals and objectives of the French and British differed, however, vis-à-vis their West Indian populations and their political and social-economic trajectories diverged. Still, these oversights are surprising given that fertility studies of French West Indian fertility patterns were conducted some ten to twenty years after these issues were debated in the United States and in the English-speaking Caribbean. As a consequence, in some instances French studies have resurrected the themes and causal factors posited in earlier investigations, and one way to understand the genesis of fertility studies of the French West Indies is to understand the literature from which they borrowed, studies of West Indian and American Blacks. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, French studies made little mention of race or of

cultural differences, but by the early 1950s, the images they projected were as stereotypical as those of their North American colleagues.

Christine Barrow argues that only in the last twenty years, as Caribbean-born scholars entered the debates about West Indian families and attempted to systematically dismantle the prevailing logic and to replace stereotypical portrayals with “positive evaluations of resilience and adaptability,” has a change in the orientation of typologies occurred (1996:xi). Barrow also attributes this interpretive change to the higher percentage of extended female-centered and single-parent households in Europe and in North America which have resulted from rising divorce rates and declines in the rates of marriage. The shift away from the conjugal nuclear model as the dominant norm worldwide has helped to soften the ethnocentric analyses of Western scholars whom, despite their best intentions, continued to uphold the conjugal nuclear family model as the ideal.

Barrow divides the early literature on the West Indian family into two phases -- the search for origins, and the analysis of functions. I however contend that prior to the 1970s, when family organization as “adaptive response” and “cultural ideology” gained in popularity, there was also a third phase. This literature, which focuses on the search for pragmatic solutions to problems associated with overpopulation and poverty, rose into prominence after family forms, mating traditions, and overpopulation were conceptually linked. These characterizations of Caribbean family problems were, in reality, the precursor to the notorious “culture of poverty” thesis. When “loose” West Indian morals

appeared to threaten regional political stability and metropolitan budgets, these studies answered the mandate to create remedies for rapid population growth.

The dominant discourses found in pre-1970s family studies indicated to policy planners that the “unstable” West Indian family structure was responsible for social instability and demographic stress. Scholars wrote that unstable family forms were prevalent primarily among the “lower class,” but, the lower class made up the bulk of the West Indian population. Their problems were characterized as similar to the incoherent African-American family widely discussed in North American studies about the “Negro Problem.” In fact, debates about the origin of Caribbean family structure were an extension of pre-World War II debates over the origin of the family structure favored by “New World Negroes” -- or North American blacks. Mid-century scholars who analyzed family systems in the Caribbean continued to refer to the Herskovits/Frazier debate. E. Franklin Frazier had posited that black family structure had originated during the period of slavery opposing Melville Herskovits’ argument that it was a survival of an African cultural tradition. Herskovits’ “survival” theory was rejected and unfortunately, in Barrow’s opinion, social scientists, such as Thomas. S. Simey (1946) and Fernando Henriques (1949, 1953), who subsequently continued a Caribbean-focused research, were more influenced by E. Franklin Frazier’s “culture of slavery” thesis (1996:6). M.G. Smith’s beliefs were opposed to those of Herskovits. Although the debate was largely about historical origins, it quickly assumed an ideological dimension.

Initially Caribbean researchers who used Frazier’s analyses as a foundation for identifying problems among West Indians were originally neither sociologists or

anthropologists. Immediately after World War II, Caribbean family studies were conducted by social welfare workers who were in turn replaced by British social anthropologists responsible for the theoretical shift to functions. Two major trends developed in this era; the first was a preoccupation with “social pathology” which characterized the writings of welfare workers. The “pathological” phase was followed by structure-functionalism, in the British tradition of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown; these studies emphasized the coherence of social structure, but also included a variant -- pluralism -- which emphasized discontinuities in society.

Social welfare works were intent on relaying the inner workings of deviant forms of family organization and explaining not why they existed, but deconstructing them as the underlying source of social problems and political instability in the islands, and their devising solutions. Following the 1938 riots, representatives of the Moyne Commission, rather than placing the emphasis on economic exploitation by British interests, argued that the basic problem was that men were delinquent in their responsibilities as heads of household and financial providers. They created a portrait of the family in the West Indies where “promiscuity and illegitimacy are so prevalent and the woman so often is the supporter of the home”(West India Royal Commission 1945, quoted in Barrow 1996:9). Following a review of the Commission’s complete findings, a group of social welfare administrators were dispatched by Britain’s Colonial Welfare Office to analyze how this situation could be remedied and to assist in setting the groundwork for locally administered Welfare Offices. The most prominent name associated with this charge was that of Thomas Simey whose objective was to create a program that would eradicate the

social problems which, from his perspective, were ultimately attributable to issues of family structure. According to Robotham, Simey's primary objective was to reduce population. His research was a direct result of the assumption that high fertility was the result of non-Christian marriage, and non-Christian marriage caused poverty. In turn, poverty was the cause of overpopulation and this was the result of indiscriminate mating which in turn led to an unstable family structure (Robotham 2000).⁶ Simey's visit to the West Indies was also for the purpose of advising the recently instituted agency, the Department of Colonial Development and Welfare. Simey attacked Herskovits' study of black family life in the U.S. on the basis that it contained no directives for devising social policy. He praised the work of E. Franklin Frazier because it was largely policy-oriented and conformed to his own conclusion that contemporary economic circumstances were far more influential on family life than was the survival of African tradition.

In Simey's opinion, economic circumstances should be attributed to internal rather than external factors. In fact, Simey posited that while economic circumstances conditioned the form of family organization, it was the weakness of family structure which was ultimately the cause of poverty in the Caribbean. Simey also linked overpopulation to poverty associated with disorganized and dysfunctional family life. Members of such disintegrate families were likely to frequently and irresponsibly procreate but fail to provide their offspring with proper socialization or financial support. His solution was, therefore, not only to increase economic assistance but to reshape the values associated with the family.

⁶ Personal communication.

Simey's portrayal of West Indian family life contained many specific characteristics later used by Oscar Lewis (1957) in his "culture of poverty" thesis. Simey conducted no fieldwork yet asserted that family ties were "loose, unstable, transitory," and gender relations were most often "promiscuous" and fathers were largely financially and emotionally marginal figures in the lives of their children. In Simey's opinion, the family was the "outstandingly important social institution of the West Indies" and needed to become more aligned with the Western (Christian) model or the entire society would continue to suffer and remain impoverished. As an institution in crisis, the West Indian family was implicated as the source of a host of other social problems among which was the problem of juvenile delinquency. In other words, family problems evolved into societal problems but poverty was the expression of a crisis exacerbated by the absence of solidifying family traditions such as a lack of food, a lack of dining tables and chairs, and the lack of a communal meal. According to Simey, "the common family meal is one of the strongest ties of family life, since the sitting together at a common table involves the sharing of many more things than food, but this is rarely made a practice by the masses in the West Indies. Adults and children alike gather their food together in a tin dish or plate, and eat it at any time and in any place round about the home which may be convenient"(Simey 1946:91-92). This approach implied that weak family structure led to high fertility; high fertility led to overpopulation; and overpopulation led to poverty.

Simey never did explain why other poor people throughout the world managed to live in nuclear conjugal families, but rather argued simply that poverty caused unstable families. He pushed forward his criticism of the West Indian family linking its lack of

cohesion, common ritual, and conjugality into a social agenda for social reformers. In Simey's opinion, the next logical step was to encourage the population to adopt the Western family model of legalized relationships and to produce legitimate children. Efforts were made to introduce social policies with the specific objective of promoting legal marriage. One such effort was that of Lady Huggins, wife of the Governor of Jamaica, who became the force behind the institution of the Jamaican Mass Marriage Movement started in 1944-45. The efforts of Lady Huggins were supported by members of the middle-class -- essentially the brown elite who ascribed to Eurowestern values and the conjugal/neolocal family model (M.G. Smith 1957:v).

M.G. Smith writes in the preface of Edith Clarke's 1957 study that at its greatest impact the movement lifted the Jamaican marriage rate from 4.44 per thousand in 1943 to 5.82 in 1946, but marriage and illegitimacy rates had reverted to their earlier levels by 1951 and by 1955 the Movement had essentially died out. It failed due to ignorance on the part of the planners utilizing misconceived methods and goals and because organizers assumed that both elites and lower-class residents employed the single word "marriage" to denote a particular conjugal institution, and that this word had identical value and significance among all social strata (Smith 1957:iv). Its failure however, did identify the need for systematic study of "unfamiliar familial institutions linked to problems of high illegitimacy rates, promiscuity, and marital instability"(ibid 1957:v).

Simey's study provided the first typology of the West Indian family and his conclusions served as a basis for the Mass Marriage Movement as well as for later studies. Indeed, when French officials later attempted to study the relationship between

family form, household composition, and fertility rates, they adopted the typologies developed by British scholars in the English-speaking West Indies. The first typologies constructed focused largely on household composition and closely followed census categories already in use. In fact, Barrow reports that some of the social welfare researchers, such as Simey, relied totally on census data as the basis for their assumptions and conclusions.

Simey acknowledged that his data base, collected on a survey of 270 rural families by the Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, was small and was not truly statistically random but he felt that it did provide a sufficient basis for constructing household classifications (Barrow 1996:55). According to him there were four dominant types:⁷

Christian family, based on marriage and a patriarchal order approximating that of Christian families in other parts of the world;

faithful concubinage, again based on a patriarchal order, possessing no legal status, but well established and enduring for at least three years;

companionate family, in which the members live together for pleasure and convenience, and for less than three years;

Disintegrate family, consisting of women and children only, in which men merely visit the women from time to time, with no pattern of conduct being established.

Concerned with “weak” family structures, low marriage and high illegitimacy rates,

Simey’s typology reflected his assumptions of what he felt a family ought to be, i.e.

nuclear and with all members of the family residing under one roof. From data compiled

on the 270 families he calculated that twenty percent could be characterized as “Christian

⁷ T.S. Simey (1946). Welfare and Planning in the West Indies. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Quoted in M. Slater (1977). The Caribbean Family: Legitimacy in Martinique. New York: St. Martin's Press

families,” twenty-nine percent as based on “faithful concubinage,” and with companionate unions and disintegrate families comprising the remaining fifty-one percent. The small number of households that could be categorized as Christian was particularly alarming to those concerned with the promotion of (Eurowestern) family values.

Primarily because it was the first of its kind, his typology was quickly adopted by other researchers, particularly fertility specialists, as a more accurate way to classify West Indian family life. Sociologist Fernando Henriques adopted the first two classifications but retitled --“companionate” and “disintegrate” families as “maternal or grandmother family,” and as “keeper family” (Henriques 1953:109). Henriques felt the revised typology was more culturally sensitive, but he found it difficult to use census information as his newly created categories were different from those currently used by the government. In the end Henriques was only able to estimate the distribution of families in his typology.

Functional Studies

Although the first typology of the West Indian family was created during the “pathology” era, studies and programs instituted as a result of the social welfare research had proved to be inaccurate and problematic. For example, M.G. Smith discusses the Mass Marriage Movement which came upon the heels of Simey’s recommendations but writes that since it was conceived in error, it was doomed for failure. Nonetheless Smith contends that

its early signs of failure indicated the need for systematic sociological studies of those unfamiliar familial institutions with which the problems of 'promiscuity', marital instability, defective paternity and child socialization, high illegitimacy birth rates and low rates of marriage were all evidently linked, though in obscure and problematic ways. (1957:v)

Government officials also highlighted the need for accurate studies and studies based on actual research conducted among the people who needed to most benefit from social reform. In the preface of Edith Clarke's study, Jamaican Governor Sir Hugh Foot wrote that when

we are establishing a new land authority or seeking to carry out some agricultural improvements or development, we are constantly reminded how little we know of the attitudes and suspicions and weaknesses and aspirations and all the fine qualities of the country people. In housing when we came to carry out the big programme of reconstruction following the 1951 hurricane, again we discovered how little we knew about the way the ordinary Jamaican families live. It has been the same in carrying out all branches of Government policy--in our health services, in our education and in industry. We build the superstructure without a real knowledge of the foundations. (Sir Hugh Foot, quoted in Clarke 1957:9)

As British anthropologists had attended many of the lectures given by American scholars about the problems associated with blacks and other U.S. minorities, they were well aware that much of the literature on Negro "origins" focused primarily on American issues. They looked to create a perspective on blacks that pertained specifically to West Indians. In the structural-functional phase, scholars continued to be preoccupied with family and mating practices of "lower-class Negroes" but argued that a thorough understanding of the culture was needed before conclusions and analyses could be made. This necessitated detailed and lengthy field studies and the scientific gathering of data among the people themselves -- unlike social welfare workers who relied on little if any

field research. Although each had a slightly different emphasis and interpretation, scholars of this era included Edith Clarke, Fernando Henriques, Judith Blake, Raymond T. Smith, and Michael G. Smith. In keeping with their academic training, these scholars focused on the social structure rather than on history and origins. They continued to voice concern that the majority of West Indians lived in families far removed from the conjugal, co-residential model which to them represented the optimum conditions under which proper socialization functions could be achieved. Men were neither primary breadwinners nor household authority figures, and overburdened women were the most central figures in family life. The structural-functionalist research was also static, virtually timeless, emphasized social consensus and community patterns, but made little mention of conflict or strain within the local or larger community.

Arguably two of the most influential studies of this era were Edith Clarke's My Mother Who Fathered Me: A Study of the Family in Three Selected Communities in Jamaica (1957), and Raymond T. Smith's The Negro Family in British Guiana: Family Structure and Social Status in the Villages (1956). In the preface of Clarke's book, Jamaican Governor Hugh Foote wrote that he first met Edith Clarke in 1945 when she was serving as Administrative Secretary of the Board of Supervision which controlled poor relief throughout the island of Jamaica. He had praised her as a good administrator and anthropologist because she was so concerned about the lives of the Jamaican people and seemed to have taken an interest in learning about and improving their circumstances. Foote later learned that Clarke, who came from a prominent white Jamaican family, had studied in England where she had received a diploma in Anthropology but decided to

return to Jamaica to become involved in emergent welfare activities. In need of advice about how to best improve conditions and to administer the fledgling Colonial Development and Welfare Office, the British Social Science Research Council asked Edith Clarke to make a formal study of Jamaican life and agreed to fund her research. During her fieldwork Clarke was joined by social psychiatrist Madeline Kerr whose purpose was to develop a psychological profile of class and community issues and the socialization process among rural Jamaicans.

The purpose of Clarke's study was to demonstrate how the immediate community and its external connections influenced family life. Another purpose was to refute essentialized portrayals that had characterized "lower-class" West Indian families as "undifferentiated and uniform" (1957:xx). The object was not so much to demonstrate that there was a single causal factor, such as economic status, but to show that how and why individuals mate and organize themselves as a family is often due to varied but largely external influences. Contrary to previous studies, Clarke was emphatic that "loose" family organization did not cause poverty; poverty derived its origin from the colonial plantation system and was perpetuated by class exploitation. Moreover, one of the reasons for the subsequent influence of Clarke's study was its eclectic nature: it emphasized contemporary conditions, but also suggested that the plantation system and slavery were to blame. Other studies by Clarke on family land even hinted that African influences played a role -- and this suggestion was well received by supporters of Herskovits. Clarke's ideal, however, was clearly the independent prosperous peasant family (Robotham 2000).

To illustrate the importance of the immediate community, its economic circumstances, population stability, and its values and norms, Clarke chose to investigate three different communities which she calls Mocca, Sugartown, and Orange Grove. The categories that Clarke used to typologize Jamaican households in her communities were very similar to the ones adapted by Henriques. Yet, rather than trying to conform to census categories, Clarke developed her classifications to encompass the range of types she encountered in her fieldwork. "Household" was renamed "residential grouping" and although they were further subdivided, she developed six primary groupings. These consisted of simple family, extended family, denuded simple, denuded extended, single person, and sibling households. Household types were further clarified according to the sex of the adult present, the presence or absence of children (blood-related, adopted, or outside), and whether they contained other kin or non-kin members. Barrow writes that ultimately Clarke's "refinement of the typology by the seemingly endless proliferation of types in order to provide a category for each and every one of the households in her sample from the three Jamaican villages becomes unmanageable, and the statistical distribution of each increasingly meaningless" (Barrow 1996:57). Yet Clarke did succeed in diverting the emphasis from family organization and mating practices as causal to economic circumstances and to the exploitation of lower-class West Indian workers.

The second major study of the structure-functionalist genre was Raymond T. Smith's The Negro Family in British Guiana. Like Clarke, R.T. Smith conducted fieldwork and also based his research on a comparative study of three village communities. Drawing on her experience as a social administrator, Jamaican patriot,

“with a family history of improving the lot of the poor,” and from her collaborate work with social psychologist Kerr. Clarke had passed judgment on lower-class mating practices. R.T. Smith argued against Simey’s early culture of poverty thesis and instead attempted to demonstrate that the characteristics of the black family in Guyana, rather than the cause of poverty, were caused by economic exploitation and status differentials. In his estimation, only direct attacks on poverty could possibly change the family structure towards nuclear norms.

R.T. Smith also believed that the family assumed primary responsibility for several important functions that were necessary to the integration and smooth functioning of a society. In his study he identified six family functions which he characterized as “elements of household group activity” existing in Negro villages of British Guiana but, although differentiated on the basis of occupational, or cultural factors, he believed that they were generally widespread in the Caribbean. The six functions were: childcare; sexual services; domestic services; economic support; managerial functions; and status-defining functions (quoted in Barrow 1996:42).

R.T. Smith noted that young women tended to remain in their parents household during a period of “maximum instability in their sexual relationships,” and may have several children during this process before settling down with a permanent mate. Whether the couple is legally married or not, after settling with one permanent mate the relationship becomes stable if not permanent. According to Smith, a woman might feel more insecure at the start of the cohabiting relationship but as time passed became increasingly secure with the knowledge that should the partnership dissolve the courts

would enforce payment of child maintenance. Nor to Smith was there significant difference between the status of common-law and legal marriage, and legalizing the status of an offspring was not sufficient motivation for people to legally marry (R.T. Smith 1956:178). In R.T. Smith's estimation, although common-law relationships were frequently transformed into legal marriage after a period of years, this change implied little additional status. Furthermore, some long-term relationships that were subsequently legalized resulted in dissolution (ibid:179).

R.T. Smith argued that another common feature of lower-class West Indian families was the general absence of income-producing property. Although influenced by the lack of property, he cautioned that "it is never the absence of productive property which alone determines the form of family structure." The absence of status of the "father figure" was often attributed to his marginal or complete lack of contribution to the household economy. But the household economy and the marginal economic position of men were themselves the products of colonial exploitation. R.T. Smith observed that male marginality was more likely to be true among lower-status individuals, but could also be true when a middle-class man married up (to a lighter-skinned woman) in which case he had to constantly provide the economic means to maintain the couple's social status or he risked a deterioration of his own status within the household (Barrow 1996:45). He further elaborated that although slavery may have given rise to the matrifocal family it is not causal of the contemporary phenomena. To point to cause one must "examine the correspondence between various parts of the contemporary system (ibid). In his opinion the cause was the contemporary economy and the heritage of the slavery system. In

addition, R.T. Smith tied union status (as influenced by slavery) with economic status, which in turn influenced fertility.

Like his predecessors, R.T. Smith also attempted to develop an accurate typology of West Indian household types but noted that there was great variation and was critically opposed to trying to fit the spectrum of this variation into a few rigid categories. While his criticisms of previous typologies were valid, as was his charge that they did not incorporate the flux and change that commonly occurred over a period of time, his own study was nearer to a static model than to one incorporating diachronic data. Jamaican-born Michael G. Smith charges that R.T. Smith ultimately failed to create categories that could be used with any positive result. Particularly problematic was R.T. Smith's view that distinctions between "legal and consensual cohabitation, and between legitimate and illegitimate children are sociologically irrelevant (M.G. Smith 1957:xii).

M.G. Smith's pluralist analysis viewed institutions as the core of a culture, with "each institution involving set forms of activity, groupings, rules, ideals and values" (M.G. Smith 1965:79). Smith extracted his data from household samples drawn from Carriacou, Grenada, and Jamaica collected between 1953 and 1955 (1962:3). M.G. Smith argued that the "institutions of a people's culture form the matrix of their social structure, simply because the institutional system defines and sanctions the persistent forms of social life (1965:80). In other words, in order to ascertain why certain family formations and mating practices are dominant, one would have to carefully examine the context in which they are found. In M.G. Smith's estimation, conjugal unions (of all kinds) were important regulators or "structural determinants" of household composition and of the

role of parents. Smith further observes that the range of alternative mating forms commonly found in the West Indies which

regulate the allocation of parental roles also regulate the constitution and growth of domestic unions...they do so in various ways; by permitting mates to live together or to live apart with their own kin; by bringing into being new households based on cohabitation, whether childless or not; and by bringing into households new members whose parents do not live together. In this system, the extra residential mating form permits persons to live alone or with their siblings, their children or their grandchildren, while maintaining conjugal relations...The entire complex of domestic relations, the range and variety of domestic forms, the patterns of isolation and association, all are regulated by the system of mating alternatives and its associated parental roles. (Smith 1962:224-225)

What was particularly important about M.G. Smith's perspective is that it portrayed the West Indian family as fluid rather than static, and it encouraged the inclusion of marital and extra-marital unions (such as the "visiting union"), each as important and distinctive types.

Family Form, Union Status, and Fertility

Simey's visit to the West Indies was a direct result of a widespread concern about the potentially explosive combination of poverty and overpopulation, but he asserted that mating practices and non-Christian marriage were primarily to blame. A number of other pre-1970s studies also focused on the problems of overpopulation and high fertility. In addition to R.T. Smith, who explicitly linked overpopulation with union status, a host of well- and lesser-known scholars became deeply involved in this issue, among those was Judith Blake (1961). In her work entitled Family Structure in Jamaica: The Social Context of Reproduction, Blake attempted to address the distinctions between

consensual and legal relationships overlooked by R.T. Smith. However, her primary focus was family form as it correlates with fertility. Blake was criticized for her overemphasis on legal marriage as as that which conferred the most desirable status upon West Indian women. Her interpretations were at variance with those posited by social anthropologist Michael G. Smith. Blake argued against the conclusion that lower-class common-law relationships were the functional equivalent of marriage by pointing to the fact that her lower-class female respondents said that they regarded marriage as the norm and morally disapproved of extra-legal mating and illegitimacy. Her assertion that girls became pregnant out of ignorance and poor socialization, and were exploited by philandering males, was rejected. Even more contentious was Blake's assertion that women who had borne children in previous relationships became "damaged goods" with significantly decreased prospects of permanent relationship or legal marriage.

M.G. Smith argued that evidence subsequently presented by Stycos and Back (1964) demonstrated the contrary, and that (1) women distinguished between casual liaisons and a sexual relationship, the latter lasting longer than three months; (2) young girls were not ignorant, innocent, nor the victims of lack of parental oversight or of male exploitation, but rather understood and participated in a socially accepted pattern of serial relationships; (3) single mothers' marriage prospects were not reduced by having children from former unions (or else no one would marry!) and, as both men and women tended to marry later, the resulting household could include children of previous relationships of both the husband and the wife.

M.G. Smith pointed out that Blake's faulty interpretations were most likely related to the fact that she was confused by Jamaicans concepts of marriage and family, and that she had only minimal contact with her survey participants. Also curious is the fact that Blake conducted her research in 1953, precisely when the Mass Marriage Movement was taking place, and this may have compounded her subject's confusion. M.G. Smith observed that although by 1953 the Movement's leaders were beginning to acknowledge failure, Blake contended that it failed only because it was poorly funded and organized, not because its principles were at extreme variance with the prevailing culture.

