Early and Contemporary Patterns of Anglophone Caribbean Migration

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INTRODUCTION

The movement of peoples in and through the Caribbean has certainly always been a feature since pre-historical times, although in principle it did not differ in this any much from any other region in the world. What is, however, distinct in the Caribbean of modern times are the extraordinarily high numbers and diversity of the peoples which came to the region or left it in search of a better life. In any case, what has resulted from this long history of (largely involuntary) immigration and emigration is a psychological mindset characterized by a remarkable “strategic flexibility” by which the people of the region approach the construction of variable options in their personal lives (Carnegie 1987). One can hardly overemphasize that this flexible attitude has evolved over generations as a veritable survival strategy in response to the extremely adverse social, political and economic conditions which have hampered the development of Caribbean peoples since the times of slavery, indentureship, and national independence. Prejudice, classism, racism and various forms of dependence have historically formed a tight system in which the disenfranchised majority of Caribbean peoples have little choice than trying to rise above these obstacles by strategies that unfold on a multiplicity of occupational levels. Part of this multi-occupational strategy in modern times has been the migration to metropolitan countries in order to attain professional skills and/or employment. In other words, and to put it simply, travel, (temporary) migration, (temporary) return, and (temporary) migration again have been normal features of life in the English-speaking Caribbean from the very beginning.

Only a few specialists readily recall that already during the times of slavery in the 17th and 18th century relatively close contacts between the British West Indies and the American colonies existed. At the end of American Revolution about 14,000 blacks went with the departing English forces and many of them settled in the Bahamas, St. Lucia, or Jamaica (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989, 82/83). Thus, at the end of the 18th century influential religious leaders from the United States, such as the Reverend George Liele, preached and baptized in Kingston, Jamaica. Although regiments from Haiti had fought in the American Revolution they returned to Haiti to fight for their country’s independence and no great number of people from the Caribbean moved North at that time. Marshall (1987, 15) is therefore absolutely right when she emphasizes that people from the English-speaking Caribbean “have been moving out of their islands almost continuously for 150 years.”
With the end of slavery the chances for mobility increased. When the first signs of such mobility became evident, most Caribbean migrants did at first not move out of the region but stayed relatively close to their points of origin. Already in the middle of the 19th century some governments actively sought to relieve existing population pressures by encouraging their people to leave. In 1861, for example, a comparatively large number of Barbadians moved to (then) British Guiana (later Guyana) and Trinidad. Since these early days, however, people from the English-speaking Caribbean have never really ceased again to migrate to even the most distant places. This was built and thousands of workers from Barbados, Jamaica and other territories flocked to Panama in order to secure a job. In fact, of the more than 50,000—perhaps as many as 100,000—workers who were recruited to commence the construction most came from neighboring Caribbean islands. Thousands of them died in the process of building the Canal. After its completion many returned to their home country, many stayed and others continued to migrate. They have significantly contributed to the ethnic and cultural diversity of this Central American country and English, French, Indian, Dutch and Portuguese names which can be found throughout Panama bear witness of this. More than any other single event, the construction of the Panama Canal signaled to Caribbean peoples that in order to find work with meaningful—if unequal—payment they would have to be mobile and willing to leave their home-countries behind. Whatever has to be said in favor of migration, from their point of view it always was more a necessity than a matter of choice or even a preference.

GLOBAL DETERMINANTS OF CARIBBEAN MIGRATION

Both structural factors and public policy shape the flow of immigrants from the Caribbean. While the first phase in the development of migration in the English-speaking Caribbean was determined to a large degree by the relationship with Britain and by internal economic and social dynamics, from the late 19th century on the United States increasingly came to play a role in the region. Although it would be inaccurate to say that United States policies actually determined the flows of migration, there can equally be no doubt that her budding assertion of regional and global power and her aspiration to shape the affairs in what was widely regarded as Caribbean “backwater” had a very strong impact on the region. Her growing role, however, in the international and regional economies provides “bridges” for potential migrants. Thus, as the example of economically vibrant countries (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea) with high migration to the United States demonstrates, this contact factor is not to be underestimated when attempting to explain flows of migration.
Following the Civil War a consolidation of U.S. domestic and external power allowed it to put its sight across its borders. In the Caribbean this coincided with the weakening of Spanish rule which in 1898 allowed the United States to occupy Cuba and Puerto Rico. Building on the “Monroe Doctrine” of 1823, military strategists in the U.S. had argued that the country needed military bases from which it could venture into new space. However, probably more important was that American business interests were looking for new business opportunities and markets.