In the 1950s, Caribbean-based demographers, aware that the "problem" of illegitimacy, unstable "visiting," and common-law unions loomed large among analyses of population in the West Indies, concluded that arguments over high birth rates had become less class related and more specifically related to race. One such explanation, first introduced by G.W. Roberts (1955) and later refined by others (see M.G. Smith 1961, Otterbein 1965, Marino 1970), was the sex-ratio thesis which posited that "high proportions of female heads of household are explained by a deficit of males in the population" (Charbit 1984). Between 1850 and 1920 Caribbean emigration was heavily male, and heavy casualties sustained by both British and French West Indian troops during the world wars only exacerbated these imbalances. According to this argument, a pattern of matrifocality and matrilocality prevailed as a result of more recent socio-economic forces which were "totally independent of slavery, which resembled the family patterns of slavery but were not a direct legacy of the slave era" (ibid:24).

This research indicated that the low rate of conjugal unions prevalent throughout the Caribbean appeared to have helped to *decrease* fertility. In his 1955 study of women in the British West Indies, G. W. Roberts noted that, contrary to popular expectations, married women and women in stable common-law relationships had the highest rates of fertility. However Roberts, as did M.G. Smith, stressed that there was a sequence and logic to West Indian mating systems and characterized them as a form of serial monogamy, rather than a system of casual, and promiscuous mating as had been formerly depicted. Nonetheless, policy planners were now alerted to the linkage between marriage and high fertility and other studies reaching similar conclusions only fueled these concerns. For example, using 1946 census data, Dora Ibberson (1956) studied women in Barbados and warned that if marriage among young women increased under current conditions, the birth rate would rise significantly (1956:99).

After research conducted by Davis and Blake (1956) elicited findings similar to those of Ibberson and Roberts, local demographic specialists concentrated their efforts on devising ways to speed birth control information and technology to women of every status. Although simplistic sex-ratio theses were later refuted, development objectives shifted from encouraging legitimate marriage and births to quickly spreading the message of birth control to all women of reproductive age. Unfortunately, as is discussed in chapter eight, Leridon and Charbit, who later conducted fertility studies in the French West Indies, utilized many of the prevailing theories about marital status and fertility and household typologies in their research. In Martinique and Guadeloupe they observed a pattern of higher fertility among married and common-law women in the French West

Indies (1971) and later conducted surveys in order to analyze these findings (1980).

Another simplistic explanation that French researchers later borrow and resurrect is the “West Indian family as a by-product of slavery” thesis which, as I discuss in chapter eight, they begin to use at the end of the twentieth-century.

From Marriage to Contraception

Despite attempts to assign causal factors for poverty to external rather than to internal influences, the debates about the causes and consequences of West Indian poverty and overpopulation centered largely around the organization of the West Indian family. Poverty caused overpopulation but at the root of the issue was a loose family structure, irresponsible, neo-polygamous and immoral mating practices, hence, overprocreation and overpopulation. The optimum solution was to promote conjugality as vigorously as possible but such attempts proved largely unsuccessful and were short-lived. A new emphasis on educating all women in contraceptive techniques regardless of their marital status emerged from demographic analyses of women’s actual situation. The results of quantitative studies like those conducted by demographic experts G.W. Roberts (1955), Stycos and Back (1956), and Blake and Davis (1956) convinced policy planners that without drastic action to combat social issues, Caribbean economic problems would soon career out of control. Nearly all specialists noted that various religious and social sanctions favoring legal marriage after emancipation seemed to have had little permanent effect. Inevitably, the marriage rate peaked during and immediately following missionizing visits but soon after waned.

The next weapon against rising fertility rates was the dissemination of imagery of modern families as consumers in the media. In the 1950s, product advertisements exclusively featured white European consumers who lived in conjugal, neolocal households and who epitomized social respectability and modernity. These consumer messages conveyed the idea that moving from a traditional or Caribbean model of conjugal and household relations to one that conformed to a Eurowestern model signified becoming more white. Still, despite a massive campaign that touted the social *and* consumer rewards awaiting married couples, the conjugal/nuclear model of family formation never took hold. There was no massive rush of blacks to the magistrate's office or altar, and the rates of legal marriage in the West Indies never reached Eurowestern rates.

The Family Planning Movement in the Caribbean

Marriage, with no way of preventing birth, used to mean fear of the future for both men and women, but now, with family planning, it can be a solemn contract between two people, with no emphasis on outward show and with confidence in the future. Marriage is a career and must be learned.

Young West Indians who learn of this vital need for planned parenthood within these islands and within their own families, must also realize that with it comes a need for a permanent sense of the responsibility which they must undertake for the sake of their future, an acceptance that planned parenthood will not give licence for irresponsible actions. (Jacobs and Jacobs 1967:22)

At mid-century, populations were largely youthful -- the consequence of high fertility -- and this circumstance heightened government concerns and roused population experts into action. Social planners in charge of Caribbean economic development

concentrated the bulk of their efforts on raising the consciousness of the younger generation *vis-à-vis* childbearing. Their secondary targets were women currently in their prime procreative years, among whom planners hoped to effect some change in attitude and habits. This older group represented potential "limiters" and "spacers" -- fertile women who would use contraception to limit the total number of births and/or to space children at more acceptable intervals (see Guengant 1985:77).

Notwithstanding some focus of attention on adult women, the greatest efforts were made, as part of the general education process, to reach adolescents -- especially the daughters of women now exhibiting "irresponsible" procreative behavior. As discussed, there was acute concern that promoting legal marriage would not be a sufficient solution. Family planning literature, such as the manual written by Dr. Len Jacobs and his wife Beth (1967), highlighted the economic and personal shortcomings of older women and called attention to their "traditional" but archaic attitudes towards producing large families. Like other social organizers who became active in the Caribbean family planning movements, the Jacobs believed that developing prudent procreative habits (Barrow 1996:53) would particularly help poorer men and women to improve their standard of living.

The attitudes of older women among the lower classes were also cited as causal of the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies. For example, a study published by J. Manyoni (1977), documented the difficulties encountered by schoolteachers when they tried to discuss the issue of teen pregnancy with their students' mothers. According to Manyoni, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, "the reluctance of parents to face up to

the recognition of the problem of premarital and unwanted pregnancies largely accounts for the perpetuation and resigned acceptance of the excessively high birth rate, especially among the young” (1977, quoted in Barrow 1996:223).

Based on research conducted in Barbados, Manyoni asserted that parents rejected school-based sex education as a “dirty subject” and felt that it was unsuitable for all age levels. In his opinion, parents had a prevailing “fatalistic” attitude, particularly among “lower status women,” and believed that it was natural for women to have as many babies as nature dictated. Manyoni observed that schoolteachers seemed as much embarrassed about the casual attitudes of parents as about the high prevalence of pregnancies among their students. Even more startling to Manyoni were the results of his sample survey which indicated that fifty-one of sixty women experienced their first pregnancy between the ages of thirteen and twenty, but only fifteen of the sixty women were legally married (ibid).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, other demographic studies produced similar findings and soon early pregnancy among Afro-Caribbean women became a critical issue (see Nag 1955, Ibberson 1956, Blake 1955, Davis and Blake 1956). As early as 1951, the government of Barbados set up a committee consisting of local and outside experts to examine the issue of increasing birth rates and to make policy recommendations on the subject of overpopulation. In conjunction with the committee’s research, another survey was conducted to assess age-specific fertility rates. The results of this survey indicated that the age group most in need of attention was women between 15 and 24, which

prompted family planners to focus their efforts on younger women (see Nag 1974:119, Ebanks 1973:48-60).

Local psychologists, school and university educators, social workers, religious leaders, and medical professionals all joined forces to help combat the dual problems of parental indifference to teen pregnancy, and the lack of sexual education and family planning education among adolescents. They believed that West Indian females could be made "economically rational" and more concerned with the quality of life than the quantity of children. They hoped also that an ideational gulf between the older and younger generation would grow as more and more young women were exposed to the infinite possibilities of modernity (Ebanks 1973, 1988). In the French West Indies, as elsewhere, not only was advertising⁸ for consumer durables a factor in the formal process of "reorientation" but so too were informal mechanisms such as the accounts given by migrants either returning from the metropole or while visiting family members on vacation. Further, by simultaneously disseminating the message of delayed and/or reduced childbearing, multi-pronged campaigns were set in motion.

In 1952, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) was created as a voluntary private, non-profit agency, and soon exerted enormous influence. In order to achieve its goal of organizing affiliate associations, training bio-medical personnel, and educating all people in responsible parenthood, it adopted a basic premise that unrestricted access to contraceptive service was a basic human right. The IPPF was first

⁸An examination of advertising placed in newspapers and magazines of the period reveals that not only were new products promoted, but new forms of credit financing, such as "the installment plan," were also being introduced.

attracted to the Caribbean region shortly after its creation. In 1953 there were already four Caribbean private family planning associations operating in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Barbados and Bermuda. The IPPF sponsored its first regional conference in San Juan in 1955. Following this, conferences were held in Barbados and Jamaica. By the end of the 1960s, every territory in the English-speaking West Indies was an affiliated member (Segal 1969:31). However, neither the early family planning movements nor more formal organizations were *officially* sanctioned by local governments until the late 1960s.

Until nearly 1970, the emphasis was placed on private family planning initiatives in the region. Private funds for research, trained personnel, contraceptives, sociological study, buildings and educational programs came from organizations such as the Rockefeller-funded Population Council, which was international, non-profit, and voluntary; the Ford Foundation; the Organization of Protestant Churches; as of 1965 from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the World Health Organization (WHO); the Office of Economic Opportunity of the U.S. Federal Government; World Bank advisors; and often covertly from national government sources (ibid).

Nearly all development specialists viewed the Caribbean as a "special" case where rapid population growth went hand in hand with high rates of illegitimacy, for which special considerations had to be made (Nag 1955). Family planning materials tried to incorporate this "special" aspect of Caribbean societies by appealing to rising standards of living and increased educational opportunities, and by instilling a "work ethic" and guilt about taking "handouts." Although most early programs tried to keep a low profile apart

from local government sponsorship or local government regulation, most employed any means necessary to promulgate their message.

Given that teenage pregnancy rates appeared extraordinarily high in many territories (see Guengant 1989), the initial emphasis was placed on educating generally, and re-educating morally, young adults and adolescent children. The underlying rationale was that if this generation understood the message that economic mobility correlated negatively with early pregnancy and/or numerous offspring, more women would desire to contracept and would use contraception more diligently and effectively. Equally important, men who had been educated early in the benefits of using contraception would become willing helpmates and collaborators in the family planning effort.

Although females were the primary target of the 1950s' and 1960s' literature, family planning manuals reminded teenagers of both sexes of the restrictions on personal freedom and certain economic squalor which they were destined to encounter, should they become parents prematurely. Educated and elite local residents were enlisted to help with the cause, and further served as role models of modern respectability. The majority of women who participated were married, and, as was common practice during that period, were addressed as Mrs. (Report on the National Conference on Fertility and The Adolescent, 1980). Local activists viewed spreading the message about contraception as a means of helping less economically fortunate people to improve their future prospects and present socio-economic status. Manuals nearly identical to the Jacobs and Jacobs family planning manual were written and created by family planners in the English-

speaking Caribbean and were translated into French, *Kréyol*, Dutch, and Spanish and distributed whenever and wherever circumstances and local laws permitted.

To be sure, in the 1950s, the question of "artificial" methods of contraception (such as the coil and the diaphragm) versus "natural" methods (such as abstinence or rhythm) was hotly debated in many Western countries. However, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, Western-based family planning programs were emphasizing the former, supported by activists. These programs were advocated by family planning experts from the Population Council, the International Planned Parenthood Association, and USAID who spread the doctrine of "artificial" contraception and family planning throughout the Caribbean. Many governments in the Caribbean did not openly welcome family planning experts, but as more local professionals and researchers affiliated with local churches and universities became involved, in nearly all the islands, government officials looked the other way when they arrived (Segal 1969).

The legality of contraceptive technology remained an issue, even after the onset of mass education programs in the Caribbean. Still, with colonial officials concerned about the mounting costs of overpopulation, often there was a double standard regarding the acquisition and distribution of contraceptive means. The issue was creating turmoil even within western nations that still prohibited the use of contraceptive devices, since demand for them was growing among women, particularly among married women who wanted to limit family size or to control the spacing of subsequent births (Charbit 1983). However, in the West, the emphasis was less on preventing pregnancy among single women than on informing legally married women how they could significantly improve the "quality" of

life for their children and in so doing improve the quality of life for themselves. In fact, The Planned Parenthood Association founded by Margaret Sanger in the United States was for a time associated with, and received funding from, various eugenics movements and was a proponent of the "quality versus quantity" thesis (see Petchetsky 1990). This thesis was adopted and retained by Caribbean family planning activists well into the 1980s (Report on the National Conference on Fertility and the Adolescent 1980).

Major family planning conferences were held San Juan in 1955 and 1964, Jamaica in 1958, and in Barbados in 1961 under the auspices of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Additionally, in 1966, the IPPF financed training in contraceptive techniques for Cuban doctors, and a family planning seminar was held in Havana in 1967 (Segal 1975:29). West Indian family planning specialists took their lead from U.S. activists, and instructional materials and family planning literature were revised and rewritten to incorporate the "special needs" of Caribbean social structures.

Even though, in the early 1960s, laws against contraceptive devices remained in place throughout much of the Caribbean, Haiti and the Dominican Republic did allow in duty-free contraceptives for family planning centers staffed by "volunteer" medical personnel that were largely informal and privately run. Trinidad refused to allow government facilities to be used for family planning purposes as late as 1967. Jamaica, where signs appeared attacking family planning as "a plot to kill the black race" offered family planning consultations first under private auspices between 1960 and 1964, and finally through government-backed programs in 1966 (Roberts and Sinclair 1978). Trinidad also attempted the "informal" route and withheld official government backing

until 1968, when, following the Jamaican lead, the family planning program was placed under the Ministry of Health (see Moni Nag 1974).

A further complication in the battle to limit the birth rate was that in 1970 abortion was illegal everywhere even though all medical specialists knew that it was widely practiced. Even this obstacle, which finally began to crumble in the middle of the 1970s, did not appear to be insurmountable. In addition to unlicensed "abortion practitioners" located throughout the Caribbean, whose training and safety varied greatly, as early as the mid-1950s, private abortion clinics existed in Puerto Rico. Some women whom I interviewed in the United States and in parts of the English-speaking West Indies recalled either personally using or referring friends to the latter. However, while some Guadeloupean women mentioned knowing about the existence of various abortion practitioners, or non-medically trained individuals who performed abortions in the French West Indies⁹ and in Europe, it appears that due to linguistic, cultural, and economic isolation, most Guadeloupean women (of modest means) were unaware that a number of abortion clinics existed during the 1960s as nearby as Puerto Rico.

Despite having to overcome a multitude of obstacles, by the late 1960s, family planning initiatives were well underway in nearly all of the English-speaking Caribbean islands. And, by 1970 all Caribbean governments except for Haiti, the Dominican

⁹ One woman admitted to me that she had an abortion performed in Martinique in the early 1960s. She suspected that an ensuing infection is the result of her sterility. Another woman admitted to going to Barbados to have an abortion in the mid-1960s. While she did not mention any complications after the procedure, she was one of my life-history participants who was married and childless. Both women were college-educated professionals. Other women told me about local mid-wives who performed abortions in the 1950s. Many women contend that by the 1960s, the majority of women who were middle-class and above knew that safe abortions could be obtained in France, Switzerland, and in the British West Indies.

Republic, and Cuba were actively seeking ways to reduce population pressure on severely strained public resources. The most immediate reaction to the problems posed by overpopulation was for local governments to seek additional metropolitan funds for education and for medical and welfare services. By the late 1960s, these requests were nearly always met by a mandate that family planning programs receive priority (Dumas 1975).

Reducing overpopulation by means of out-migration was never as effective as anticipated since, in proportion to the demand, government planners were never able to "create" or to identify a sufficient number of jobs (T. Smith 1972, Marino 1970). By 1971, unable to absorb the steady stream of migrants searching for employment, England had shut its doors to its Caribbean relatives. Barbados aggressively encouraged emigration to Canada but there too, the government inevitably had to give priority to the employment of native-born citizens. Private employers were unlikely to hire black workers except in the areas of manual labor (usually seasonal) and domestic-based employment. In addition, racial strife was becoming a problem in many Eurowestern countries. Thus, even in the face of local disinterest or opposition, regional economic planners intensified their campaign to spread contraceptive technology throughout the Caribbean, having run out of other effective solutions (Nag 1974).

By 1970 Barbados, Trinidad, and Jamaica all had government-sponsored central family planning organizations and openly espoused family planning goals (Harewood 1983). In the early 1960s, when Curaçao and Puerto Rico finally agreed to partially fund contraception services, they diverted funds to private organizations which professed to

serve private and individual interests rather than national goals. And, as will be discussed in chapter seven, covert measures were also used to establish family-planning programs in Guadeloupe.

Conclusion

Stereotypes abound in relation to the Caribbean and have been employed to describe both cultural and political-economic characteristics (see Barrow 1996:256-261, Lazarus-Black 1994:211-219). Austin argues that some concepts which are attributed to Caribbean social systems, e.g., matrifocality, are in reality cross-cultural and consonant with the value systems of many other working-class people. The concepts of "matrifocality," "matrifocal households," and "Caribbean social structure" are problematic because they essentialize behavior and explain little (Barrow 1996). Significantly, as Okongwu and Mencher point out, the terms matrifocality, matrilocality, and female-headed are often used interchangeably and in a confusing way (see Okongwu and Mencher 1990). Applied for the most part to poor people, they carry the implication of a "lower level" of civilization. Yet, in the French West Indies, assumptions that elite or upper-class families subscribe more fully to a Eurowestern system of values than do lower-class folk are unfounded. This neat distinction may obscure a range of behaviors shared within and across class lines. Caribbean societies can be seen as stratified by race, color, ethnicity, and class: these distinctions have not only shifted through time but are far less definitive than previous studies indicated. It has also long been observed that education and income can move people up or down the social scale irrespective of skin pigmentation

and that family forms can vary within as well as between social strata (Lowenthal 1972).

Perhaps what does distinguish the different classes is the range of activities and behaviors characteristic of each. For example, members of the middle and upper classes are more likely to be fluent in a larger repertoire of behaviors and be able to fit into several ideological terrains. Even matrifocality and illegitimacy,¹⁰ which Austin primarily attributes to working-class people, are practices understood and engaged in by upper-class and middle-class strata. For the lower classes, behaviors and repertoires are likely to be limited because they are more circumscribed by economic and social factors, but not because lower class people lack economic ambition or social aspirations

Notwithstanding scholarly debates about what constitutes the optimum family model or under what conditions procreation should take place, the nature of women's autonomy has become the most popular focal point of modern fertility transition theory. It continues, however, to be accompanied by a long-standing and implicitly causal connection between high fertility and extended or "traditional" families. Although modern theorists have observed that fertility appears to fall even when non-Western families retain their traditional organizational patterns, demographic transition theory retains a subtle and persistent denigration of non-legal relationships.

In this research I consider sexual unions and family and kinship organization to be heuristic concepts (rather than fixed "institutions") which are to be viewed historically and dynamically. This is in contrast to many Western observers for whom complex kinship ties resulting from common-law and visiting unions appear bizarre if not immoral.

¹⁰I discuss illegitimacy as it pertains to Guadeloupe in greater detail in chapters 7 and 8.

As we have seen, however, divorce, serial monogamy, and cohabitation are now more common than the one life-partner model of conjugal nuclearity in many "modern" postindustrial societies, and serial relationships can equally be said to characterize West Indian mating practices. Conversely, I found that many West Indians expressed a preference to live in a nuclear, conjugal relationship, but were constrained from doing so by economic circumstances. Common-law and "visiting" relations are dominant in the Caribbean, yet many common-law relationships are more durable than Eurowestern legal marriages.

Given the posited (unproved and controversial) causal connections which are often made between family type and fertility transition, a micro-level anthropological analysis of Caribbean fertility decline is timely. By historicizing and analyzing the processes of family formation and kinship organization in the Caribbean apart from, rather than with, procreative behavior, I then can re-evaluate the posited link between family models and fertility change in non-Eurowestern settings. We know that despite the enormous obstacles planners faced in the 1950s and 1960s, fertility rates fell throughout the Caribbean, even though conjugal, neolocal households did not become the norm. As Frank and McNicholl point out, this would seem to indicate that not all aspects of "modernization" need be adopted in order to induce the desire to have fewer children.

Also, based on research which seemed to indicate that single women and teenagers were greatly "at risk," family planners specifically targeted women and teenagers with literature which acknowledged that Caribbean family organization was "different." While

much of the literature continued to promote legal marriage, it concentrated more on the specific goal of lowering aggregate fertility. This was accomplished primarily by appealing to people's desire to improve their standard of living and social status, and by vigorously marketing images of "modern" European families who engaged in patterns of modern consumption and consumerism.

Unlike British officials and social scientists, French West Indian researchers were relative novices when it came to explaining West Indian social difference and deviance from the metropolitan norm. As they began to participate in regional conferences and population studies, it seemed only logical to them to rely heavily on the existing literature. On the other hand, French officials were quite sophisticated in linking migration and fertility in order to create several scenarios of projected short- and long-term population growth. But unlike British officials who never proposed extending welfare and social entitlements to their Caribbean subjects, the French were under immense pressure to provide social benefits to French West Indian citizens on the same level as those offered to metropolitan residents. As will be discussed in chapter 7, for them overpopulation had direct and dire financial consequences if left unchecked.

In chapter seven I examine how and why political assimilation (resulting from the 1946 Law of Departmentalization) failed to produce economic improvements, despite the introduction of many inducements. Particular attention is given to France's cultural assimilation policy and its "civilizing mission" which was designed to "colonize the minds" of French West Indians migrating to Paris. I discuss how economic neglect of the DOMs provoked anti-French sentiment, and may have inhibited any enduring adoption

of the French model of family formation and nuclearization. At the same time, the chapter confronts the rapid fertility decline of Guadeloupe, analyzing it in relation to ideational and cultural changes associated with consumption as distinct from changes associated with economic development.

Chapter 7 - An Era of Consumer and Contraceptive Revolution: French Assimilation and Emigration

There will of course be no solution to the problem of our West Indies if we passively let their population double in the course of 25 years. The efforts made by the Metropolis will be inoperative if we do not find a means of reducing the rate of the population growth. These include a policy of full employment, encouragements to marriage, the reinforcement of judicial action against family abandonment, free assistance for research into paternity, and the development of professional training for girls. Migration is but a fragmentary and temporary cure and other measures will have to be taken in full respect of moral principles and religious convictions.¹
(quoted in Segal 1969:93)

Introduction

The uneven process by which contraception spread throughout the Caribbean during the 1960s was due not only to the anti-contraception religious dogma preached by the Catholic Church but also, given that the English-speaking Caribbean was not Catholic, due to a retreat from the subject on the part of local politicians. Local politicians feared that if they endorsed a political platform which included a statement of explicit support for national family planning, they would lose valuable political support and votes. In the early 1960s, when local political leaders were faced with the triple burdens of closed migration outlets, return migration, and rapidly escalating unemployment, they did, however, grudgingly back minimal national support for privately funded family planning efforts.

¹Stated by Pierre Billotte, French Minister of Overseas Territories in 1961.

Public pressure from rising expectations, fueled in part by family planning literature which nearly always enumerated the benefits (e.g., material possessions and social prestige) to be gained by reducing family size or by delaying pregnancy, also motivated local and national officials to work together in order to improve economic conditions. Furthermore, for the first time, tourism brought many residents into direct contact with displays of affluence and Western consumption habits. Added to this were the tales of relatives who had either worked in or had traveled to metropolitan destinations. Often they reported on experiencing superior standards of living and returned with "modern" conveniences and luxury goods which represented tangible evidence of the "modern" Western lifestyle.

In a sense, the ensuing reduction of fertility levels during the 1960s and 1970s, and the adoption of family planning programs, signified a transition to a quality over quantity model. While Caribbean residents were seduced, as it were, into reducing the birth rate, they were not as easily convinced of the benefits of legal marriage and nuclear family formation. In Guadeloupe, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, demographic change was induced by exposing the general populace to the negative economic consequences caused by having too many children. However, because Guadeloupe was a French department, government officials were primarily motivated by the budgetary burdens of overpopulation.

The 1950s was a critical period in the political relationship between France and its newly departmentalized DOMs. Residents were agitating for economic and social improvements, not on the basis of a previous colonial relationship, but as equal citizens

of the French Republic. While there are many similarities in the spread of the family planning message and the adoption of "artificial" contraception between the Antilles and other Caribbean islands, there are also several significant differences. For one, even though Guadeloupe was predominantly Catholic, family planning programs were institutionalized relatively early in comparison to other Catholic islands (Segal 1969:33). Second, commencing in the *mid-1950s*, the spread of contraception was made an explicit goal of the French government's economic plans (ibid:94). Third, when other metropolises were closing their doors to Caribbean natives, the French government embarked on a comprehensive program to pay each year thousands of fertile men and women to leave Guadeloupe. Although initially more men emigrated than women, the numbers equalized quickly. Consequently emigration did not appear to further aggravate the sex-ratio imbalance, but did remove a large percentage of Guadeloupe's fertile population from the Caribbean. Instituting massive out-migration and birth control programs was the French government's panicked reaction to the wake-up call sent by angry and disenchanted Antillean citizens (ibid:98). France also hoped to reorient Caribbean cultural practices through the process of assimilation.

This chapter examines the four major external or "top down" components of Guadeloupe's transformation to French modernity: a) reassertion of French assimilation ideology; b) "regularizing" and increasing emigration; c) contracting the agricultural sector in favor of consumer-oriented enterprise; d) disseminating the family planning message to the "at risk" female population.

French Assimilation and Its Civilizing Mission

I look around and wherever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism. conflict, and, in a parody of education, the hasty manufacture of a few thousand subordinate functionaries, "boys," artisans, office clerks, and interpreters necessary for the smooth operation of business...between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses. No human contact, but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production. (Césaire 1955:32)

By the mid-1950s, government officials from all Caribbean countries, including those from the French West Indies, were participating in regional conferences convened to discuss the issue of overpopulation. Policy planners shared the results of social and demographic studies about Caribbean "problems" including studies by Clarke (1957), Roberts (1955,1957), Stycos (1955), Ibberson (1956), and R.T. Smith (1956). Officials in the English-speaking Caribbean, who had honed their expertise under the tutelage of specialists from EuroWestern organizations such as USAID, the American Public Health Association, and the International Planned Parenthood Association took the lead in sharing their experiences and research with representatives of other countries (Roberts 1955; Marino 1970; Gautier 1986; C.D.E.I.F. 1972). Policy planners quickly realized that not only were they facing the same problems but that fertility patterns contra-indicated promoting legal marriage unless all women were educated in the use of contraception.

The knowledge that legal marriage and high fertility correlated positively did not prevent government planning specialists from vigorously promulgating their “civilizing” messages. If anything, the knowledge heightened the urgency to insure that all women were knowledgeable regarding contraception. It also increased the urgency to assimilate Guadeloupeans to French culture and to remove as many fertile young adults as possible from the negative influence of their Caribbean surroundings.

Yet, when one reviews contemporary French West Indian social science studies, government reports, or literature, one is hard pressed to find any mention of assimilation (Lirus 1979; Blerald 1986; Casanave 1998; Chamoiseau 1992). The near total erasure of the word “assimilation” from French West Indian vocabulary exemplifies a case of revisionist history. Although the term was used most closely in conjunction with the 1946 Law of Departmentalization, assimilation was the rallying cry and goal of *Mulâtres* and *Noirs* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As we saw in chapter four, the *Mulâtres* in particular worked hard at demonstrating the highest possible degree of sophistication and cultural assimilation with France. Although they were black, in every other possible sense they were first and foremost French.

Antillean migration to France was hardly a new phenomenon; in fact, metropolitan France had been a steady receiver of Guadeloupean migrants since the late nineteenth century. Much like English-speaking West Indians who were educated in England and who served as bureaucrats in Africa (Anderson 1994 [1983]:114), educated Antillean citizens were frequently appointed as minor *fonctionnaires* or civil servants in French colonial Africa, where, as a result of their centuries-old lineage of “Frenchness,” they

quickly developed a disdain for the Africans in their charge. Although some elite, privileged, or particularly bright Antillean students were accepted into French educational institutions of higher learning, rarely were they placed in administrative positions or indeed in any position of power within metropolitan France.

In the late 1950s, when French officials decided to give priority to emigrants from the Caribbean colonies, the decision was primarily based on metropolitan labor needs and only secondarily on concern for Antillean overpopulation. It was not indicative of a higher tolerance for skin color difference. Nor was the decision to establish government-funded migration programs indicative of an acceptance of Antilleans as fully equal to the citizens of metropolitan France. For the most part, Guadeloupeans were perceived of as not yet “fully assimilated” French citizens.

For over a century, the doctrine of assimilation -- political and cultural -- remained in full force throughout the French colonies and became the guiding light in France’s attempt to “modernize” its colonial inhabitants. As will be discussed shortly, France conceded to Guadeloupean demands for local autonomy in the late 1950s. The demands emerged from a colloquium convened to focus attention on the economic and political failings of departmentalization which had been organized by a coalition of interested political, educational, and social leaders. Their goals were to gain a measure of political and social autonomy in matters of governance, and to speed up the process of equalizing Guadeloupean economic conditions with those of metropolitan France. The autonomy issue was specific to Caribbean overseas departments and lasted roughly twenty years

after departmentalization, whereas the process of political decentralization taking place in the early 1980s applied to all departments of France.

Ostensibly, the assimilation ideology was superseded in 1982 by the installation of "decentralization" which allowed all French departments to have a higher degree of political autonomy and accommodated some degree of regional cultural specificity. Political decentralization was meant to soften France's assimilation policies yet it never replaced the ideology of French cultural assimilation in instances where the population in question differed significantly from the racial and ethnic composition of metropolitan France. In essence, all non-European French citizens continued to be governed by the doctrine of cultural assimilation in spite of concessions made to incorporate some degree of political and social specificity.

Alain-Phillippe Blerald (1986) asserts that the assimilationist ideology was a thinly veiled metaphor for racism, revealing that France held fast to maintaining a "civilizing mission" for all of its colonial peoples. This stance was based largely on the self-perception of the French nation as the most advanced and highly cultured society in the modern world. And, as "*un grand empire*" it had a responsibility and duty to "*mener les peuples culturellement inférieurs à un stade de civilisation plus avancé*," i.e., to lead its culturally inferior people to a more advanced stage of civilization. Therefore, as Blerald sees it, French assimilationism was another variant of the "white man's burden," and in the French West Indies, cultural assimilation was induced by means of political assimilation. (1988:97).

In light of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the Antilles, the French government had concluded by 1958 that despite their long association with France -- and perhaps because of strong cultural influences exerted on them by their Caribbean neighbors -- Antilleans were in greater need of assimilationist acculturation than most of France's colonial or former colonial subjects. Blerald argues that the assimilationist ideology formulated for application to Antilleans, although articulated culturally, was racially motivated and that Guadeloupe was judged to be far more "African" than its sister department Martinique (Blerald 1988:99-100).

In promoting assimilation, not only did France exalt and promote the French language and culture, but it denigrated the Créole language and culture. As Blerald observed, French became the official language of school, politics, and government while Créole was either excluded or forbidden to be spoken in these settings.² To the French, the transmission and assimilation of "Western values" was also a key component of the successful installation of controlled reproduction and widespread acceptance and use of contraceptive techniques. A related goal was the widespread adoption of legally sanctioned conjugal relations and the EuroWestern version of family formation.

The outcome of this period of assimilationist acculturation was the "black face white mask" syndrome identified by Franz Fanon in his book of the same name (1967). Accordingly, Guadeloupeans were distanced from their culture, and local culture was subjected to, in Blerald's words, "the steam roller of specificity" (1988:99). However,

² Teachers in the French West Indies were ordered by the government not to use Créole in conversing with students, and to prohibit students from speaking Créole on school property (Cerol 1991:17, Blerald 1988:99).

during the early years of the Fifth French Republic, under the charismatic leadership of Charles de Gaulle, there was little local opposition. In fact, de Gaulle himself made several trips to the islands and in speeches he delivered to enthusiastic crowds, assured Antilleans that they (at least in his eyes) were French. Consequently, as will be later discussed, little fanfare accompanied the initial phase of planned migration programs or the promulgation of acculturative assimilation. In the eyes of government officials, both were necessary before economic assimilation could be possible.

Outward Mobility and “Regularized Migration”

During Yvonne’s (the woman who was inspired to emigrate by her cousin) narration of her life history, she recalled experiencing racist treatment during the 1960s in France. She recalled, however, that the treatment of African and Algerian immigrants was far more hostile. France’s reception of migrants during the immediate postwar period could be characterized as at least tolerant if not welcoming due, in no small part, to the extreme labor shortages that existed in a variety of sectors and to significant population losses suffered as a result of World War II. Throughout the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), a period marked by the greatest turmoil in which there was a succession of twenty-six separate Cabinets, many legislators even favored a definite policy of permanent immigration. An agency created to administer this open-door policy and known as the *L'office nationale d'immigration* or the ONI, was charged with supervising and coordinating the entry and citizenship regularization of immigrants. Unfortunately, buffeted by external political turmoil and outflanked by the large numbers of immigrants

who preferred to enter the country as illegal or clandestine workers, ONI failed in its mission. Still, the French government maintained its tolerant and welcoming reception and legalized or "regularized" the vast majority of these workers after the fact.

France's ongoing relations with its overseas colonies and territories facilitated the movement of a large ethnic mix of non-French speakers from Francophone Africa, in particular Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia, as well as workers from southern European countries such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain. With formal mechanisms of welcome largely inoperable, France adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards immigrant workers. These populations filled the void created by war losses and metropolitan depopulation by supplying French industries with desperately needed unskilled and semi-skilled laborers.

Notwithstanding earlier receptions, by September of 1958 after the installation of Charles de Gaulle as president of the newly constituted Fifth Republic, dissatisfaction over the messiness of unorganized or "spontaneous" migration quickly set in. Simultaneously, citizens of recently departmentalized Guadeloupe and Martinique were complaining about poor economic conditions and lack of employment at home; their protests drew attention to the socio-economic gulf that existed between the metropole and the DOMs. French labor needs remained high, and this confluence of circumstances inspired government officials to attack these crises comprehensively by creating the government-sponsored migration program subsequently titled BUMIDOM. Further, right-wing extremist followers of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front Party were protesting the growing presence of Algerian and West African immigrants. As the

BUMIDOM program scored successes, France steadily decreased its reliance on other sources of foreign labor.

Migration and the control of reproduction were in reality two sides of the same coin. More than any other factor, *déséquilibre démographique* or demographic imbalance spurred the French government to action. The government believed that migration would energize economic takeoff by alleviating population pressure. In truth, programmatically planned outmigration actually favored France more than Guadeloupe. Guadeloupeans needed jobs but France desperately needed to replenish its ranks of manual laborers to facilitate postwar expansion.

By the late 1950s, the stage was set for the polemics which later followed and by the early 1960s, Guadeloupe not only became a "sender" of migrant labor but a "receiver" as well. Beginning in the late 1950s, an increasing number of French white metropolitans obtained upper-echelon civil service posts and white collar managerial jobs in the private sector of Guadeloupe. Here they crossed paths with blue collar and low-paid Guadeloupeans on their way to the bottom of the occupation ladder in France. This bifurcated system of whites at the top and blacks at the bottom was so long ingrained in the social landscape that few complained.

As my life history narratives reveal, due to the century-long assimilationist orientation, many Guadeloupeans who participated in sponsored migration were initially grateful that the trip was government financed (the price of the one-way ticket was prepaid), that a government placement service assured them of employment, and that

housing and education were also government arranged. Previously, Guadeloupeans who self-financed the move to the metropole arranged these significant details on their own

Immigration to France was presented as an economic solution. However, like Yvonne and her friends who migrated to Paris in the 1960s, for many young Antilleans, the anticipation of future migration exerted an enormous cultural pull, as well. By the late 1950s, many French West Indians like Yvonne, who was initially awed by her Paris cousin's polish, possessions, and self-assurance, had come in contact with earlier self-financed migrants who spoke of the riches to be had in Paris and of its culture. Later, after Yvonne experienced the positive and negative aspects of emigration to Paris, her orientation toward European living changed. Few government-sponsored emigrants realized that the majority of earlier migrants were, before their departures, relatively well-off and better educated than other Antilleans.

While overall Yvonne seemed disillusioned if not embittered by her metropolitan experience, in contrast, my life history data from other women portray their years living in Paris as very happy ones, despite some rigors and hardship. They recalled eating out, shopping, traveling, going to the cinema and to concerts, and generally partaking in all of the delights that Paris had to offer. Yet, it was immediately apparent that these women, although sponsored, inevitably were better educated and better trained than their unhappy counterparts. Apart from one woman who had sold tickets in the metro, most were placed in semi-professional careers in government offices, or became nurses or teachers, and none of them recounted working in a hospital laundry room as their first assignment. Many women told me that while aspiring to relocate, like Yvonne, they had

significantly changed their expectations of prospective mates and their sexual behavior.

When I asked these women if they had used any kind of contraception or birth control method to prevent pregnancy prior to relocating, several women (reluctantly) told me that instead they ended relationships in which they were sexually active. According to the explanation given by Marcelline in another life history account,

I did not really trust myself, nor my partner to be as careful as I needed. In the end I felt at the time that it would be better to avoid sex than to fight about being careful. Plus, I was working several jobs in order to save enough money to go. I wanted to make sure that I had at least some savings to take with me in the event anything went wrong. My partner and I argued about how I was always working and how I was always busy. He had no intentions of leaving [Guadeloupe], life for him here was sweet. But although I never did make it to France longer than to pay a visit to friends, in those days, I was bound and determined to live there. My idea was that it was my ticket to a better life and a life away from Guadeloupe.
(Marcelline, age 57)

Similar to the aspirations of Yvonne, who had participated in the BUMIDOM program at its inception in 1966, Marcelline had aspired to attain upward social mobility and to have a "better life." While the majority of women whom I interviewed outlined serious reasons or goals, a few women said that they really wanted to "have fun," and nearly all said they wanted to earn money, to shop, and to travel. Unlike women in the English-speaking Caribbean, Guadeloupean women generally did not send home part of their salary as remittances to support children or members of their family (see Anselin 1990, Hintjens 1991, Burac 1995). To the contrary, most women told me that on more than one occasion, they existed on money and/or on care packages sent from family members in Guadeloupe. Women who received money from home told me, however, that

they maintained the tradition of bringing home gifts for family members, appearing prosperous to relatives and friends who were none the wiser.

Although the majority of women were single during their years of "premigration preparation," a small percentage were married. Some women who were married either migrated with their husbands or were separated from their husbands and had boyfriends fulfilling military service obligations in France. A few women admitted to being married (legally) or in long-term relationships when they applied for the migration program but thought that by reporting their status as single they would have a better chance of being accepted. One woman named Sophie told me that she was "legally" married but used migration as a "kind of divorce." According to Sophie, "I had no intention of sending for my husband when I got to France and I actually hoped that we would never have the occasion to reunite." Another woman, named H  l  na, related to me the following experience:

My boyfriend talked me into applying for the migration program. He was married to another woman and had four children with her. He promised that he would send me money and that he would visit me in Paris. He painted such a romantic picture of what our long distance relationship would be like. He said that we could take trips into the French countryside, and go to Nice on the weekends. He told me that since he frequently attended medical conferences that were held in the metropole, he would see me at least six or seven times a year. But he never sent me money and he never came to visit. Instead, a friend of mine told me that he had another baby with his wife, and that he had a new girlfriend. (H  l  na 60, Guadeloupean return migrant)

Both men and women participated in the BUMIDOM program, however, when I surveyed residents informally, there was a consensus that more women returned to Guadeloupe than men. Also, despite the fact that some men and women were married,

the vast majority of program participants were single. Below are charts outlining the gender and marital status of BUMIDOM participants between 1964 and 1971.

Table 2 - Percentage Comparison of Marital Status of "Sponsored" Migrants Between 1964 and 1971 by Gender

Year	Single Men	Married Men	Single Women	Married Women
1964	81.5	18.2	89.2	8.5
1965	87.2	12.4	96.7	2.8
1966	92.5	6.7	95.9	3.6
1976	86.5	12.7	95.8	2.7
1968	88.3	11.1	98.4	1.2
1969	89.6	9.7	94.5	5.2
1970	89.9	9.6	96.6	2.9
1971	91.4	8.1	95.0	5.0

Source: Bulletin d'information du CENNADDOM 1982:68

Overwhelmingly, men and women who participated in the BUMIDOM program were placed in low-salaried positions as a sample of "placements" made in 1968 indicates below.

Table 3 - Placement Category of "Sponsored" Migrants 1968

Type of Employment	Men	Women
Military Service	1405	0
Professional	196	25
Semi-Professional	196	359
Service Workers	3,632	4,276

Source: Bulletin d'information du CENNADDOM 1982:68

As the above charts indicate, both women and men who participated in sponsored migration programs tended to be single. Further, the data (which were collected by the research unit of the migration agency) show an overwhelming number of placements in service sector jobs rather than in professional employment. As the numbers of white metropolitans who migrated to Guadeloupe and who managed to dominate the upper-echelons of civil service and private industry increased, the low-level placement of black migrants in France became a growing source of discontent.

By the 1960s, the Antillean assimilation of a European model had a long and perfectly respectable history. Since the end of the nineteenth century, "exhibiting" assimilated behavior had been the means by which Antilleans unyoked themselves from *Blanc-Créole* and *Béké* domination and became integrated into the egalitarian-minded nation of France. It did not matter that outmigration and Europeanization were the goals of national development planners with highly prejudiced views of Caribbean society. Nor was it repugnant to them to reduce births or avoid pregnancies. On the contrary, in their life histories, many Antillean women told me that they viewed their mothers as someone they did not want to be. Like Yvonne, what both men and women saw most vividly were the positive gains to be acquired by adopting a French lifestyle and/or by moving to France.

Laying the Groundwork for Consumer Revolts

In the 1860s, twenty-year old Denise Bandu and her two younger brothers, recent orphans, emigrated from a provincial French village to Paris, to live with their uncle. Arriving at daybreak after a sleepless night on the hard

benches of a third-class railway car, they set out in search of their uncle's fabric store. The unfamiliar streets opened onto a tumultuous square where they halted abruptly, awestruck by the sight of a building more impressive than any they had ever seen: a department store. "Look," Denise murmured to her brothers. "Now *there* is a store!" This monument was immeasurably grander than her village's quiet variety shop, in which she had worked. She felt her heart rise within her and forgot her fatigue, her fright, everything except this vision. Directly in front of her, over the central doorway, two allegorical figures of laughing women flaunted a sign proclaiming the store's name, "Au Bonheur des Dames" (To the Happiness of the Ladies). Through the door could be seen a landslide of gloves, scarves, and hats tumbling from racks and counters, while in the distance display windows unrolled along the street.

Entranced, the three youngsters walked slowly along, gazing at the displays. In one window an intricate arrangement of umbrellas formed the roof of a rustic cabin, while in another a dazzling rainbow of silks, satins, and velvets arched high above them. At the last display of ready-to-wear clothing, a snowfall of expensive laces cascaded in the background, and before them pirouetted three elegant mannequins, one draped in a velvet coat trimmed with silver fox, another in a white cashmere opera cloak, the third in an overcoat edged with feathers...

Denise awoke from her reverie. She and her brothers still had to locate their uncle. Asking directions, they discovered they were on the very block where he kept his shop. It was housed in a moldering building on the opposite side of the street, where its three dark, empty windows grimly confronted the brilliant displays of Au Bonheur des Dames. Inside Denise glimpsed a dim showroom with a low ceiling, greenish woodwork, and tables cluttered with dusty bolts of cloth. She felt as if she were staring into the dark shadows of a primeval cave. (Emile Zola, quoted in Williams 1982:1)³

In many ways, the seeds of the transformation of Guadeloupean society had been planted during the postemancipation era. Chroniclers of the social life of nineteenth- and turn-of-the-century Martinican cities describe them as microcosms of Paris.⁴ At least,

³Emile Zola, quoted in Rosalind H. Williams, *Dreamworlds* (1982), chapter one, "The Implications of the Consumer Revolution."

⁴For an excellent visual portrayal of this period see Martinican filmmaker Euzhan Palcy's 1982 *Sugarcane Alley* (*La Rue Case Nègres*) which depicts the bustling and cosmopolitan life of early twentieth-century Fort-de-France through the eyes of a poor rural boy who had been awarded a partial scholarship to study there at an exclusive but racially mixed *lycée*. The film also contrasts class and color differences, and the activities and aspirations of the rural poor with those of white *Békés*, *Mulâtres*, and the black middle class.

such a description was fitting in the case of white and *Mulâtre* elites who were notorious for their habits of "conspicuous consumption." Such a portrait could, however, in no way describe the lifestyles of poorer residents (about 90 percent of the population), some of whom had not even glimpsed this pattern of consumption. When relatives returned from the metropole with tangible proof that a lifestyle of modern abundance did indeed exist, many Guadeloupeans, much like Denise Bandu, the heroine in Emile Zola's novel, were awed.

After departmentalization, residents of the French West Indies were vainly waiting for tangible and ideological proof of their new status. To many observers among the local political constituency, France's neglect of Antillean socio-economic conditions appeared to be benign rather than malicious. France was, after all, beset with its own internal problems, among which was the long and costly civil war in Algeria, as well as insurrections in other colonial territories. But, if only to quell mounting political dissent now critical of the departmentalization process, French officials realized that they would have to make substantial investments in social and economic improvements for Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Faced with the realization that inevitably the government would have to substantially increase its level of transfer payments to support its Antillean departments, colonial officials also began to view them as potential consumers of the products of France's increased industrial output.

Consumer Revolution and Agricultural Devolution

You ask me about living conditions when I was young? Let me tell you, they were not very good. My father was killed during the war, and my mother worked hard to farm the family land. We lost our crops after a storm. In 1951 my family lost its farm including the house in which I was raised. My mother and my eight brothers and sisters, and two cousins who lived with us, had to move from Grande-Terre to Basse-Terre on the other side of the island into a shack that was located on the edge of the property owned by my father's uncle. Our old farmhouse was not luxurious but we had about six hectares, a garden, a cooking shed in the back, and at least my sisters and I had our own room. My uncle's shack had no running water, or kitchen, or even a roof that kept us dry since the roof was tin and always leaked. All of us had to squeeze into one big room. We had no privacy and in order to pay the rent for that miserable place we all became workers on my uncle's land, picking his crops and tending his livestock. My mother had to wash, clean, and cook for my uncle's family and it was degrading for me to watch, but she did manage to keep us in school. But since my mother could barely read or write she was not suited to do any other work, so she was trapped by the lack of skills and education. After 1951 my entire family became live-in servants. My only consolation was that we really did not know anyone in our new neighborhood so my old friends could not witness how miserable our lives had become. In those days, there were no unemployment benefits or family allocations so we had to work together to support each other and we knew better not to complain. My mother had never been strong and she became very sick in 1954. We took her to a clinic but I remember that we had no money to pay a private doctor nor to pay for the tests and treatments that needed to be performed at a hospital. She died when I was nine years old, only a few months after she became ill. At first my miserable uncle would not even help us pay for her burial expenses. Afterwards, my sisters and brothers who were all under 15 years old, were split up to live with different distant relatives and neighbors. I stayed in school until I was fifteen but my brothers left school to work.

I knew that I never wanted to live on a farm again if I had a choice. Now many people consider the country to be the suburbs. Then, country life was very difficult, financially very uncertain, and then the weather could also wipe you out. I vowed to myself then that I would always live in the city when I got older and I would never be anyone's servant again. I have kept these promises to myself. I live in the city, I have never been a servant, but except for visits to the metropole, I have never lived outside of Guadeloupe. (Ariane 52, Guadeloupean)

The deteriorating economic conditions which initially motivated the French Government to make socio-economic changes in Guadeloupe had improved little in the late 1950s, about the time central planners were creating plans for a more orderly and regulated migration. Following departmentalization in 1946, the French government commenced the process of official economic integration with the metropole. This integration merged the total agricultural production goals of France with those of its overseas departments, resulting in a redundancy of sugar-related products that were the mainstay of French West Indian economies.

Other agricultural crops downsized or eliminated as a result of the merger included bananas, and other fruits and vegetables. Metropolitan beet sugar production was far more profitable and Antillean bananas transported poorly and were expensive to produce. Experimental plantings of new agricultural products such as pineapples, and “exotic” flower productions were designed to make up for Antillean production losses in sugar, bananas and rum manufacturing, but few new products were financially successful. Consequently, each year following departmentalization, a greater percentage of land was taken out of agricultural production and allocated to the National Park or for tourist-related activities (see Hoy 1961, Masse 1972).

Békés were more than willing to transfer their assets from the agricultural sector, in which labor costs were rising and profits were dwindling, to consumer-related enterprises. Antilleans engaged in farming, either as owners or laborers, increasingly were finding it difficult to make ends meet. Yet, at the same time that economic assimilation caused widespread unemployment and the massive displacement of agriculture-based

workers from the land, these workers were eager to move to France. Most agriculture-based employment involved working in cane and banana fields or in the sugar refineries and rum distilleries that, until then, continued to be the dominant form of local production. This type of employment was not confined only to landless workers. Many small proprietors with limited holdings supplemented the income from their crops with temporary waged labor by working on the larger plantations and sugar estates during harvesting. In sum, particularly in Guadeloupe which was more "rural" than its sister department Martinique, agriculture-based employment touched the lives of a broad cross-section of society. Wages earned in this sector enabled a large segment of the population, both men and women, to earn a living and to feed their families. But the work was seasonal, intensive, low-paying and dirty -- hardly a source of pride, as can be seen from Guadeloupean's desire for city jobs, ideally in France.

The monopoly on large tracts of land by agricultural conglomerates and large plantation owners, usually *Békés* and *Blanc-Créoles*, was only somewhat modified by the land reform schemes of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although these land reform schemes were national or public programs, a smaller-scale process of "private" land reform also took place. White elites in Guadeloupe divested themselves of "surplus" land which they sold to local aspiring agro-entrepreneurs, in a process similar to what Edelman (1994:480) has termed "private enterprise land reform" in Costa Rica.

In the case of Guadeloupe, local peasants were charged high prices, and large landowners "donated" land directly to the French government for which they received either a cash payment or a reduction in property taxes. They used the proceeds from

these transactions to modernize and to mechanize the remainder of their holdings. The mechanization process was meant to decrease reliance on manual labor. However, until the early 1960s, the shift to mechanized farming occurred slowly. A major reason for the continued reliance on manual labor versus mechanized labor was that manual labor was plentiful and, in the absence of a minimum wage requirement, relatively cheap, and this allowed employers to keep labor costs low.

Several important changes parallel to the contraction of the agricultural sector hastened the advent of Guadeloupean consumerism: (1) the proposed adoption of French guidelines that specified minimum wage requirements for agricultural as well as non-agricultural work;⁵ (2) images of modernity which created a demand for bigger and better stores and a wider variety of goods than previously offered by local merchants; (3) improvements in transportation including new roads and highways which decreased the time and effort required for getting crops to market, and stimulated the desire for automobiles (owning an automobile gave Guadeloupeans access to new stores); (4) the advent of running water and electricity, which though relatively rare, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas, nonetheless stimulated the acquisitiveness of Guadeloupeans who now not only wanted new appliances and household goods, but a choice of them as well. With regard to shopping, Guadeloupeans had been introduced to the concept of "comparative" shopping and thus wanted the option of choosing from several models of

⁵Minimum wage regulations had already been adopted in Martinique. However, there, the laws affected a lower percentage of workers, since it was a less rural-based economy than Guadeloupe. Mechanized farming had been adopted much earlier in Martinique resulting in the new wage guidelines affecting a much smaller percentage of workers.

the same appliance. White entrepreneurs realized also that Guadeloupeans were quite receptive to buying a higher priced model and using "credit terms" to pay for it over a period of months. Thus, profits could not only be derived from sales revenue, but from interest payments as well.⁶

The (Re-)Emergence of White Power After Departmentalization

*Les Békés Sont Des Jodokas...Ils Retombent Toujours Sur Les Pieds*⁷
Constant 1998:168

The connection between agro-enterprise and the growth of an economy of consumption in the French West Indies is directly related to the continued monopolization of the choicest parcels of land by *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles* elites. During the late 1950s, the goal of the white elite was not to promote industrialization (which would have provided jobs for displaced agricultural workers), but, as I will soon discuss at length, to capitalize on "rising expectations" by building and promoting a consumer economy which would provide elites with a new (additional) source of income from consumer spending in their new stores. This is not to say that *Blancs-Créoles* and *Békés* abandoned the agricultural sector. Rather, in order to avoid having to pay a fixed national minimum wage to agricultural workers (meaning higher wages and higher costs), they hastened the spread of mechanized agriculture. Thus, in the French West Indies,

⁶A review of advertisements in magazines and newspapers of this period reveals that the installment-type payment plan was the most common type of "credit" available. Credit cards were largely unknown, and even now, are relatively rare. As then, people still use installment payment plans for purchases (which are vigorously promoted) or use bank debit cards connected to savings or checking account which requires having money in the bank.

⁷The Békés are like judo masters...they always land on their feet.

there was continuous interaction not between the agricultural and industrial sectors (see Creed 1995:543), but between the agricultural sector and the new consumer economy as an agro-consumer economy.

The new consumerism sparked planters to siphon off profits from their agricultural enterprises rather than to reinvest them as before. As Constant explains:

Their [Béké and Blanc-Créole] control of land has been the main source of their adaptation to the changing politico-economic environment. Here two dominant strategies have been closely connected. The first has been to sell unproductive land when it was not possible to mechanise the exploitation of it or to build tourist resorts on it. This has been the main internal process by which Békés have raised money in order to reassert their economic dominance. The second has been to exploit close ties to certain mainland political circles to increase state assistance in order to modernise the local agricultural sector. The combination of these two strategies have [sic] raised a large amount of public funds which have been turned into private profits. Not only did this money help to modernise sugar-cane production and diversify agriculture (in the cultivation of commodities of bananas, pineapples, citrus fruits and avocados), it has also been the main source of Békés' investments in tourism, real estate and import-export (1995:173).

The economic expansion of *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles* into non-agriculture-related activities was not expected by the black population nor was it anticipated by white elites. In fact, both groups believed that after departmentalization white social and economic hegemony would decline if not end.

As previously discussed, black Guadeloupeans believed that by supporting the 1946 Law of Departmentalization they would finally be freed from *Blanc-Créole* domination. At first, the white planter class likewise believed that departmentalization would spell their own financial and social ruin. However, as Constant points out, *Blancs-Créoles* and *Békés* proved to be remarkably flexible and adaptable in the face of the new

threat of centralized and national political power. In Constant's opinion, their continued economic domination represents a fascinating example of the white ethnic minority quickly responding to and taking advantage of a changing market and a changing world. As a result, "white supremacy" continues in the cultural domain and in the economic sector. (1995:175)

Constant argues that a combination of socio-economic factors has permitted the white minority to develop a deeply entrenched and pervasive form of economic power. Originally, when the *Blancs-Créoles* campaigned *against* the assimilation of Guadeloupe and Martinique into the French nation, and later against departmentalization, they did so in the belief that state interference would dismantle or weaken their base of power in economic affairs. They also believed that political assimilation would considerably weaken the high degree of political domination that they were able to maintain by virtue of their economic dominance. *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles* argued that state centralized political and economic management was unsuitable for "small, remote, and backward insular societies like Martinique and Guadeloupe" (1995:171).

Thus, *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles*, rather than blacks, became the first advocates of Antillean cultural specificity and cultural differences(ibid). Yet, in the end, it was the black population that least profited from political integration. *Békés* and *Blancs-Créoles* proved particularly adept at utilizing every available means to turn what they initially perceived to be a negative situation into one in which they could maintain significant advantage.

Consumption as Modernity and Social Mobility

I remember, in the early 1960s, when shopping became the popular social pastime in Guadeloupe, particularly on Saturday after school. I don't remember how or why the habit of shopping on Saturday started but I do remember that our usual routine changed. Often we met friends and neighbors who were walking from store to store and my mother spent more time talking than she did shopping. But we would amuse ourselves by looking in the store windows. Sometimes, my mother bought us ice cream, and every now and then she would buy us something new to wear to school. Before there were so many stores in Point-à-Pitre, our Saturday afternoons were spent cleaning and sorting vegetables from the morning's shopping at the produce market, finishing our homework, and doing a lot of household chores. (Clarice 58, Guadeloupean)

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, profits from the agricultural sector provided the much needed capital for the development of retail business, such as furniture and clothing stores and car dealerships, and the beginnings of tourist enterprises. These fledgling businesses were cash intensive in that they required an enormous initial outlay of money. This was because the stores themselves had to maintain a constant stock of new merchandise or equipment from suppliers in France. Because of the high cost of shipping and the financial uncertainty surrounding the profitability of these new enterprises, initially, metropolitan suppliers were largely unwilling to extend credit terms. Further, not all goods imported into Guadeloupe were French-made or even made in Europe. A large percentage of new imports consisted of cheaply made apparel items manufactured in Asia. Even so, dealing with foreign importers, even at a secondary level, required liquid capital, not only for the cost of goods, but also for the cost of shipping.

It mattered little to the new consumers that often the products sold at the new emporiums were of inferior quality and far less durable than those that they replaced.

Guadeloupeans were entering the new era of modern disposable products. Who wanted a hand-crafted dining or bedroom set that could be passed down from generation to generation? The pattern of consumerism emerging in Guadeloupe was reminiscent of the first stages of consumer society elsewhere (R. Williams 1982).

Few locally owned black businesses were immune to this onslaught of immediate-gratification consumerism. For example, jewelers and makers of baptismal gowns and traditional costumes and accessories for *fêtes* and special holidays found that suddenly their customers could obtain similar items faster and more cheaply from the newly blossoming all-purpose emporiums called "department" stores. Simultaneously, the influx of imported goods rose to unprecedented levels, as metropolitan suppliers realized that the Antillean market was profitable and therefore were more willing to extend credit terms. New commodities flowed in from all parts of the globe, and, even with the cost of importation and shipping, they were often lower-priced than their locally produced equivalents. Gold jewelry could be obtained from Italy, and lace-adorned clothing was cheaper if machine-made. But, the loss of jobs in the agricultural sector was enormous.

Not surprisingly, the hasty adoption of mechanization in agriculture caused the widespread displacement of agricultural workers from gainful, (if only minimally so), paid employment. It also greatly accelerated the import of foreign made goods and products. Miller notes that "for many people, the entry into consumption is also seen as their entry into self-conscious modernity" (1995:149). In Guadeloupe, modern consumerism spelled the end for local black artisans and craftpersons who had once supplied the population with hand-crafted furniture and goods, and who had managed to earn a decent living for

themselves and their families. In many instances their small (black-owned) enterprises employed relatives and friends as well. Local craftsmen were unable to match the low prices, extended credit terms, or selection offered by these new stores. Consequently, many small shopowners were forced to close their doors or to significantly reduce the scale of their business, and unless they could capture a niche market⁸ became less rather than more competitive.

The French Government was fully aware that the demand for jobs was accelerating at a rate far beyond the ability of the local employment market to keep up. They attempted to initiate large-scale projects which they hoped would provide new employment. These were mainly construction projects and included (very ugly) cement and cinderblock, low-rise and high-rise housing projects⁹ and highways. But the demand for jobs far outstripped the supply of jobs, no matter how quickly new projects could be implemented.

French government solutions to declining economic conditions during the 1950s were devised to defuse anti-colonialist sentiment by curbing rampant population growth and reducing the number of people currently resident in the department. The Minister of

⁸By "niche market" I am referring to businesses that provide "traditional" and/or handmade goods which are particular to the culture. These include the traditional hand-hammered gold necklaces and earrings that women collect from adolescence through old-age, lace blouses and lace adornments which are integral to the costumes and everyday dresses of many women, musical instruments, or the production of culinary specialties. Many of these goods have also met the demand of tourists and crafts consumers for "authenticity" and "nostalgia."

⁹These huge housing projects are, in most instances, located on the immediate outskirts of Point-à-Pitre. In the last decade, there has been a shift to the construction of two- and three-story apartment complexes (similar to U. S. "garden apartments"). Less obtrusive and designed to conform to the local environment and architecture, these low-rise attached and semi-attached dwellings are now appearing in semi-urban locations throughout the island. (For a good example of the contrast in housing types see photos in appendix).

the Overseas Territories, Pierre Billotte consulted with economic specialists. By the mid-1940s, France had begun to develop a series of five-year plans designed to address the economic recovery of the metropole and of associated territories. In the late 1950s, sections of the five-year plans pertaining to the overseas departments were revised in reaction to their economic problems, among which was the growing population pressure. A plan for initiating “regularized” migration had already been included but the creation of what was to become the BUMIDOM program was moved higher on the agenda. The new series of five-year plans contained a blueprint for effecting dramatic, immediate, mid-range and long-range change. The goal of this change was substantial population reduction. Meanwhile, to many Guadeloupeans, the idea of moving to the metropole without having to worry about how this move would be financed signified that their fortunes were indeed on the rise.

The 1958 Colloquium on the Status of Departmentalization

As discussed previously, economic plans devised during the 1950s were formulated not out of largesse, but in response to a barrage of vituperative attacks launched by the general populace of the Antilles and by a highly vocal body of social activists and politicians. Guadeloupeans (considered less civilized) were far more openly hostile to the neo-colonial arrangement than were Martinicans, and many Guadeloupeans were not at all afraid to demonstrate this hostility with bombings of government buildings and *Béké*-owned stores, street rioting, and other acts of violence. While the attacks on the neo-colonial order made by activists and radical politicians were often openly hostile,

several politicians attempted to mediate differences in a peaceful and rational manner. An example of the latter, designed to debate the status of the department, and to draw attention to its problems, was a large public meeting held on Sunday, May 4, 1958. Scheduled speakers on the agenda included political party figures, minor and major elected officials, intellectuals and scholars, educational administrators and university faculty, and representatives from the Chambers of Commerce throughout the department (*la Revue Guadeloupéenne* 1958:9-19).

Entitled "Guadeloupe Under Assimilation: A Colloquy on Assimilation," the colloquium was convened by the editorial staff of a local political newsletter, the *Revue Guadeloupéenne*. Nearly all of those in attendance had supported the 1946 Law of Departmentalization. The mission was to focus national attention on the departments' problems by openly debating the (negative) effects of the 1946 Law of Assimilation. Although the context of the meeting was political, the issues raised were largely of a social and economic nature (ibid: 20-140) and even though some observers argued that differences between them were more semantic than substantive, two opposing viewpoints were represented. Local labor-dominated political parties favored a "modified departmental status" whereas the opposing student- and intellectual-dominated Communist and Socialist Parties favored "internal autonomy." Neither side, however, advocated adopting a stance that would involve a complete break with France. Even among those adopting the same position, there was little agreement about what precisely was meant by the terms "modified status" and "internal autonomy." Nonetheless, between and among opposing factions, there was much agreement about the nature of

Guadeloupe's social and economic problems (see Beckles and Shepard 1996:451-453). In fact, all participants came prepared not only with a list of complaints but each with a statement of proposed solutions as illustrated by the following extract from the proceedings:

M. Gerty Archimede, of the Guadeloupean Communist Party states: the critics of Assimilation contest the imposition of additional taxes resulting from the new status. Figures show that the 1946 law of departmentalization has only aggravated the fiscal expenses of the vieilles colonies. Perhaps it is beside the point and a necessary part of assimilation, but the cost of living and taxes continue to rise since 1946 and the consequences of this spells political disaster for the French government which has only recently withdrawn from the very costly Algerian war. We understand that since 1946 France is in great need of money and that the government must continue its taxation policy, but, we are suffering the consequences of this need... We know that we cannot now withdraw as a department but in the name of the Guadeloupean Communist Party for whom I now speak, we realize that these circumstances require that Guadeloupeans take their own matters into their own hands. I thereby invoke a right expressed in the revised constitution, in particular article 73 of the 8th Constitution, that allows for a territory to be accorded internal autonomy within the Union Française.

M. Clovis Renaison, of the Socialist Party states that nearly everyone in Guadeloupe agrees that Assimilation to date has produced primarily negative results. But can we see ourselves operating under the conditions of internal autonomy within the French Republic? Yes, I certainly agree that the idea and practicality of internal autonomy is both realistic and conceivable.¹⁰

In turn, participants in the colloquium enumerated the disparities between France and Guadeloupe with regard to social welfare benefits, economic stagnation, unemployment, educational expenditures, funds for new housing, roads, sanitation, agricultural diversification, and other economic improvements. The proposed solution to

¹⁰ Extracted from the proceedings of the colloquium held on May 4, 1958 as recorded in a special issue of *Revue Guadeloupéenne* No. 34, July 1958.

these inequalities was assuming greater local political control since many of the disparities had been the subject of legislation, but that legislation had not yet been enforced. For example, while in principle the French social security system *should* have covered Guadeloupean citizens in full, in practice by the late 1950s, only minimal benefits were provided. The system in Guadeloupe did provide a monthly income benefit for retired (civil service) workers, family living supplements if needed, and health coverage (see Constant 1987). But as of 1958 no standard minimum wage regulation had been introduced, and the few family maintenance allocations adopted were at a level far below those of their metropolitan counterparts.

To make matters worse (and widen the gulf between haves and have nots), the supplement paid to French civil service employees (*prime de chère*) stationed in overseas territories, and originally meant for white nationals fulfilling temporary assignments, was permanently adopted and applied to both permanent and temporary Guadeloupean civil service workers. Needless to say, this move only intensified Guadeloupeans' desire to obtain civil service employment. The supplement was not, however, paid to Guadeloupeans who emigrated to France. This meant that emigrants willing to accept metropolitan-based employment would be paid *less* than persons occupying equivalent positions in Guadeloupe. As a result, few people were willing to give up lucrative DOM-based government positions -- the positions not monopolized by immigrant white metropolitans.

The French response to the published proceedings of the 1958 colloquium was relatively swift, and later that year plans were unveiled for the inauguration of an official

migration program. As youth and young adult unemployment was a central topic of criticism, the plans outlined a metropolitan-based "hands on training" program as well as special occupational training programs to be conducted in Guadeloupe. Since many of the anti-French activities were led by students and youth activists, the hope was that these measures would at least alleviate heightened political tensions and reduce the amount of protest activity. To the French, these sentiments were particularly dangerous given that the United States presence loomed as large as ever and Cuba was in a state of turmoil under the charismatic leader Fidel Castro, who assumed power in 1959. The French government feared that if attacks on the neocolonial arrangement continued to escalate, social volatility would increase and local leaders would successfully mobilize the population against the new DOM/metropole relationship and would undermine the existing regional and territorial social and political order.

Fortunately, by the time the colloquium was held, the internal problems which had beset the metropole after World War II were beginning to abate and, except for Algeria, France's relations with its other colonial territories were relatively calm. All in all, the political state of the nation had much improved under the steadying influence of General Charles de Gaulle, and a postwar economic boom had begun. This period of (relative) peace and prosperity in France freed government officials to focus on the political situation in Guadeloupe and other Caribbean territories.

Still, the earliest government efforts towards inducing programmatic change were directed not specifically at improving local economic conditions or creating local employment, but towards effecting rapid population reduction. These programs

dramatically increased the level of outmigration and, quietly, financed the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and technology among Guadeloupean women. However, to complicate existing matters, in the late 1950s, Guadeloupe was quickly becoming a receiver of intra-Caribbean migration.

Guadeloupe as "Receiver" and "Sender" of Migratory People

Although its claim to modernity was at best tenuous, in contrast to neighboring countries, Guadeloupe was "modern" long before others in the Caribbean region. According to socio-economic indicators for the Caribbean region, when based on per capita income, Guadeloupe has continued to rank relatively high.

Even in the late 1950s, social and economic conditions in Guadeloupe, although poor by EuroWestern standards and below those of Martinique, were considered better than conditions in other Caribbean islands. As a consequence, during the postwar period, Guadeloupe became a magnet for Francophone neighbors, particularly Haitians. In fact, following World War II, Guadeloupe attracted a steady stream of clandestine immigration from other Kreyol-speaking countries, not only from Haiti, but also from Dominica and St. Lucia. Haitian migrants particularly desired to escape the even more difficult living conditions in their homeland and/or its repressive political circumstances and to improve their cultural and socio-economic status.

French demographer Jean-Pierre Guengant writes that, unlike the intraregional movement of other Caribbean peoples, Haitian migration is relatively recent. Though Haitians started to leave the island in the 1950s, the number of emigrants dramatically

increased by the 1970s. Guengant calculates that half of all Haitians who migrated did so between 1975 and 1985. Those who migrated earlier did so before economic conditions were at their lowest level; Guengant considers 1970 as the decisive year in which Haitian economic conditions started to plummet. He notes that, as elsewhere, the advent of export-oriented industrialization was initially designed to stop the exodus of people. However, positions created in these new export processing zones were urban based, required that workers live in shanty-town housing on the outskirts of the city, and were very low paying, thus prohibiting workers from rising above the level of poverty (Guengant 1997:32).

Guengant notes that Haiti, like other Caribbean countries, also experienced a tremendous population explosion. At the time of Haitian independence in 1802 its population was about 400,000. But by 1950 the Haitian population had grown to some 3.1 million and, even with continual outmigration, had passed the 5 million mark by 1980 at which time nearly three-quarters of the population lived below the poverty line. Fertility among Haitian women was high and in 1950 stood at nearly 7 births per woman, but, nearly 60 percent of all children were malnourished and the average life expectancy for women was 53. By 1985, in fact, Haitian annual per capita income stood at U.S. \$310, but the birth rate had little declined and stood at 5.2. It is little wonder that the majority of Haitians considered life in exile preferable to life at home (ibid).

Although Guadeloupe became a prime destination for Haitian-born migrants, receiving 10 percent of the migrant population, in contrast, Martinique, which is also a Francophone island, records having only 2.5 percent of the migrant population.

Guadeloupeans further estimate that the real number of Haitian-born immigrants living in Guadeloupe is at least three times higher than indicated by census data.

Many people argue that the reason why such a high percentage of Haitians selected Guadeloupe as a destination is the relative ease with which immigrants can enter the department, not merely because both populations speak *Kréyol*. With dependencies far flung, with the essentially open borders provided by a multitude of outer islands, and with no immigration checks on intradepartmental travel, Guadeloupe presents few difficulties to outsiders wishing to enter. To Haitians, after the United States, Guadeloupe represented a destination in which they could finally achieve at least a modicum of upward social mobility.

Guadeloupeans, however, did not share these immigrants' perspective of their department as a "land of opportunity." Rather, they used the economic conditions of metropolitan Frenchmen as a yardstick by which to measure their local quality of life. In comparison, they found that conditions in the French West Indies were woefully substandard.

"Special" Solutions for "Special" People: Guadeloupe's Inaugural Migration and Family Planning Programs

Having given assurances to the 1958 colloquium attendees that conditions would quickly improve, and having unveiled the "sponsored" migration program, France embarked on its program of "ideological" modernization of the Caribbean. If anything, French government officials felt that *before* they could substantially respond to the

demands of activists and agitators, they needed to address the problem of demographic stress which, they believed, exacerbated the deteriorating socio-economic conditions, and would cancel any ameliorative effort. "Regularized" or planned emigration (rather than the previous "spontaneous" migration) was one solution. Another was the introduction of birth control and family planning technology. The government calculated that this solution would reap longer-range and more permanent benefits, and was particularly critical in light of the growing presence of immigrant hi-fertility (Haitian) women. Both initiatives, however, required the spread of an ideology more conducive to "modernity," and this took the form of the heavy promotion of French culture and values and a reformation of the reigning family ideology. The French, long renowned for their acculturative approach vis-à-vis non-French colonial subjects, were firm in their belief that only a totalizing ideological reorientation was capable of aligning a "traditional" Guadeloupean population more closely with modern France. In fact, to them, a much accelerated form of "reorientation" or cultural assimilation was a necessary prelude to economic alignment and would go hand in hand with political assimilation.

There is little doubt that French officials viewed Antilleans (particularly Guadeloupeans) as inferior. Guadeloupeans, however, did not interpret French programmatic development initiatives as either racist or denigrating. As Constant argues, when the various components of the BUMIDOM program were initially presented, it did not occur to Antilleans to question why they needed a "special" agency for housing, a "special" agency for psycho-social counseling, a "special" agency for school placement; in sum, why they needed so many special considerations to effect their integration into

metropolitan society (Constant 1987:238). Nor had Guadeloupeans yet grasped the fact that they had become the "special" targets of a new French campaign promoting "family values." However, before the government could resolve the issue, officials felt that even more interventions were needed to bring Guadeloupeans educationally, socially, and morally in line with metropolitan France. Thus, the French worked covertly but intensively to reduce fertility levels, alter procreative behavior, and lower the high fertility rate which in the 1950s stood at an average of six children per woman. However, as was the case in the English-speaking West Indies, middle class and professional Guadeloupeans were enlisted to help with the cause (LaPlante 1971, Simet-Lutin 1974, Guengant 1970).

The introduction of contraceptive knowledge and birth control devices was, in fact, part two of the French government's depopulation program for Guadeloupe. While migration was the "quick fix" or instant remedy to overpopulation, the spread of birth control technology remained the most important component of its long-term economic program and the centerpiece of economic improvement. The 1961 statement of Pierre Billotte, Minister of the Overseas Territories, which is quoted above continues as follows:

No durable results will be achieved until local authorities have introduced social centers of family planning in every district, centers that would be under medical control and where everyone according to one's own convictions could receive advice and guidance. There follows, that, as long as it has not been repealed, the 1920 law must be enforced in a very liberal way [my emphasis]. (ibid:94)

The 1920 law to which Billotte refers interdicted family planning and the use of birth control devices in France. However in 1961, any family planning program that dispensed information or devices involving “artificial” or technologically assisted birth control methods was illegal in France, and by extension, illegal in Guadeloupe.

As in the United States, the push to legalize birth control in France commenced among educated and professional women. In 1947, a young gynecologist named Marie-Andree Weille-Halle traveled to the United States to learn more about the birth control movement initiated by Margaret Sanger and her followers. Weille-Halle returned to France full of ideas and laden with literature about how a similar organization could be established, provided she could garner support from a sufficient number of other French doctors. In 1953, Weille-Hallee published an article in a French medical journal in which she outlined the merits of family planning. The article did not provoke the negative reaction she anticipated, and instead was guardedly well received (Ardagh 1969:255).

Enthused by this small success, Weille-Halle founded a family planning organization which she called the "*Mouvement Pour la Maternité Heureuse*" (movement for joyful motherhood). Initially the organization was comprised of women only but they were able to solicit and obtain the cooperation of male doctors. Soon, however, Weill-Halle's activities captured the attention of a number of pro-natalists of diverse social and political affiliation. These included the Council of the Order of Doctors, the Catholic Church, and the Communist Party, all of whom viewed the organization's efforts to reduce the birth rate as counter to religious dogma or to the best interests of the state or the proletariat.

Weille-Halle and her followers argued that wealthy and elite women were already availing themselves of effective contraceptive devices which they acquired outside of France, whereas poor and less affluent women who wanted to control their fertility were forced to rely on less reliable methods such as douches, coitus interruptus, and temperature control or rhythm. Given that a large percentage of the female population appeared to indicate that they desired to take control of their fertility, the general inaccessibility of effective birth control resulted in poorer women also resorting to unsafe and often unsanitary abortions (Ardagh 1969:256).

By 1958 a second anti-natalist organization was formed called the *Fédération Internale des Associations de Planning Familiale* (IPPF) which absorbed the *Mouvement pour la Maternité heureuse*. With the help of a larger network of affiliated doctors and medical specialists, the new organization began to illegally distribute diaphragms (manufactured in England) and spermicidal cream (illegally manufactured in Grenoble) through doctors and clinics (ibid). By keeping family planning a privately run activity, and by obtaining contraceptive devices outside of France, feminists and activists¹¹ promoting national contraceptive programs were able to circumvent two long-standing obstacles: the first was a set of anticontraceptive laws adopted in 1920 which were enacted in response to secular concerns over depopulation as a result of heavy World War I casualties; the second was the vigorous pronatalist policy of the Catholic Church, which continued to uphold religious sanctions against the use of any external device to prevent

¹¹Switzerland was the destination of choice for metropolitan Frenchwomen seeking contraceptives, abortion, or family planning information (Ardagh 1969).

pregnancy. Further complicating the political picture vis-à-vis the contraception issue were the pronatalist and pro-Catholic views held by the president's wife, Madame Charles de Gaulle.

But while the family planning movement in France had clandestine beginnings, its clients were largely middle-class and elite women. The majority of these women were married and used contraception in order to postpone, space, or to stop procreation early in their reproductive years. The goal of the national family planning movement was not to enable single women to engage in premarital sex. Although the French government attempted to obstruct the movement's activities, government officials nevertheless consulted with the movement's leaders in order to formulate a family planning strategy for Guadeloupe. Even so, initially, the contraceptive literature and technology distributed in the French West Indies was largely obtained from sources in the English-speaking Caribbean or from the Dutch half of St. Martin rather than from France (Segal 1969:96-97). But, as the Guadeloupean movement gained momentum and support from local residents, by the mid-1960s printed materials were being obtained from national sources in France.

When I first asked older Guadeloupean women to recall their memories of early family planning programs in the department, I noticed that many of them were unable to recall dates. My first reaction was to attribute these memory lapses to the passage of time, but I also wondered if there had been some legal or social controversy related to the issue. Archival sources listed the date of the creation of *L'association Guadeloupéenne Pour le Planning Familial* as 1964. Records for this association indicated that the first

(official) planning center in Guadeloupe opened in Point-à-Pitre in 1968. However, three women that I interviewed claimed to have been associated with its predecessor, the *Union Départementale des Associations Familiales* (UDAF), at least a decade before. Women involved with the UDAF said that they had distributed information about birth control and about postpartum sterilization procedures to pregnant women with several children. They also told me that they had directed women to abortion practitioners or to doctors who were trained to insert IUDs and coils, when the request was made.

Several weeks later, I met two women at a meeting of retired civil service professionals who told me that they had been trained as nursing assistants to provide contraceptive services and information by English-speaking specialists associated with the *L'association Guadeloupéenne Pour le Planning Familial*. According to them, this training had taken place not in Guadeloupe, but in Jamaica, Barbados, and in Puerto Rico. They also recalled attending a family planning conference held in Jamaica in 1962 (as it was the year they both married), and attending lectures in Guadeloupe given by “metro” family planning representatives.

When I asked older citizens involved with the 1950s and early 1960s family planning movement about populist reaction to its activities, I was told that there had been a local pro-natalist faction. Apparently, a small but highly vocal anti-birth control movement targeted several Guadeloupeans who were participants in the family planning movement. These participants consisted of local (primarily middle-class, elite, and professional) black Guadeloupeans and some *métro*-based specialists involved in the early stages of family planning activities. Funds and technical expertise were also received from

some locally prominent *Békés*. I found no archival information verifying *Béké* participation, but as I had recently observed one prominent *Béké* association organize and operationalize a very high profile anti-drug campaign, the possibility of *Béké* involvement in early family planning activities seemed plausible. This would provide a context for the pro-natalist reaction, whose leaders were black. Martinican political activists, under the leadership of Aimé Césaire, had adopted a highly vocal anti-colonial stance, particularly highlighting racial inequality and economic inequities. Fearing that serious attempts to establish family planning in Martinique would be met with accusations of genocide or racial extermination by Césaire and other local politicians, planners decided to concentrate their efforts on Guadeloupe. Government officials also noted that Césaire's extended periods of residency in France often left Martinique with a political vacuum that prevented the study of demographic issues or decision-making regarding population pressure. Moreover, Martinique "has lacked interest in an orientation towards population problems which has been forthcoming from medical and political elites in Guadeloupe"(Segal 1967:97). For one of the few times in its history, Martinique lagged behind Guadeloupe in the process of "modernization."

Several local Guadeloupean women told me that there was a distinction between family planning clinics and family planning centers. One retired nurse told me that clinics were equipped to perform medical exams, routine gynecological procedures, and to dispense and insert contraceptive devices, whereas family planning centers were usually (but not always) locations where women could obtain literature about contraception or be referred to a medical specialist. Archival records from the *Centre Guadeloupéen*

d'Information et de l'Education Famiale (CGIEF) supported this statement and provided dates that, on the surface at least, appeared more precise.

According to CGIEF records, Madame Marie-Antoinette Simet-Lutin, one of the early organizers, and later president of Guadeloupe's Family Planning Association, a branch of the *Maternité Consciente* was officially created by Jacqueline Letourner and her husband Yves in the early 1960s (Simet-Lutin 1974). These documents state that the first medical family planning *clinic* was opened in Point-à-Pitre in 1968, and by July 1971 there were seven fully equipped clinics operating throughout the island. The first medical clinics were opened in urban locations, but Simet-Lutin also lists twelve family planning *centers* that opened in more rural locations during the same period. According to her records, these centers were solely for the purpose of dispensing family planning literature (ibid:78).

In the mid-1960s, survey results indicating that informal efforts were producing modest success and estimating that a more intensive campaign could be even more productive transformed what had been a low profile movement into a full-fledged campaign (Dumas 1975:77-78). According to the survey, by 1964 nearly 20 percent of Guadeloupean women were using some method of birth control, and family planning professionals felt that it would be relatively easy to increase the percentage (ibid:77). Nonetheless, at this juncture the high rate of illegitimate births and pattern of consensual mating continued to be cited as conducive to high fertility and problematic (ibid:76).

In 1964, the Family Planning Association of Guadeloupe, then still an independent organization, began offering annual "memberships" to women at the cost of

fifteen francs, approximately three U.S. dollars. The membership included receiving extensive family planning literature, a monthly magazine, and access to a referral service of affiliated local doctors who dispensed information and birth control devices (Simet-Lutin 1974, Segal 1975:95). One-third of the fees that were collected went directly back to the national family planning movement which provided the literature and printed information (Segal 1969:95). By 1965 the Family Planning Association of Guadeloupe had 250 paid members. Its success inspired local professionals to organize officially as the Family Planning Association of Guadeloupe. The Association finally became a recognized affiliate of the national organization in July 1967, when the ban on contraception was rescinded.

Notwithstanding local criticism, for a variety of national and local reasons, the family planning movement moved forward in Guadeloupe but initially, was technically divorced from the national family planning movement. Without overtly contradicting official policy in the metropole, as suggested by Minister Billotte, "private" family planning programs were operationalized in Guadeloupe by means of covert national financing, a collaboration of private interests, and a very lenient interpretation of French law. Records from the national archives and first-hand accounts support the fact that several local doctors, nurses, psychologists, and semi-professional medical personnel were recruited and trained by members of the national family planning movement to spread the message of contraception among local women (Dumas 1975, Charbit 1987).

However vague its origins, clearly, members associated with the family planning movement in Guadeloupe dispensed both contraceptive information and devices well

before it was technically legal. As overseas minister Pierre Billotte had advocated the lenient policy, those involved in early family planning activities were only minimally restricted and never prosecuted for their involvement. This "official" policy of extending the "widest possible latitude" to Guadeloupe in matters of contraception allowed for the dissemination of birth control information and the importation of contraceptive devices still illegal in France. These included devices such as the coil and the diaphragm, which were obtained from neighboring English-speaking Caribbean countries.

Not until the Law Neuwirth, a national law permitting the use but not the public advertisement of birth control devices, was passed in 1967 (Ardagh 1969:254) could there be an *official* recognition of established family planning programs. Throughout this period, the *public* objective of the Guadeloupean program was not to achieve fertility parity with the metropole, but rather to provide women with the information and the means needed to make an "informed choice," and to foster the notion of "responsible parenthood."

Conclusion

Were not governmental programs and policies designed to reduce population pressure between 1960 and 1982 successful, and, therefore, did not the end justify the means? Statistically speaking these interventionist measures appeared quite effective. Until recently, official statistics documented that the total fertility rate dropped from a high of 6.1 children per woman in 1958 to a low of 2.4 in 1982 and, after a few upward fluctuations in 1997, was projected to restabilize at the near replacement level of 2.2

(INSEE 1991). But, the issue of morality, marriage, and illegitimacy is a bit more thorny. And, as will be further discussed, the outcomes were almost certainly not what French government officials had in mind for the envisioned modern Guadeloupean society.

"Out of wedlock" births, which were at their highest levels in 1956, fell to their low levels in the early 1970s; however, they then climbed again in the 1980s surpassing 1960s' levels. The rate of legal marriage peaked in the early 1960s, but has declined steadily ever since. The 1960s' high rate of nuptuality is now considered an aberration. In fact, this is the period which local social scientists refer to as the "do as if we were French" era, a period during which "respectability was redefined." The ensuing period of high divorce rates and abandoned marriages appears to support their analysis.

What about the issue of family formation? Again, French government officials envisioned that Guadeloupeans would not only legally marry as the norm rather than as the exception, but would also prefer the formation of small and nuclear families. In fact, an underlying objective of migratory programs fostered by the metropole during the 1960s and 1970s was to sever the "extended matrifocal family pattern" which was considered conducive to high fertility. Migration presupposed the removal of women from the network of mutual help from grandparents and godparents and provided them with the means and opportunity to emulate metropolitan values of restrained sexuality and responsible parenthood. Yet, men and women who migrated often sabotaged these government attempts by bringing their children home to live with parents or sending them back to Guadeloupe by plane in the company of returning friends and relatives, or in

some cases with returning strangers. Often these young "visitors" were not reflected in census records.

In Guadeloupe, the consumer revolution commenced during the postemancipation period and has continued until the present. In the mid-twentieth century, metropolitan and *Blanc-Créole* entrepreneurs were more than willing to satisfy local cravings for modern goods. They channeled profits from agro-based enterprises into retail businesses in order to be able to open "modern" stores featuring "modern" goods. In the process, black Guadeloupeans lost employment opportunities as the agricultural sector was mechanized and declined, and as the small businesses lost both profits and staff. The new consumerism reinforced rather than abolished white hegemony. Nor did the new emporiums provide additional employment for black Guadeloupeans, as employees tended to be white.

Guadeloupean activists and politicians were eventually able to bring their demands to the bargaining table and were "rewarded" with sponsored migration programs initiated at government expense. Yet, while the BUMIDOM program relocated thousands of Guadeloupeans to France, not all who aspired to migrate actually did so, and among those who did, only a small percentage were able to fulfill their dreams.

During the process of labor "relocation" or reallocation, the French government indirectly funded family planning programs which at the time were forbidden in France. They enlisted local women and local medical practitioners to disseminate the message, and despite that fact that these early efforts were largely covert, in the end, they proved to be successful. Within twenty years women reduced their fertility so dramatically that the

difference in cumulative fertility among different generations was highly apparent. The reduction of fertility did not, however, lead to the adoption of "legal" marriage or to the formation of enduring nuclear families. This "failure" appears to be attributable not only to "cultural" factors but also to the state of the Guadeloupean economy.

In chapter eight I examine how contemporary cultural, economic, and political circumstances shape young Guadeloupeans' goals and expectations as they (re-)create new frames of reference in devising pragmatic solutions for dealing with current problems.

Chapter 8 - Daughters of the Decline

Vis-à-vis the developed West, we [people of the Caribbean] are very much “the same.” We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the “Other”. We are at the outer edge, the “rim,” of the metropolitan world -- always “South” to someone else’s *El Norte* (Stuart Hall 1992:227-228).

Introduction

After a trip to Jamaica in the English-speaking West Indies and to Martinique in the French West Indies, Stuart Hall observed that often the identity differences between Black West Indians were important and mattered. Yet, despite the existence of these cultural differences, he contends that Black West Indians are categorized similarly as socially and economically inferior to the predominately white, “advanced” populations of the West (ibid). For all Caribbean countries, the postwar years were socially and economically traumatic, but the issues faced then may be similar to the issues that are (re)appearing today. At least in the French West Indies, the same sets of demographic pressures and economic constraints characteristic of the post-World War II years are returning with a vengeance.

This chapter looks at the circumstances which plagued Guadeloupean women (and men) during the 1960s and 1970s “transition” to low fertility and at the set of similar circumstances which younger Guadeloupean women, “daughters of the decline,” must now face. I examine recent population pressure, its sources, and how it impacts the lives of black residents. Contained in the chapter are peoples’ reactions to metropolitan racism and how new manifestations of racism have only reinforced the younger generation’s resolve to locate new migratory destinations. I look at why older and younger Guadeloupeans have finally abandoned the goal of assimilating to French culture.

I review new national "explanations" and individual narratives concerning gender relations, intergenerational relationships, and patterns of family formation in the Caribbean in general and in Guadeloupe in particular. In order to add context and texture to this fertility decline, I revisit the dichotomization of family models, family formation, and Guadeloupeans' dual claim of belonging to both a "modern" and a "traditional" society. I look at how Black West Indians have faced similar constraints and have endured similar stereotypes and cultural denigration. I conclude by attempting to answer the question why has "westernization" failed to eradicate "traditional" forms of culture (and family formation) in Guadeloupe, and to explicate how and why "modern" fertility has diverged from the model of the "modern" family.

Guadeloupean Motherhood

To imply that following their fertility transition Guadeloupean women no longer want to marry or to have children would be misleading and inaccurate. In fact, such an implication would greatly distort a very idealized portrait of Guadeloupean motherhood. Most women want to have a child, albeit later rather than sooner, and most would also like to find a (faithful and prosperous) husband. In Guadeloupe, motherhood is a highly regarded status. Because the "fertility transition" is relatively recent, the majority of middle-aged and senior residents belong to families which had six or more children (Leridon and Charbit 1981). Although the young may have smaller families, given the abundance of women in their eighties and nineties, there are plenty of "children" of all ages paying homage to mothers.

The best evidence of the exalted status of motherhood can be seen in the two week period leading up to Mothers' Day. Celebrated about two weeks earlier than in the United States, Mother's Day is an event which involves a flurry of preparation. Before the big day, *France-Antilles*, the daily newspaper in Guadeloupe, features stories about mothers of all ages. Invariably, the mother celebrated is surrounded by a crush of children. Special television spots feature "mother's stories" and towns and communities sponsor Mother's Day festivities. The majority of mothers feted are middle-aged and senior citizens, and stories about these women are particularly revealing of the differences in fertility between the young and the older generations. Older women are portrayed encircled by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Often, I have wondered if the decisive factor for making the news is the number of children a woman can display. Nonetheless, the few young and younger middle-aged woman occasionally featured typically have two or perhaps three children. During the several years when I have been in Guadeloupe for Mother's Day, I do not ever recall a mother celebrated who only had one child.

Equally illuminating is a pattern that emerged from my survey and life history data suggesting that single and unmarried women in short-term relationships have the lowest level of fertility. As I later realized, these data are congruent with the findings of Doris Ibberson (1956), George W. Roberts (1955), Lloyd Braithwaite (1961), Judith Blake (1961), George Cumper (1966), J. Mayone Stycos and Kurt W. Back (1964), Anthony Marino (1970), and with the findings of other scholars who conducted fertility studies in the Caribbean region in the 1950s and 1960s. Their data likewise indicated that contrary to popular expectations, married women and women in stable common-law

relationships had the highest rates of fertility. Leridon and Charbit (1971) reported the same findings among French West Indian women. Subsequent fertility studies conducted under the auspices of the French Bureau of Statistics do not make mention of their findings (INSEE 1970, 1980, 1990, 1997).

Of the three women I interviewed who had been married for forty years to the same partner, all had given birth to at least eight children¹. Women whom I interviewed who were widowed early or who had not had a relationship of longer than five years duration, had on the average six children.

I was struck by this disparity when it emerged from my questionnaire and life history data and due to the small number of participants in the elderly age group in my research, I was ready to dismiss my findings as statistically insignificant. But the media images seemed to corroborate my findings, and so I began to ask questions (as tactfully as possible). Chatting with senior women, I brought the issue up. While not all of the women I questioned responded to me directly or responded to me at all, I did get some very lengthy accounts which shed light on my questions. Most of the shorter responses were similar and pertained to the pragmatics of having numerous children without having a stable partner. Women without husbands worked outside of the home, and on the average had sex a lot less often than women with husbands. Married women of this generation also tended more to be stay-at-home mothers and were far less likely to have participated in either the formal or the informal economy. As Marie, aged 82, mother of 12 (11 living), grandmother of 23, and great-grandmother of 9 explained:

¹ One woman had twelve children, the other had ten, and the last had only eight. Their average age was 70, and all but five of their combined 30 offspring were still living. Two of the four had died shortly after birth. Also, all three women had miscarried at least once.

When my children were born (1932-1949), my husband and I had a farm and he and his brothers also repaired roofs. Then, it was expected that I stay home, yes, but he could feed and clothe us. I sewed, cooked, tended the livestock and the garden and sometimes helped with the harvesting and the planting. No we did not have a grand house, or plumbing or running water inside, but my children's clothes were always clean and we always had ample food for everyone during most of those years. When I got older, we tried restraint and withdrawal but not very successfully. Things were more difficult during the war (WW II) because although my husband was not in the army, three of his brothers had enlisted and after the war only one brother returned. Our children had to help out and things were more difficult.

None of my young great-granddaughters say they want children and my three granddaughters have only three children among them. My thirteen year old great-granddaughter tells me that she wants to become a doctor. That is not to say she isn't feminine, and she is always preening and begging her mother for money for more new clothes and makeup (and money for McDonald's). Both of my great-granddaughters were beauty queens. I think that the younger generation is in another kind of competition, they are so talented but there are so few jobs for them. So their hunt is not for a husband but for a job that will get them away from the island. (Marie 82, Guadeloupean)

Marie's profile of her family, particularly of her female offspring, exemplifies in many ways the differences among the generations. It also explains why women who were married or in relationships lasting for several decades were apt to have a higher cumulative fertility than women who participated in two or more relationships of shorter duration.

I revisited the findings of Leridon and Charbit (1980), who conducted a study on "patterns of marital unions and fertility in Guadeloupe and Martinique," based on data collected in 1968 by the French *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* (INSEE) in conjunction with the World Fertility Study. As the table below documents, for birth cohorts between 1926 and 1940, on the whole, married women had higher fertility levels than women who participated mainly in "visiting" and "common law" relationships during their procreative years.

Table 4 - A Comparison of F.W. I. Women for Birth Cohorts Between 1926 and 1940
(women ages 35-49, with at least one union).

Age at time of Survey (in 1975)					Number of Women
Current Status	35-39	40-44	45-49	35-49	
married	5.17	6.00	6.88	6.00	(705)
common law	5.43	4.91	6.36	5.54	(151)
visiting	4.80	4.75	4.75	4.77	(122)
currently single	3.87	4.25	5.20	5.56	(201)
all women 35-49*	5.00	5.46	6.27	5.57	(1,179)

*confined to women ever in a union.

Table 5 - Total duration of union life; mean age at first union; mean number of unions and of partners, by current status. (Women aged 35 - 49 with at least one union in 1975)

Current Status	Total duration of union life	Mean age at first union	Mean number of unions	Mean number of partners
Married	20.5	20.7	2.2	1.3
Common law	18.8	19.3	2.9	2.5
Visiting	17.2	19.7	3.3	3.0
Currently single	12.0	21.1	2.6	2.2
All women* 35-49	18.5	20.5	2.4	1.8

*Confined to women ever in a union.

Source Tables 4 and 5: H. Leridon and Y. Charbit. 1981. Patterns of Marital Unions and Fertility in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

According to the above, married women on the whole had lower cumulative fertility than their counterparts in common law and visiting relationships. Yet this table

does not reveal class, socio-economic background, education, at what age these woman married, or if, as in the case of many woman I interviewed, women listed as married might have separated from their husbands during their thirties.

As regards fertility differences between women of various age groups in the current population, my survey and life history data revealed that women who were older had a higher cumulative fertility, middle-aged women in their late 30s and early 40s had two or three children, while women in their 20s and early 30s tended to have one child or, at most, two. Contrary to my expectations, this pattern is not confined to middle-class, educated, or elite women. Several young women who participated in the questionnaire survey at clinic locations or at the bureau of Social Services were women one would categorize as either poor or of very modest means. Some women had not even completed high school, and a few already had children yet the majority of them told me that they intended to postpone pregnancy or further pregnancies until they were financially secure.

Among women of all classes, few linked childbearing with marriage as either socially or morally necessary. Nearly all women expressed the desire to "eventually" have at least one child (and several did during the course of my research). However, less than half expressed a desire to be "legally" married. As I was told several times, "marriage is such a big step and such an enormous commitment," better to wait and be sure to find 'the right' husband, than to marry for marriage's sake"--or, marry in haste and repent in leisure. The goal among women who desired to get married was to have an "enduring, permanent, and long-lasting commitment." Such a relationship, they said, would require emotional stability, maturity, and financial security on the part of both partners.

Weddings, however, are a big event in Guadeloupe. Weddings are also very expensive and lavish social occasions and involve a substantial outlay of cash for food, hosts and servers, flowers and decoration, party favors and liquor, and live entertainment. As a rule, wedding receptions normally start at seven in the evening and last until noon the next day. Younger couples have large and traditional weddings, replete with bridesmaids, ushers, ring bearers and flower girls, whereas the receptions of older couples are somewhat more subdued but are often equally expensive. I realized that in the case of several weddings I had attended of younger couples (in their 20s), both husband and wife had been working professionals. Rarely have I heard about a wedding when the bridegroom was unemployed.

Unfortunately, given the dearth of employed, mature, and faithful single men (a lament one reads in the Guadeloupean equivalent of "Dear Abby" columns often), most single women, young and old, believe that the odds of finding this ideal husband are slim. In fact male fidelity is a huge issue. On any given week, at least half of the letters featured in "Emmanuelle's Mail Bag," a very popular advice column in the weekly magazine insert of the local newspaper *France-Antilles*, are from women involved with married men, cheating men, or men who claim to be single but are not.

Routinely, Emmanuelle's advice to women is to leave an unfaithful partner, but it is doubtful that this advice is much followed. Irma McClaurin observed the same pattern of clinging to a mate regardless of his sexual indiscretions among women she studied in Belize. She says that "one of the most powerful holds that men have over women is the threat of abandonment. To avoid abandonment, women in Belize practice endurance"(1996:121). Physical loneliness more than economic abandonment is the

overriding concern of the majority of Guadeloupean women which accounts for the many women who are willing to “share” their partner with another woman. Although younger women openly complain about their partner’s infidelity, middle-aged and older women are stoic and pragmatic about their husband’s outside activities, although, as I quickly discovered, not willing to discuss them.

After observing the reactions of older women, I was curious to know how older men felt about this “informal polygamous mating system.” I had the opportunity to engage in such a conversation when a married male acquaintance named Raymond asked me why I had not remarried. In addition to my own daily encounters with the opposite sex, friends had attempted to match me with the local dentist, the mailman, a bank officer, a customs inspector, an immigration agent, several policeman, two professors, and other gainfully employed men. Given past experience, I strongly suspected that Raymond was warming up to ask me for a date, and being adventurous, I responded in a way that I was sure would provoke a reaction. I was not disappointed. I told him that my first marriage was to a civil engineer, that we had one child and the marriage had lasted for eleven years but that “I think that the reason why I have not remarried is that I am very much a romantic. The next time that I marry I would like it to be forever.” Raymond asked “what kind of a man are you looking for?... Rich, I’m sure.” I told him, “No!, my first husband made a very good living but apparently that did not help us to stay married. I am looking for a financially secure man yes, but not necessarily rich.” Raymond seemed encouraged by my response, but puzzled. “What else then do you want from a man?” “Well,” I said, “the man of my dreams will have a good sense of humor, be intelligent, sensitive, romantic, and above all faithful.” As I expected, when he heard my last

qualification, Raymond's response was swift and explosive. "You dream if you think you or any woman will find a man who will want only you in bed. Maybe in the U.S. you will find such a creature, but I doubt it, and certainly never in Guadeloupe!"

For a while, after my conversation with Raymond, whenever the opportunity presented itself I made it a point to talk to other men about the subject of fidelity and marriage in Guadeloupe. Not only did many (not all) men of all ages agree with Raymond's opinion, but some male acquaintances told me stories about the husbands or boyfriends of some of my female friends and acquaintances who were having affairs. A few men also informed me about women whom they knew to be cheating on their husbands. Soon, I realized that I knew more about men's (and women's) extramarital relations than I had ever intended, and, even in the interest of anthropological research, certainly more than I really wanted to know. Soon I refrained from raising the issue of infidelity even when the opportunity was offered.

However, the odds against single women finding an employed, mature, and faithful mate do not prevent women from trying, as evidenced by the growing number of singles classified ads published by newspapers and weekly magazines. The majority of ads from women in the *Pour Vous Monsieur* (women seeking men) column emphasize that they are looking for a man who is stable, lovable, faithful, looking to have children, and willing to make a lifetime commitment. One single woman advertised that she was serious and wise and willing to accept a man's children, which indicated to me that she was also pragmatic.

Several Guadeloupean women told me that their ideal of a perfect husband was a black *American* male (Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley, Denzel Washington, and Colin Powell are high on the list). True, nearly *every* popular African-American actor or sports

figure is revered by many Guadeloupean women. Bearing this in mind, I found myself keeping track of the backgrounds of the new husbands of my newly married acquaintances. Of the seven close acquaintances who married during the course of my research, one married a white Canadian male, the second a white French-Swiss male, two married Guadeloupean-born East Indians,² one a St. Lucian. Only two married Guadeloupeans who were black -- and each was considered a "good catch."

Gender Relations: Unhappy Men?

In Guadeloupe, as elsewhere on the planet, there seems to be a disparity between what men are looking for in a woman and women in a man; while women are looking for a lifetime commitment, men are looking for an affectionate, loving, and romantic partner. Women are explicit about permanency and eternal loyalty, while men vaguely advertise in the "personals" for fidelity in a romantic relationship. In the *Pour Vous Madame* columns, men advertise that they are amusing, amorous, mature, sensitive, and express their desire to have a loving relationship. Occasionally, a man will state that he is looking for a woman with whom to have children, or stipulate that the woman be single and have had no previous children, or emphasize that he is single and has no children from previous relationships but is ready to start a family.

I discovered that there exists a great deal of criticism among Guadeloupean men (of all ages) about the current state of Guadeloupean womanhood. Much of the acrimonious sentiment revolves around the failings of contemporary young women as mothers and

² The East Indian population in Guadeloupe is relatively small. Unlike the situation in many other islands, such as Trinidad and Jamaica, Guadeloupeans of East Indian and Afro-Caribbean heritage are close and intermarry fairly frequently. I was told that, unlike black Guadeloupeans, East-Indians would not marry whites because they still blame them for their bondage.

housekeepers who, men say, prefer tending to their hair, nails, make-up, and clothing rather than tending to the laundry, diaper-changing, and their kitchens. I spoke to middle-aged fathers of married daughters who proclaimed that never would they have tolerated "the things that new wives make their men do."

For instance, one man, David, told me that he had often observed his son-in-law changing diapers and doing the laundry and, with the help of "fast food" stands, even preparing the dinner. When I asked what was wrong with that, David continued:

When I was growing up, it was unacceptable that a man even enter the kitchen, that was for the women, your sisters, your mother. A man who spent time in the kitchen was considered sissy, at least, certainly not masculine. I can't even begin to think about having to change diapers. Perhaps, it would not be so bad, but my daughter is a secretary at a bank and has more free time than my son-in-law. She is forever going to the shopping center, out to dinner, to the movies with her girlfriends. Why did she have a baby at all? Why did she get married at all? I know men who have wives who spend all the household money on make-up and clothing. And men accept that? Never me!

Exhausted from his recitation, David sat back in his chair and called out to his wife Thérèse to bring him his dinner. Thérèse had in fact been standing behind him during his little diatribe. I pretended that I did not see her and, as David instructed, called out and asked when David's dinner would be ready. By then she had returned to the kitchen and called back *Tell him it's on the stove and he can come to the kitchen to get it*. She popped her head out of the kitchen for a moment, looked at me and winked. David growled, looked around to argue with his wife, but kept quiet and stayed put. In the end, David not only got his dinner served to him at the dining table, but, as every evening, was served a predinner drink.

The fact that David had taken the side of his son-in-law rather than his daughter surprised me and seemed to indicate a good deal of male solidarity. Of course, I made it

my business to eventually speak to David's daughter, Elise, (without telling her about her father's conversation) about gender relations in her marriage. Elise turned out to be not a secretary but a loan officer in the local branch of a national bank and told me that she earned more money than her husband who, she said, was a government statistics clerk. She claimed that she and her husband had a "modern" marriage which required that they both share childcare and household responsibilities. Concerning her primping, she explained to me that

in addition to having brains, at my office it is expected that I always dress well and look professional. Does my husband accept this? Yes. If he is unhappy about our arrangement it is because my father made him so. My father is always talking about life in his day, with his mother, when he was growing up!

Although I still had not mentioned my conversation with her father, I assumed that by Elise's tone and by the content of her conversation she had frequently been the object of her father's criticism. Her husband, as it turned out, proved to be a charming, animated man who seemed (as I watched them both in the kitchen) quite comfortable with his "modern" role.

While there is a good deal of advertisement for modern goods and clothing items aimed at men, one cannot help but notice that the bulk of the advertising in Guadeloupe is directed at women. Ads feature not only beauty products, clothing, make-up and jewelry, but also fast-food dinners, furniture, household adornments and every imaginable product. Traveling "china and crystal shows" circulate around the island (much like the American Tupperware parties of yesteryear) attracting potential clients to their displays. Through high-pressure evening soirees the organizers promise to bestow on attendees "free" gifts, food and drink and, for those who are wise and buy their goods, the assurance

that they will immediately become more "cultured." Sales agreements lie waiting on the tables and each demonstration assumes the aura of a magic show. The goods do not come cheaply. An average china dinner service for eight including flatware and glassware costs a minimum of U.S.\$2,500. Consequently, I noticed that most of the sales agreements are installment contracts offering credit terms as long as five years.

Nearly all of these potential customers, who are well-attired (though few appear well-off), arrive and announce their "reservation" for the evening to an obsequious host who hands each "guest" a *ti punch*--the local pre-dinner speciality made from burnt sugar, lime juice and the very potent *rhum agricole*. The aperitif is capable of intoxicating the uninitiated or non-habitual drinker with a single gulp (of course I learned this the hard way). At the nine shows I attended, I noticed that most of the customers were middle-aged or older. When I asked several participants and observers about this apparent generation gap, men in particular told me that young women, even if married, would not consider spending such a sum of money on anything as durable and practical as dishes, or indeed on anything connected to the kitchen.

Yet no one (male or female) complains about the intensity of the vigorous promotion of consumerism in non-durable products designed specifically to ensnare the young. When shopping in town or at the *centre commerciale*, one notices that Guadeloupean salespersons and shopkeepers of both sexes are (generally) less aggressive than "metro" salespeople and proprietors who will often leave the shop to pounce on a female customer who is window-shopping and try to convince her that the object of her gaze will not only flatter (help or beautify) her, but is well within her means. And, while I frequently heard variants of the "spoiled" Guadeloupean women story uttered by men, I

never came across any woman who remotely fitted this description. In fact, a good deal of the time that I spent with women of all ages was in their kitchens.

I did tend to eat at restaurants more often with younger women (both single and married), but not nearly as frequently as men implied. More frequently, I dined on home-cooked meals at family gatherings that included several generations. But I often wondered if the Guadeloupean press was not responsible for promoting this image of deteriorating womanhood. While they filled their pages with advertisements for women, they also printed articles lamenting the lost art of "traditional" (translation: very time consuming all-day preparations) cooking. Another source of men's anger (especially among politicians) was the single-parent allotment for which many women are eligible. (Men are also eligible.)

But while both women and men told me about "certain women" who had many children and collected money from the state (similar to Aid to Dependent Children), given the small size of these allowances and the high cost of living in Guadeloupe, most single mothers must either be magicians or obtain financial resources from somewhere else. Further, many women praise the French government for its policy of providing allotments for mothers who desire to stay home with their children (under the age of five) rather than go to work.

I both met and interviewed twelve single mothers in their late teens. They came from middle-class and elite families as well as from poorer circumstances, being the daughters of educators and government officials as well as the daughters of farmers, market women, and laborers. In talking to them, I realized that if there was one thing that many had in common it was the fact that they were the offspring of parents who were

largely absent or busy, and were enamored of, rather than regretful about the experience of motherhood. Although I encountered a few women who gossiped about the circumstances of someone's pregnancy, mothers, as many reminded me, are revered in Guadeloupe. And perhaps, one day, they would find the husband of their dreams. The other common thread among them was that none wanted to marry the father of their child. Finally, I admit, I stopped asking the question, since in that setting not only did it appear ignorant but, like the issue of male fidelity, in anthropological terms, ethnocentric.

New Pressures, Old Problems

Contemporary Antilleans are faced with a new set of limitations and fewer choices regarding their economic and romantic aspirations. They are also facing the return of population pressure. In the 1990s population pressure has been steadily mounting as fewer and fewer Guadeloupeans seek to migrate to France. To complicate matters, thousands of Guadeloupeans who immigrated in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s are returning home (INSEE 1997). The major reason given for their return is that French citizens are eligible for retirement benefits after twenty years of government service; thus, a substantial percentage of these returning retirees are relatively young -- in their mid-fifties and early sixties. Other returnees include college students, discharged military personnel, and Guadeloupeans who either lost or failed to find a job -- the latter now a very common phenomenon. Some of those returning are second generation metropolitan residents, born and raised in France.

Many returning Guadeloupeans are re-establishing themselves in family homes or are building new and larger homes as they re-constitute the kinship alliances once

"severed" (or at least they appeared to be "severed") by migration. Indeed, building a new home or refurbishing a family home appears to be a particular priority among financially secure returning middle- or retirement-aged Guadeloupeans who have accumulated substantial savings and/or are entitled to government pensions. Often the new households contain two or more generations. Some returnees are uniting with their children, many of whom are grown, or they are making living arrangements that would simultaneously allow them to care for aging relatives (INSEE 1998).

A second reason for the reappearance of population pressure is the slow but steady stream of migrants from neighboring (independent but economically struggling) Dominica which immigration authorities and the police seem unable to effectively halt. Dominicans, from Dominica, not the Dominican Republic, are visible particularly in market activities and (though less visible), in the domestic sector where they work off-the-books in restaurants, in guest houses, and in private homes. Their arrival has not taken place without critical comment from Guadeloupeans and national officials. Dominicans are cited as a primary source of illegal drug trafficking and the increased crime that goes with it. Dominican women and men line the roads and harbors peddling produce. Some have managed to insert themselves into the marketplaces where Haitian peddlers (whose numbers are now dwindling) already trade in non-agricultural products such as clothing, adornments, accessories, and souvenirs.

Recent Dominican migrants tend to remain in Guadeloupe for comparatively short spans of time, whereas earlier immigrants settled more or less permanently. Some of the newcomers commute back and forth between Dominica and Guadeloupe in order to replenish supplies of Dominican-grown produce, while others grow crops on local

squatter plots. Recent Dominican immigrants are typically middle-aged or younger while earlier immigrants were middle-aged and above. Some young women whom I interviewed admitted frankly to coming to Guadeloupe when they were pregnant specifically to avail themselves of Guadeloupe's more modern obstetrical facilities. These women tend to live with friends or relatives during the later stages of pregnancy and, after giving birth, take their children back to Dominica to live with relatives. As they reminded me, being born on French soil does not automatically confer French citizenship.

Several Dominican women told me that they are involved in various kinds of market activities in order to earn enough money to live permanently in Guadeloupe with their children. Still, it is not clear how they intend to achieve this goal in light of tightened immigration laws and residency restrictions. Government statistics document that a large percentage (nearly 15 percent) of all children born in Guadeloupe are born to immigrant women (INSEE 1995:33). According to law enforcement statistics, it is claimed that Dominican males are heavily implicated in drug trafficking. This sweeping statement appeared to me to stereotype and essentialize Dominican men, but several Dominican men (more than I expected) corroborated this allegation.

A third source of renewed population pressure is the steady stream of "metros" who seek to escape the harsh European climate while fleeing from the high metropolitan unemployment rate. Two additional factors facilitate this trend: (1) metropolitans who collect unemployment benefits in France continue to do so in Guadeloupe; (2) about 70 percent of Guadeloupean stores and businesses are either *Blanc-Créole* or white metropolitan owned and the majority of upscale stores prefer to have white employees. A casual survey of all mid-price and upscale stores would reveal that they are staffed

predominantly by whites -- many of whom have only recently arrived from the metropole. Likewise, metropolitan whites own and operate most of the growing number of small, one- or two-person enterprises such as fast-food trucks and carts located close to thoroughfares and housing developments. I interviewed younger white "hippie metro" women work the beaches nearest to the tourist areas selling hand-made trinkets and "island" jewelry who told me that they loved the lifestyle and the business opportunities available in Guadeloupe.

The decline in the number of jobs available for an increasingly better-educated Guadeloupean population is as much due to the dominance of whites in mid-range and non-professional employment, e.g. sales help, as it is to the pattern of continued white dominance of the upper echelons of government and private enterprise (Constant 1998:173). Together, these factors exacerbate the marginalization of the black population. What these conditions mean for the younger generation is that the odds of finding jobs and affordable housing are rapidly diminishing. One result of this situation is that previously "nucleated" households now contain two or more generations living under one roof. For example, a household might now contain thirty year old "children," middle-aged adults, and eighty or ninety year old parents.

Thus, as elsewhere in Eurowestern cities, young and not so young adults are returning to live at home or remaining at home for a much longer period. Declining socio-economic conditions mean that with greater and greater competition for fewer and fewer resources (including housing) a larger percentage of the population is forced to rely wholly or partially on some form of subsidized benefits or social welfare entitlements. Statistics compiled for this category indicate that it comprises less than 20 percent of the

population. However, the same reports state that the percentage is approximately three times higher than that of metropolitan France (INSEE 1995:73).

Though many Guadeloupean women admit that they would like to marry, the prospect of this becoming a reality is very slim. Women also want to have children, which is a task that many feel can be undertaken with greater ease and less risk than would be the case with "legal" marriage. Thus, while women acknowledge harboring romantic illusions about living "happily ever after," most Guadeloupean women forecast that they will more likely have a child first, and at some point in the future perhaps find the husband of their dreams. These forecasts concur with the published government statistics which empirically support not only this trend, but a parallel trend away from consensual unions as well. In other words, as the table below shows, contemporary couples are neither marrying legally nor living together as a couple. The table demonstrates a dramatic decline in the percentage of both legal marriage *and* consensual relations, or common-law partnerships as of 1990.

Table 6 - Change in Percentage of Couples Living Together and Married

Age	1974		1990	
	Married	Living together	Married	Living together
15 - 19	2.7	4.0	1.1	1.5
20 - 24	27.7	34.2	11.4	18.9
25 - 29	53.5	64.1	31.2	45.0
30 - 34	62.0	72.7	43.8	57.6
35 - 39	61.8	73.4	50.6	61.0
40 - 44	60.9	72.1	54.8	61.5
45 - 49	58.7	70.1	56.7	60.6
50 - 59	53.6	62.4	54.4	55.9

Source: INSEE- Census Population 1990 of Guadeloupe

Recent figures for birth rates during the last ten years exhibit some fluctuations as well as empirical fuzziness. It turns out that fertility rates are projected some five years in advance and are based upon current trends. 1982 figures, marking the presumed "end" of the fertility transition in Guadeloupe, place fertility at 2.2 (INSEE 1997:19).

Newspaper articles from 1998 and inserts to the newer departmental statistical profile state that an even lower figure of 1.89 was reached in 1993 but that there was an increase in 1994 to 2.1. The 1994 rate is called an aberration for which there is no explanation, except to say that fertility increased slightly for the same period in metropolitan France. All told, both the popular media and government reports depict Guadeloupean women as developing a profile much closer to that of metropolitan woman. Also, in 1990 the life expectancy of Guadeloupean women was 80 years while that of

men was 72. When this statistic was published in the local newspaper, several women sarcastically commented that they could now expect to live longer alone and/or single.

Opportunity: The Door Opens and Shuts

Many and sundry reasons have been cited to account for the massive return migration of Guadeloupeans. They include retirement, caring for children and/or grandchildren, caring for aging relatives, housing difficulties in France, and even climate. Rarely is there any mention of rising xenophobia or racist treatment. On the whole, I found that most older adults were still reluctant to discuss the issue of racism openly, whereas the young were open and vocal about racist conditions in the metropole. This was true even after I mentioned my own experiences and the treatment I observed being accorded to French blacks. This wall of silence crumbled somewhat in 1997 when the local television station aired two specials about the manifestations of French racism and about the bitter conditions endured by black Antilleans over the years. Speaker after speaker recalled racist encounters, recalled being denied service, housing, and jobs, and recalled being harassed by the French police. The specials sparked public and private dialogues about racial divisions in France. More pertinent to my research, after the airing of the specials, former migrants who admitted to concealing the realities of their stay in the metropole from family members became more open with me about their experiences. Some media and life history stories detailed periods when Antilleans were reduced to living on the street. Other less dramatic stories documented the harsh realities migrants faced during the course of their "sponsored" migration.

Most Guadeloupeans state that recent racism appears to be more overt and believe that this is due to the high unemployment rate and the inflammatory politics of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his followers. The younger generation, however, is little disposed to put up with racist treatment. In fact, a film entitled *La Haine* (Hate) which is a brutal portrayal of racist events and confrontations with French police as experienced by three immigrant teenagers living in France has developed an enormous cult following among Guadeloupean youth. To them, if there is any promised land it is now America or Canada. Young Guadeloupeans feel that there, at least, they will have an opportunity for advancement without having to deal with the overt racism that appears to be gripping France. Getting a visa, however, is difficult.

Guadeloupean parents only half-heartedly try to deflate these dreams by reminding their offspring that in America there is no state-paid university education, housing allotment, or even national health coverage. But more and more parents are willing to finance the dreams of their children (even if they can only afford to finance a short stay), enabling them to acquire an "American" education. Older adults (grandparents in particular), less in direct touch with the current frustrations and obstacles facing young Guadeloupeans paint a different scenario. They assert that many Guadeloupean youths are spoiled, passive, lazy, and/or lacking in ambition. Further, that they are also given too much spending money by parents who want their children to have the best even when they can ill afford it.

Older residents lament the advent of McDonald's restaurants (there were three on the island in 1998), the proliferation of stores that carry American clothing brands such as Nike and Levi (as of yet, there is still no Gap), and the fact that eight out of ten films

shown at the local cinema houses are American and invariably attract huge audiences, unlike French films which play to largely empty theaters. Political scientist William F.S. Miles, who has commented on Antillean politics and "consumerism" in the past, refers to these recent developments as "déjà vu with a difference." Miles (1995) argues that the trend now gripping the Antilles is "McDonaldization." He believes the phenomenon to be symbolic of the transformation of French society which followed the end of the Mitterrand era. Miles writes:

How does the mass manufacture of fatty hamburgers fit into this post-Mitterrandist analysis?...I am using McDonaldization as a metaphor for the integration of peripheral regions into a worldwide network of commercial exchange and cultural uniformization. One could go further, though: The McDonald's way of eating is a way of life; an ideology...more intrusive (if much more subtle) than any Marx or Mao ever contrived. McDonaldization is a phenomenon also known as transnationalism, internationalization, cosmopolitanism and, most currently, globalization. (1995:360)

While I would argue that the dynamics contained within such overarching concepts are far more complex and nuanced than implied by "McDonaldization" as it has been unfolding in the French West Indies, the concept helps to explain seniors' disenchantment with the young, and men's critiques about the recent failings of Guadeloupean women. Older Guadeloupeans say that attempting to access the tangible aspects of Western/"modern" culture also contributes to disrupting the local household and territorial economic system. As one woman in her sixties stated "It's bad enough that French-made goods cost double their European price but now there is a flood of American-made products and their price tags are easily four times higher than their American price."

One cannot help but notice that Guadeloupean adolescents seem to act younger (or as seniors say, more "immature") than American adolescents. But, at the same time, Guadeloupean parents are far more protective of their young who in turn are likely to interact regularly with a larger number of kin and fictive kin than do American children. These interactions are frequently with members of older generations who are even more protective than are middle-aged parents. I noticed that on the occasions when I have hosted "metro" teenagers at home in New York, they were far more adventuresome than were my Guadeloupean visitors who tended to stay closer to home and to roam less. To the latter, TV was the big attraction since in New York one could actually watch current episodes of popular American shows rather than the two- or three- year-old reruns that were shown in Guadeloupe.

"Metro" teenagers loved going to clubs, restaurants, and movies whereas Guadeloupean teenagers were content to stay at home, order take-out, and talk far into the night. On the whole, these activities were far less costly than other forms of New York entertainment and thus I questioned, somewhat, the charges that Guadeloupean teenagers were reckless and spoiled spendthrifts. I noticed that Guadeloupean youths, like Nicki and her (half) sister, came with larger amounts of spending money than did "metro" teenagers. But they conserved their money until the end of their stay, at which time they expended a great deal on gifts to bring home to relatives and on clothing items for school.

Shopping, rather than entertainment per se, seemed to be the preferred activity among visiting older women who as a rule came with one small suitcase of clothing needed for the trip and another empty suitcase for anticipated purchases. These women tended

to watch very little TV (if at all); rather, they engaged me in long discussions about their careers, their homes or property, and the future success of their children.

Créole Families and Créolization of the Family

An article, entitled the "Créolization of the Family" appeared in several local publications in April of 1997.³ A duplicate of the article with a cartoon appeared in the local newspaper in June of 1997 and was added as a preface to the annual statistical profile of the department. A second article printed about the birth rate in Guadeloupe states that it is not only low but that women are having children much later, now in their late twenties and early thirties. This article featured a cartoon depicting an old woman in her rocking chair, cane at her side muttering "having babies too early, it's not a good thing -- I'll still wait a bit more" (France Antilles June 10, 1997:14).

While the article on the pattern of delayed pregnancy is glowing, the article explaining why Guadeloupean families are "Creolized" also cites the persistence of matrifocality as the main reason for the high rate of "illegitimacy" in the Antilles. According to the author, demographer Jacques Cazenave, this "revised" analysis of the characteristics of the Guadeloupean family was a late acknowledgment that the impact of slavery on current orientations had been significantly underestimated. Less is said about the postslavery period and its attendant socio-economic circumstances which have exerted considerable influence as well.

³ "*Familles créoles et créolisation de la famille*" first appeared in the local quarterly economic magazine *Antiane Eco* in April 1997. Under the heading of "historical background of the Guadeloupean family" it was reprinted in the preface of an annual INSEE publication in June 1997, and was also published in the local newspaper, *France-Antilles*, June 10, 1997.

Also, contained within the same article is a side-bar discussion of the new dynamics of metropolitan French families. This article states that the rate of legal marriage is on the decline in metropolitan France, and also that metropolitan families have become more diversified. Likewise, the metropolitan rate of “out-of-wedlock” births is rising. High unemployment rates, particularly among young adults, is cited as the reason for the declining rate of metropolitan marriages. The low rate of marriage among Guadeloupeans however, is attributed primarily to historical conditions, and to social factors specific to the region. Less emphasis is placed on the scarcity of employment opportunities for Guadeloupean young adults, even though previous articles have documented the fact that the unemployment rate is nearly double that of metropolitan France. The author acknowledges that Guadeloupean marriage rates have declined while “illegitimacy” rates have risen sharply, a pattern now largely attributed to the “créolization” of family models.

Congruent with the findings of fertility studies conducted by G.W. Roberts (1957) among English-speaking West Indian women at mid-century, is the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s the highest number of per family births in Guadeloupe appears to have occurred among conjugal and nuclear couples. These findings *should* debunk the myth and popularly held theory that low fertility and conjugal nuclearity are linked characteristics of a demographically “modern” population. However, like demographic transition theory and the modernization thesis, and despite contradictory evidence, this myth appears to be durable.

Conclusion: Reframing Caribbean Transformations

[T]he economic marginality of most of the population, partly a result of the inferior social status allotted to them by the dominant culture, has produced a family system which we have come to brand as “disorganized.” Indeed, we may marvel at the thoroughness with which European norms have “culturally penetrated” all populations of the Western hemisphere while, at the same time, remaining cognizant that the non-European groups have never been permitted the conditions in which these norms could be observed. (Marino 1970:172)

Although Marino’s sex-ratio argument was subsequently rejected by other scholars as simplistic and as lacking a consideration of cultural factors, his observations regarding the influence of economic circumstances on family organization remain relevant. The attempts of Eurowestern governments to transform the culture, fertility, and family models of Caribbean people have been in progress for nearly two hundred years. From the postemancipation period until the present, work ethics, legal codes, and a European model of family formation were integrated into Caribbean people’s frames of reference and elevated above “traditional” orientations. From their arsenal of weapons, government officials throughout the Caribbean used force, coercion, suggestion, stigmatization, and seduction to achieve this integration. The vigorous promotion of Europeanization had a profound impact on residents since it was superimposed on existing ideologies of class and color stratification.

During the era of colonial rule, Caribbean governments were headed by Europeans and were based on European models. After independence or regional autonomy, the new political leaders did not reject the political structures imposed on them by colonial masters; rather, they adopted and adapted to them as if they were Caribbean creations. Diverse nationalisms led to intra-regional cleavages among Caribbean peoples, who drew

closer to the motherlands of France and England than to each other. Even before the advent of modernization programs, members of each Caribbean society aspired to higher social status vis-à-vis white inhabitants who retained hegemony in both political and economic affairs.

Unfortunately, economically and culturally, the brunt of colonization and Europeanization was borne by West Indian women who were portrayed as the antithesis of respectable women and the cause and source of the ills of Caribbean societies (see Phillips-Lewis 1994:70-75). Moreover, although hundreds of thousands of Caribbean men migrated in search of work between 1890 and 1920, and fought valiantly in two world wars, they were portrayed as the irresponsible, invisible, appendages of matrifocal families.

By the early 1950s, men had become homebound, Caribbean populations grew, and weak Caribbean infrastructures were severely strained. In Guadeloupe and in the English-speaking West Indies, political movements emerged spreading anti-colonial and anti-white rhetoric among the black populations. "Social problems," in the Caribbean were not, however, attributed to government neglect of economic conditions, or to persistent white hegemony, but to character failings or African cultural "survivals" among blacks (Marino 1970). After World War II, governments commissioned in-depth studies of social conditions, even though in the English-speaking West Indies, the Moyne Commission had documented that the majority of problems were economic. The discourses found in these studies, for the most part, only served to support previous assumptions that black West Indians were incapable of becoming modern unless they closely followed the examples put forth by whites. Likewise, population planners and

development experts based the nature of their interventions on Eurocentric beliefs, transition theories, and recycled Malthusian beliefs and concerns.

In the 1950s, the "moral failings" of West Indian women had, as in the postemancipation era, again become a topic of lively discussion among development planners and "modernization" experts. We see these discourses in family planning literature and in the narratives of French government officials who prioritized the spread of birth control information and technology among all women of reproductive age. When Eurowestern governments turned their attention to effecting population change in the Caribbean, they referred to the first-hand accounts of administrative observers, social workers, sociologists, and anthropologists who had designated these populations as socially dysfunctional. The challenge, as they saw it, was to compose appropriate family planning literature to counteract innate "immoral" tendencies among youthful (and fertile) populations by emphasizing the existence of a new world of possibilities. At the forefront of this new world of possibilities was the advent of modern consumption.

In many Caribbean countries, the introduction of family planning programs coincided with a sharp contraction of the agricultural sector, with expanded educational opportunities for both sexes, and with the tentative introduction of industrial/manufacturing-based waged labor. Congruent with the tenets of the postwar modernization thesis, development planners considered educational opportunities for women as a particularly effective way to combat their "irrational" behavior. They believed that women with a higher degree of personal autonomy enabled by increased education and/or economic self-sufficiency would be inspired to practice contraception (Frank and McNicholl 1987:231, Cleland 1983:4). All population planners of the

modernization era expected that the promise of women's autonomy (along with "rising expectations") would induce women to have fewer children (Roberts 1955).

In an analysis that is very much in tune with Lesthaeghe's concept of a second Western transition, W. Penn Handwerker (1989) argues that after 1950, Caribbean women underwent a profound transformation. His study of Barbadian women indicates that between 1950 and 1980 they dramatically shifted the focus of their attention, from a nearly exclusive dotage on children and mothers to more a concentrated concern with their own goals and dreams (1989:143). According to him, in the 1980s "women invested less heavily in their children and created a discontinuity in intergenerational obligations" (ibid). They still helped care for parents and children but helped less and invested more heavily in actualizing their own plans, which included having less children. While on the surface this analysis appears to be applicable to Guadeloupean women, Handwerker's explanation attributes the cause of fertility decline to the transformation of younger women's expectations and new found "rationality" summed up as "modernization." According to Handwerker,

changes in family relationships are not inconsistent with expectations one might have from the viewpoint of standard demographic transition theory...likewise, modernization is expected to be accompanied by the breakdown of the extended family and the increased importance of the nuclear family (149:143).

In Handwerker's opinion, fertility decline in Barbados was marked by a profound transformation in access to resources and power on the part of women, and this shift, rather than more accessible family planning, is what precipitated the fertility decline. In the 1980s, he says, Barbadian women were able to plan their own lives "independently of their children and independently of men" (ibid).

But I would argue that although women may have become more independent of men, in the Caribbean region as elsewhere, it is not a choice that many women prefer. I would contend that the choice to be independent is more often a result of external forces rather than a desire to be "man-free." Put another way, women's independence of men was due to political-economic circumstances which failed to supply a sufficient number of jobs (or "living wage jobs") for male workers.

It is also clear from my life histories that becoming self-sufficient or less dependent on male economic resources did not eliminate many women's desire to become mothers, nor diminish their concern for their children. In essence, they held fast to "traditional" West Indian values and beliefs about family and motherhood.

When pressure to adopt a modern lifestyle intensified and the opportunity structure shifted in favor of women by providing them with both educational and emigration opportunities, Caribbean women did respond by changing their future aspirations. They also revised their expectations of future mates. But, under the prevailing economic circumstances of high male unemployment, women's "choosiness" made the desired outcome of higher marital rates less rather than more likely. The promise of becoming a "respectable," "modern," "rational" woman was enormously enticing, yet, as I was reminded repeatedly, within the Caribbean frame of reference, "respectable" does not always mean married. Out-of-wedlock births and single parenthood may not be preferable, but are acceptable behavior in Afro-Caribbean frames of reference.

Another important factor was the vigorous marketing of modern material goods to local populations. Without exception, Guadeloupean women who grew up in the late

1950s and 1960s talked about having new choices in the world of modern consumption. The arrival of commodities previously unheard of, or unavailable dominated the discourses of nearly all the women with whom I spoke. With equal animation, however, women also talked about the growth of new white and blue-collar employment opportunities in occupations far removed from working the land or in agro-enterprise. In these new occupations, employees dressed in modern clothing, wore modern make-up and accessories and went home to use modern appliances. Suddenly, Caribbean people *felt* modern.

Spontaneous, regularized, sponsored and non-sponsored migration played an enormous role not only in reducing population pressure but also in confirming the differences between Caribbean and Eurowestern peoples as emblematic of differences between "traditional" and "modern" lifestyles. Contact with relatives, students, and others who had lived or worked in Western metropolises, and later with tourists confirmed the fact that Caribbean people and "modern" people were different. Improvements in medical and sanitary services resulted in Caribbean populations becoming healthier.

Roads and highways were constructed, which provided rural dwellers with easier and faster access to the cities and urban dwellers greater mobility within them. Wider travel, even if it took place only within one's district or neighborhood, heightened people's sensitivity to their appearance, and thus make-up and machine-made clothing were requisite to competing one's image of being up-to-date.

Commencing in the mid-1960s, the increase in education levels throughout the Caribbean also increased people's aspirations in the material or acquisitive sense, and instilled in many people dreams of embarking on careers that not only did not involve

manual labor, but were also based outside of the confines of the Caribbean. Taken together, these externally induced "material" changes produced internal transformations in that they redefined men and women's sense of self and of self-worth, and inspired them to improve their economic circumstances vis-à-vis their parents. Lower fertility was merely one aspect of these transformations.

Despite their adoption of modern consumption, Glissant argues that residents of the region have come full circle, and as for deciding what constitutes "acceptable" morals, family values, and family organization, have moved away from European frames of reference and "have *become* Caribbean" (1989:8). I would extend this argument to posit that black West Indians have set the parameters of what they consider to be acceptable black West Indian behavior. In other words, they have created their own frames of reference apart from white Creoles and apart from cultural models prevailing in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and in Eurowestern countries. They have also seized opportunities such as migration, education, and self-employment whenever possible.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, the influences which motivate and shape an individual's perspective of fertility, family organization, and modernity are contained within a netlike, weblike field of forces. They include cultural, historical, racial, political, and economic factors at the micro- and macro-level. While social, and even material, evidence of Guadeloupe's modernity is highly visible, a government supported policy of racial equality, and evidence of economic "modernity" or economic viability is far less apparent. But, the possibility of attaining tangible economic modernity *and* racial equality is what initially motivated Guadeloupeans to assimilate and to embrace French culture.

Even Guadeloupe's demographic modernity is in question. New population studies are filled with dire predictions about the likely re-awakening of severe population pressure, not as a result of returning high fertility rates but due to the lack of new migration outlets. Add to this the steady stream of return and other new migrations and these new fears about the return of population pressure appear to be well founded. In 1985 demographers predicted that in the year 2000, the population of Guadeloupe would reach 387,000. However, in 1995, the population was estimated at 422,000. Many experts fear that in the worse case scenario (to which all indicators point), the population could reach 500,000 by the year 2010. I believe that results of the 2000 year census will reveal that Guadeloupe is very close to the half million mark now. But, alongside these dire predictions, given that fertility rates remain relatively low, government literature continues to hail Guadeloupe's fertility transition (whenever it ended) as successful. This indicates to them that Guadeloupean women are acting "rationally" and have adopted birth control methods (and abortion) on a widespread level.

The French National Bureau of Statistics reports that Guadeloupean women's fertility habits are becoming "almost identical to those of white metropolitan women" (France-Antilles 1997). In other words, they are having fewer children and are waiting longer, sometimes well into their thirties, to have them. According to statistics the largest segment of the population is between 30 and 45 years of age. Since the current average age of a first pregnancy is 29.5, this would mean, it appears, that a large percentage of Guadeloupean women are only starting to have children.

Another issue that Guadeloupean women now face is that they also outperform men academically, and this has created another type of sex-ratio imbalance between

educated men and women. Unfortunately, while the metropolitan "opportunity structure" itself is not stellar, the Guadeloupean opportunity structure is far worse. It remains to be seen if Guadeloupeans' future productivity will be as "modern" as their reproductivity.

But modernity (selective aspects of it) is what much of the population dreams about. This modernity has little connection to the parents who need to be tended to, or little to do with children who must complete three and four hours of homework a day. Guadeloupean "modernity" has everything to do with what will happen at the end of the period of schooling, when there is no job, no housing, and no future simply because Guadeloupe remains trapped somewhere between the "first" and the "third" world. Modernity in Guadeloupe means having some tangible proof of societal and individual success. Thus while Guadeloupeans are proud of their collective reduction in fertility which is supposed to align them more closely with "modern" nations, economic equality appears to be elusive and illusive. And, in Guadeloupe, as in Eurowestern and third world countries, there has been a bifurcation in the path towards what used to be Eurocentric modernity. Birth rates have fallen without a concomitant increase in the number of couples who conjugally nucleate. One wonders why and how it is still useful, in this context or elsewhere, to classify births as either legitimate or illegitimate.

I would argue that until the milestone of a more "tangible modernity" is reached in Guadeloupe and elsewhere in the Caribbean, it is highly unlikely that the impractical practice of conjugal nuclearity will diffuse or be adopted en masse. In this setting, "traditional" extended families are not dysfunctional. In fact they continue to flourish because they function very well. Nor are "traditional" extended households African

“survivals” or “creolized families.” Rather, they are a strategy of survival adopted to soften the impact of harsh socio-economic circumstances -- a reflection of actual rather than “idealized” circumstances, as well as an integral part of Guadeloupean culture. As for the fact that fertility declined in Guadeloupe even though Guadeloupeans retained traditional values, under the prevailing socio-economic circumstances it would be “archaic” for contemporary Guadeloupeans to have numerous children. More importantly, having numerous children might return them to a position of being subjected to a world of limited options as was experienced by their parents, rather than being able to create their own destinies.

Appendix A- A Sample of Survey Questions for Women 45 and Older Administered at Public Clinics and at Doctor's Offices.

1997 Study of Fertility and Employment Preferences

Notice to Our Clients: In order to help us to conduct our research, we would ask that you complete this questionnaire as completely as possible. In the event that you are not able to exactly remember the details pertaining to all the responses, would ask that you complete as much as you can remember. We are relying on you for your cooperation and we thank you in advance for your participation.

(this questionnaire is anonymous)

Background Questions

1. The name of the health clinic or medical office where this questionnaire was obtained.
2. Name of the community, town, or city where this questionnaire was completed.
3. Do you live in a) a city b) the countryside c) a town
4. Have you always lived in the above, if not, in what type of community did you spend the majority your childhood (until the age of 16)
5. How old are you?
6. What is your date of birth?
7. Where were you born?
8. Are you: a) single b) married c) widowed d) divorced e) separated?
- 8a. If currently married, how long have you been married?
- 8b. If currently widowed, separated, or divorced, how long?
9. Do you currently live in an apartment or a private home.
- 9a. During your childhood, how many rooms did your home or apartment contain.
- 9b. Concerning your childhood home, did it have electricity, running water, a refrigerator, a radio.

10. How old were you when your family bought its first car.
11. For the majority of your childhood (until the age of 16), how many people lived in your household.
12. After the age of 16, how many people lived in your household. Explain if necessary.
13. Can you list the people who resided in your household before the age of 16. (According to their relationship to you)
14. After the age of 16, list the people who resided in your household. (Explain if you feel that more than one circumstance applies.)
15. Who was considered the head of your childhood household.
16. Did the head of your household own or rent the home in which you resided.
17. Currently, how many people reside in your household.
18. List the relationship of all members who currently reside with you.

Employment and Education

19. Between the ages of 16 and 30, were you engaged in salaried work. In what types of activities were you employed.
20. During this period, were you engaged in non-salaried activities. What types.
21. Are you currently employed in a salaried occupation.
22. In what trade or activity.
23. Do you work full-time or part-time.
24. Would you like to be employed in a different occupation? If so, which.
25. If you are not working, or have quit your job, why?
26. If you are trained in a particular trade or occupation but are currently not employed, why not?
27. Did you attend high school, trade school, university. At what age did you leave school. What is the highest level of education completed. Did you obtain a diploma, if so, what type of diploma.

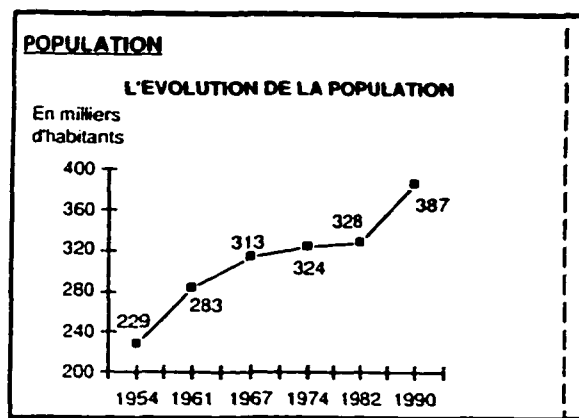
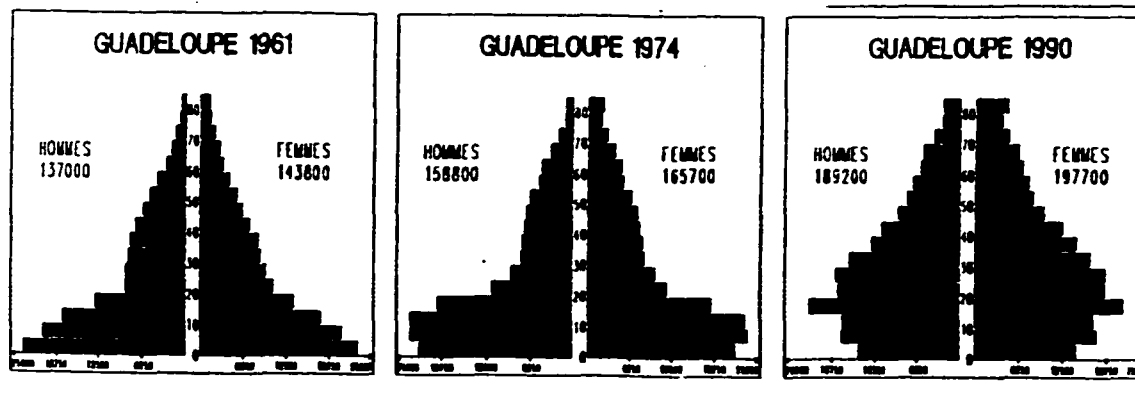
Motherhood and Pregnancy

28. How many living children do you currently have
29. To how many children did you give birth (living and dead).
30. Have any of your pregnancies ended in a) infant death b) miscarriage c) abortion.
31. For each pregnancy, what was your relationship status. Were you a) married b) single c) living with someone.
32. If you have never had children, why not (explain).
33. If you have always been single, why (explain).
34. Between the ages of approximately 16 - 30, did you think that it was better to have several children or a few children, and why.
35. Currently, if you had the same choice to make again, how many children would you have.
36. Do you wish you had fewer children or more children, and why.
37. What do you feel is the best age for a woman to have her first child and why.
38. In your opinion, what is the ideal number of children a woman should have
39. On the subject of preventing pregnancies, between the age of 16 and 25, do you recall that you discussed this subject with another member of your family or with a friend. Specify.
40. Currently, is this a subject that you talk about with family members or friends, for example a daughter, son, granddaughter, or niece, nephew, or godchild. Specify.
41. Have you used some kind of birth control in the past. What methods of birth control have you used in the past. What method of birth control did you use most often. Select from the following:
coitus interruptus, condom, diaphragm, spermicidal jelly or creme, pills, sterilization, IUD, others.
42. What, if any, methods of birth control did you use most often between the ages of 16 and 30. Specify.
43. If you have never used any form of birth control, why not.

44. If you were to compare your situation, your life as a mother to that of your mother, do you believe your life or her life was more difficult. Why so.
45. If you were to compare your life to that of your daughter, or another close young adult female relative, do you think that your life was or her life is easier. Why so.
46. What was your financial situation when you were raising your children. What financial resources did you depend on.
47. Was there someone who helped you to raise your children. Did they contribute financial help. Did they contribute babysitting or other kinds of services.
48. If you had help, approximately how long did you have this help.
49. Did your partner, boyfriend, or husband help you take care of your children.
50. If not, was it because he was often away, out of the country, because you saw him infrequently, because he worked a great deal, because he was not interested in raising children, due to other reasons (specify)
51. Were there other people besides your partner who helped you with your children. What was their relationship to you. About how long did they help you.
52. In your opinion, do metropolitan women have more or fewer children than do Guadeloupean women. Why is there a difference.
53. Have you lived in the metropole for an extended period of time. Has another close family member resided in the metropole. Specify. Do you have close relatives who currently live in the metropole. Residing in other countries. Who are they and where do they live.
54. If you resided in the metropole, how long did you live there. Were you working, and in what type of occupation.
55. If you have never lived in the metropole, was there any time in your life that you wanted to live there. At what age was this.
56. Now, would you like to live in the metropole. Why or why not. Would you like to live in another country? Where.
57. When you were a teenager or young adult, did you think that life in the metropole was better than life in Guadeloupe. Currently, what do you think and why.
58. If you have lived in the metropole, why did you return.

59. Concerning the language you used most often at home during childhood and as a young adult, was it Créole, or French.
60. Currently, what language do you most often use at home.
61. What is your opinion about metropolitans who live in Guadeloupe.
62. Concerning the recent elections, what did you think of the results.

Appendix B - Overview of Population Growth and Fertility Decline. Average Fertility Rates of Other Islands and Territories in the Caribbean Region

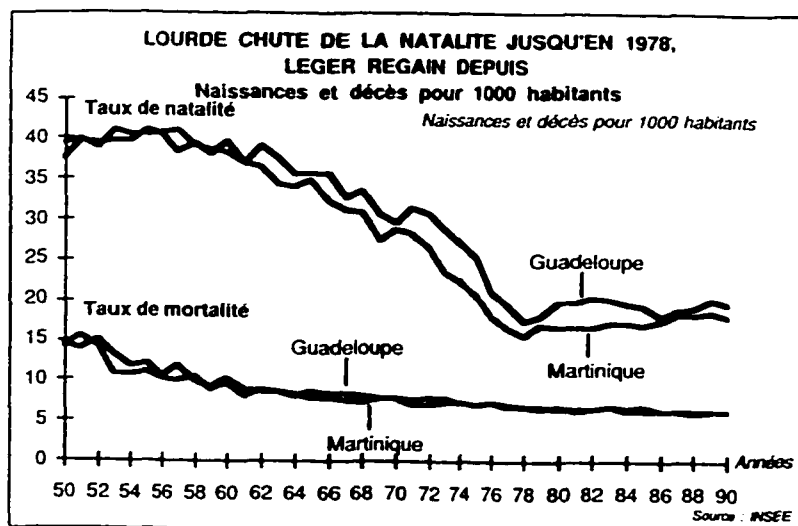


PAYS DE LA CARAIBE SELON L'INDICE SYNTHETIQUE DE FECONDITE CROISSANT (1988-90)

Nombre moyen d'enfants par femme

Montserrat	1,73
Barbade	1,79
Aruba	1,81
Bermudes	1,83
Cuba	1,92
Antigua	2,05
Bahamas	2,07
Martinique	2,16
Curaçao	2,18
Guadeloupe	2,23
Porto Rico	2,30
Saint-Kitts-Nevis	2,49
Saint-Vincent	2,52
Trinidad et Tobago	2,53
Dominique	2,56
Jamaïque	2,80
Iles Vierges américaines	2,83
Sainte-Lucie	2,88
Rép. Dominicaine	2,91
Suriname	2,99
Guyana	3,04
Grenade	3,25
Guyane française	3,47
Belize	4,81
Haïti	6,45

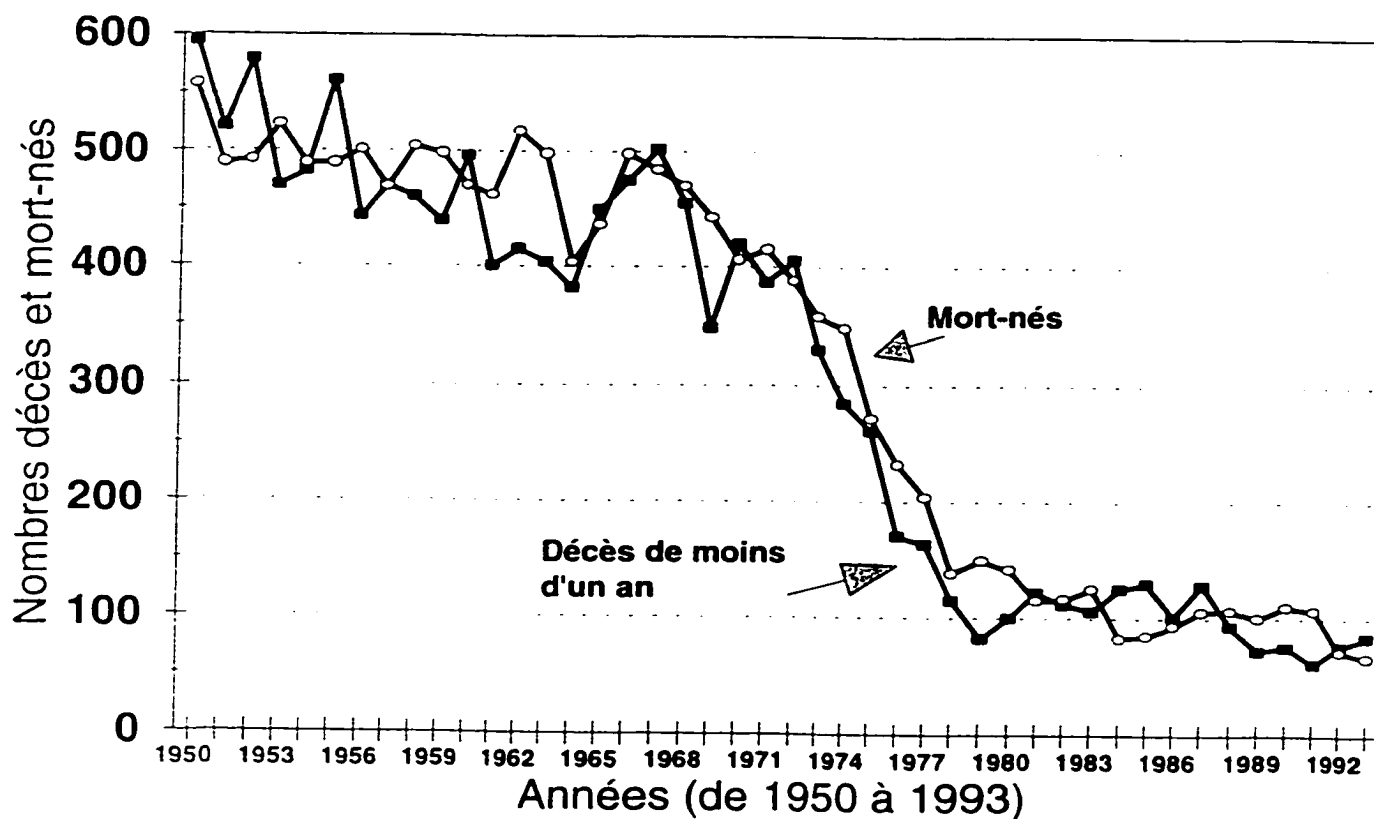
Sources : Données démographiques des différents pays



Appendix C - Graph Illustrating Decline in Infant Mortality and Still Birth Rates in Guadeloupe, 1950 - 1993

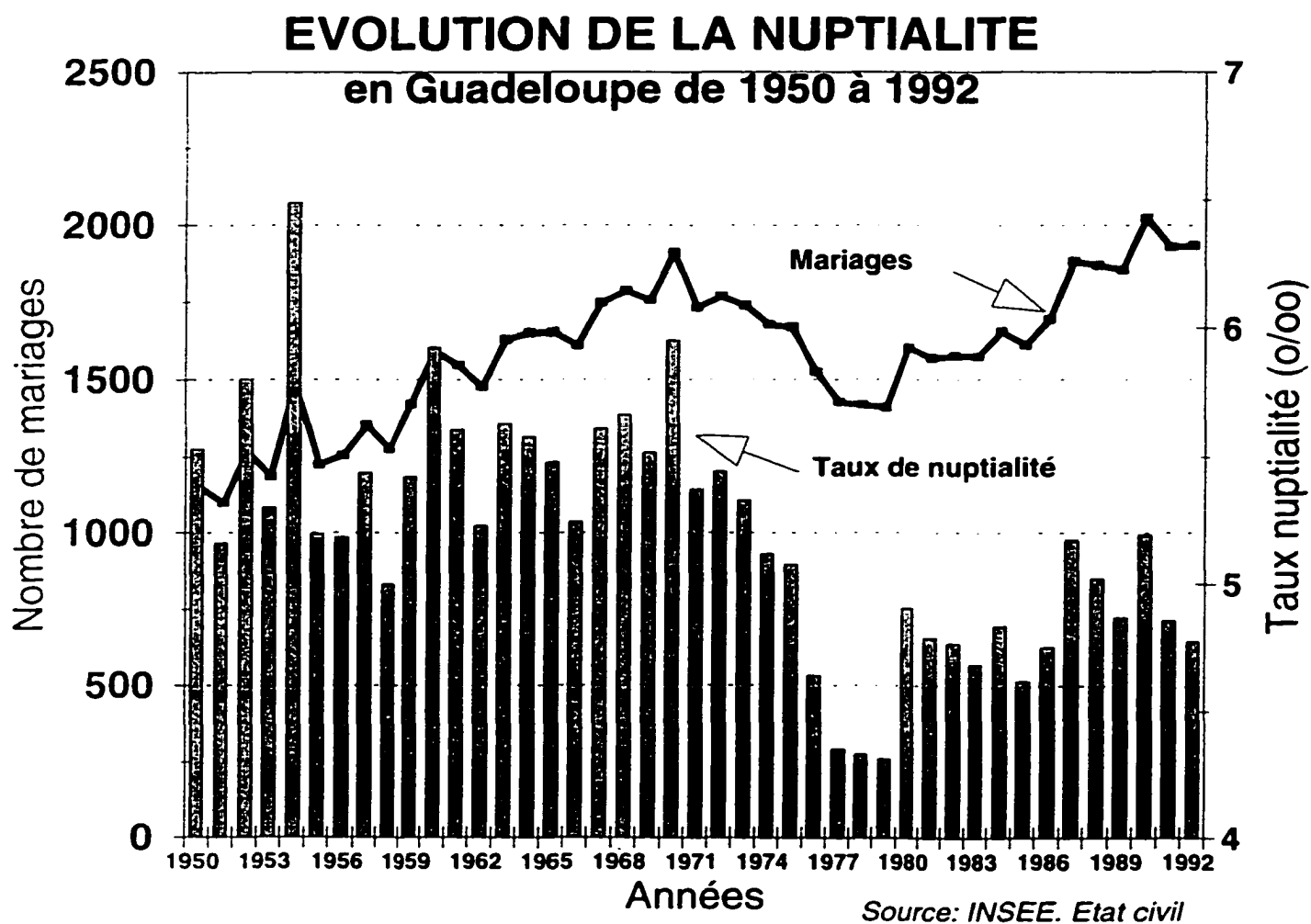
MORTALITE INFANTILE EN GUADELOUPE

Décès de moins d'un an et mort-nés

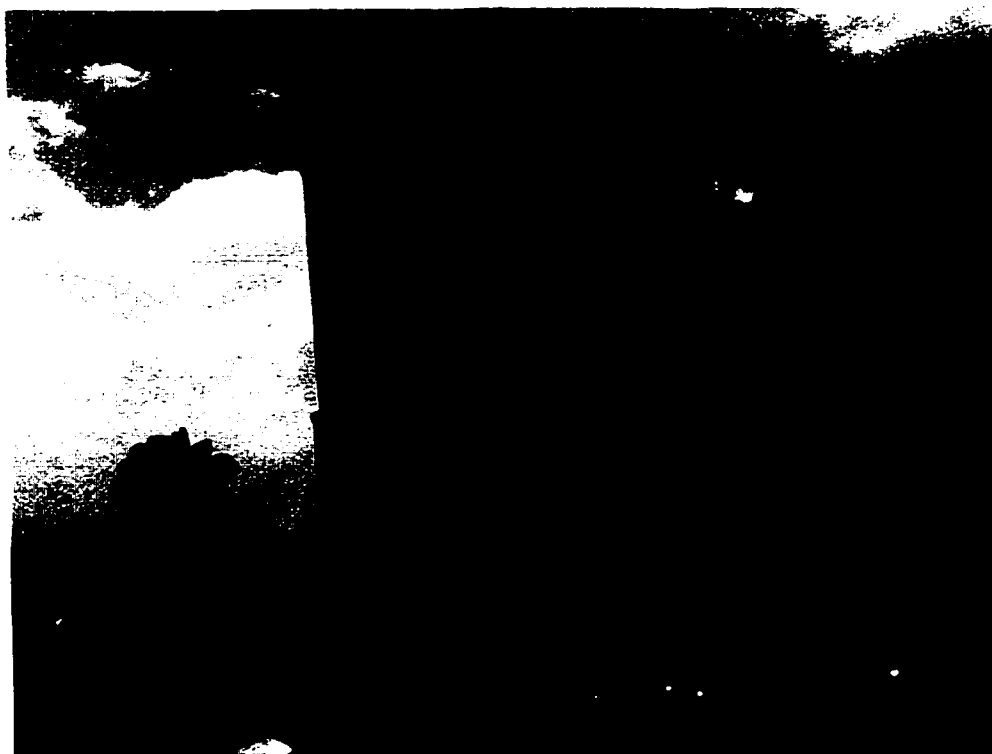
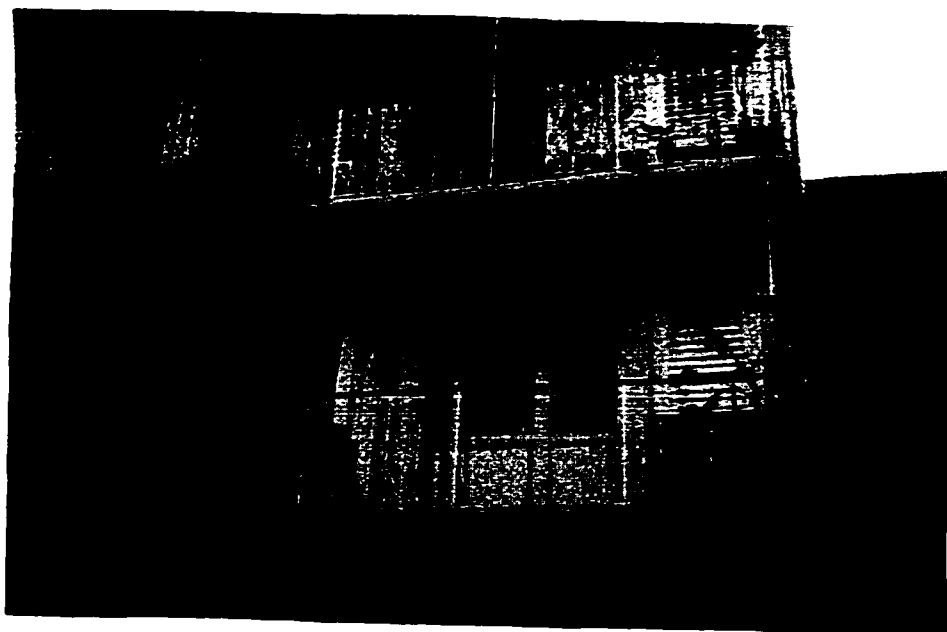


Source: INSEE. Etat civil

Appendix D - Graph Illustrating the Evolution of Legal Marriage in Guadeloupe, 1950 - 1992.

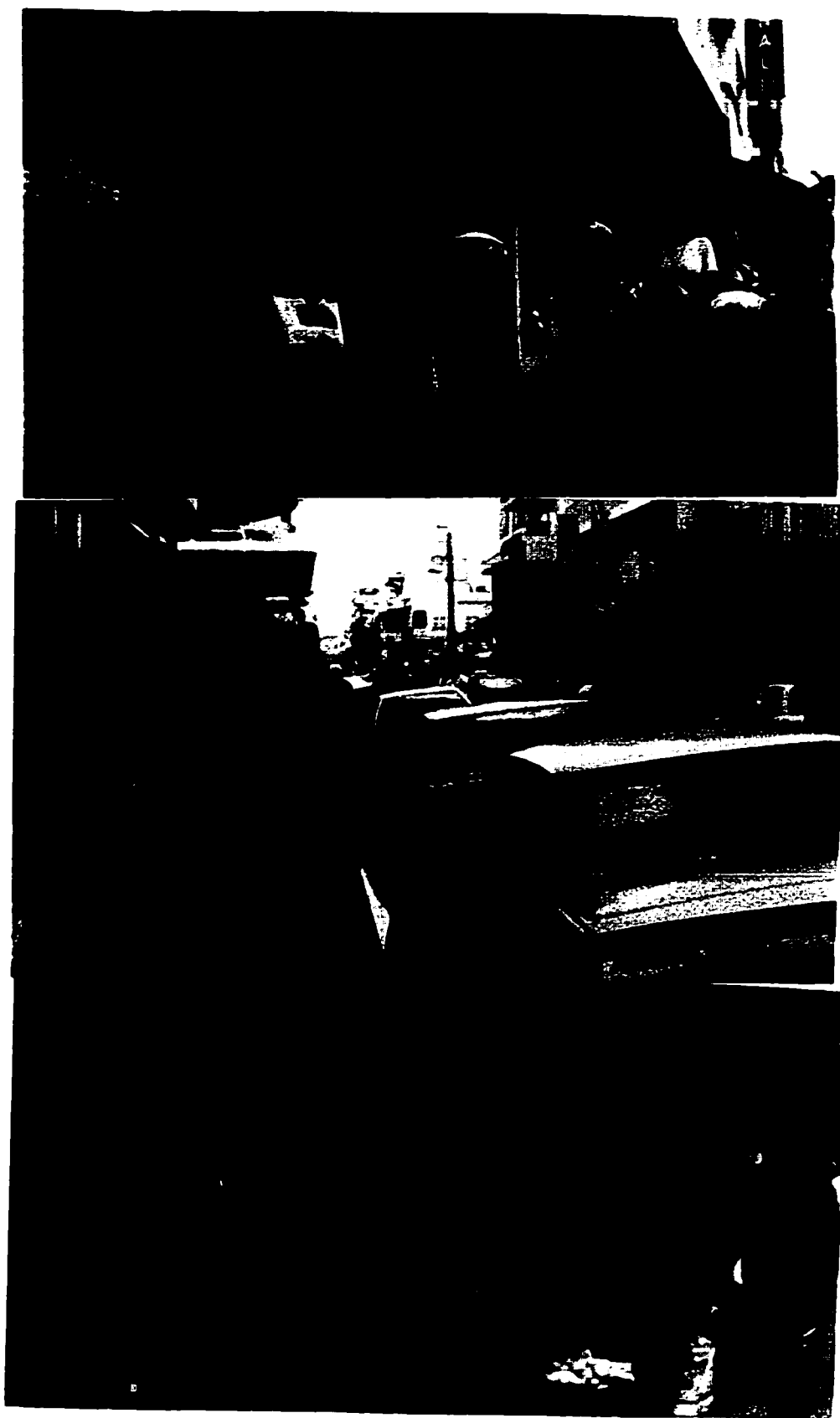


Appendix E - Examples of Housing: Traditional and Modern, City, Town, and Country.¹



¹ Unless noted, all photographs in the appendices were taken by the author.





Appendix H - Young Adults at Leisure

1. Teenage girls modeling traditional dress.
2. College student practicing the piano at home.



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