Since the 1930s the population in the Caribbean increased steadily. In fact, between 1940 and 1980 it tripled from 55 million to 166 million (Maingot 1991, 101). Due to this rapid population growth in the Caribbean, by the 1950s large numbers of young people in the region were seeking employment which the economies were not able to supply. The growth and contraction of new arrivals from the region also responded to the policy shifts in the immigration laws of the United States. For example, in 1952 the McCarran-Walter Act imposed a limit of 100 immigrants per Caribbean colony per year which was aimed to significantly reducing the amount of immigrants from this region. It particularly affected the English-speaking countries of the region which were still under colonial rule. Thus, although the total amount of arrivals from the Caribbean increased over the next 12 years, immigration from the major islands in the British West Indies was reduced. The main impact of the McCarran-Walter Act, however, was that migration shifted to the United Kingdom until the immigration laws there were tightened in 1962. Between 1962 and 1965, when the discriminatory provisions in the United States were repealed, West Indians again shifted their direction back to this country, “first coming through the side door (as spouses, relatives, and so on), then the back door, and finally, with independence and subsequently the 1965 immigration act, through the front door as well” (Pastor 1987, 251).

Both aspects (i.e., structural and policy-related) can be unified and understood as complementary elements in the development of the world market. Some authors argue that since the beginning labor markets and agricultural and industrial production in the Caribbean have been subjects to the development priorities of the metropolitan countries. For example, Watson (1988, 9; see also Simmons and Guengant 1992, 101) describes how these processes have historically been related and the ways in which they continue to contribute to the crisis conditions in the Caribbean:

In the context of the world economy Caribbean export staples have been produced with state incentives. Some of these commodities such as sugar have received preferential treatment in the world market. Bauxite and crude oil have been produced and marketed under the auspices of the vertically integrated transnationals that employ transfer pricing and other practices which are
designed to increase their profit margins while weakening the producer countries process. Forms of state intervention in the market through monetary and fiscal incentives and other forms of surplus transfer are among the main forms of value transfer. These produce direct and indirect consequences for production, employment, surplus realization and accumulation of capital. Labor migration continues to be a basic response to the crisis that results.”

This statement calls to our attention the fact that the interconnectedness of national economies is determined by both local and foreign factors which—in the case of the English-speaking Caribbean—have created a socio-economic system which puts their economies at a disadvantage.

It has also to be realized that migration is a direct consequence of the requirements of capitalist development, in general, and the recently accelerated process commonly referred to as globalization, in general. Most national policies do not pay sufficient attention to this link and consequently fail to achieve their desired intentions—the regulation of legal immigration and the suppression of illegal immigration. However, despite this myopia the desire to migrate is influenced by the preparedness of employers in the industrial world (including the United States) to employ workers for low wages even if they are known or suspected to be illegal. Ho (1991, 28) has forcefully argued this point:

... it is pure folly to attempt to curb the flow of immigrant labor into the U.S. labor market, without understanding the economic forces that propel multitudes from the Third World to the United States. Attempting to limit the inflow without simultaneously prohibiting the flight of U.S. capital overseas to places where labor is less expensive is even more futile. The two phenomena are simply two sides of the same coin. To deal with one and ignore the other is plainly absurd.

The globalization of international capital, i.e. the freeing of flows of goods and capital from boundaries imposed by tariffs, taxes, import ceilings etc., has created entirely new dynamics as far as the decision powers of single enterprises about the location of their production sites are concerned. If wage levels or environmental standards are considered as limiting company profits, enterprises under the new rules of globalization are freer than ever to shift their operations to other countries. This has not only given them increased influence over political decisions about economic concerns, but also led to an immensely increased power over decisions concerning wage levels and employment structures. It is therefore not surprising that employer sanctions have failed in twenty other nations and ten states in the United States, but failed completely to prevent employers from
hiring illegal workers (Ho 1991, 27). Without doubt, globalization has given a new lease of life to both legal and illegal immigration.

Particularly relevant for the Caribbean remains the impact of the United States economy which, in any case, is the largest market in the world. Most recently U.S. insistence on the abolition of certain European Market trade preferences for Caribbean bananas have threatened to seriously disrupt several Eastern Caribbean economies in which this is the major export product. Without doubt, the unemployment resulting from this initiative will not alleviate any population pressures providing a push for migration. Some observers (e.g., Maingot 1991, 104) object to establishing a linear relationship between levels of development and numbers of migrants. Although a linear relationship between economic growth and migration is not at work, this objection nevertheless appears to underestimate the importance of opportunity (or the lack thereof) when migration is considered as an option. Certainly, the Reagan Administration’s Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) cannot be cited—like Maingot does—as evidence disproving any relationship between the importance of economic development and levels of migration. As most scholars (See e.g., Payne 1984; Pastor 1982/83; Ramsaran 1982) agree, too little was intended and achieved by this law, better known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative, than that it could possibly be held responsible for any significant, positive economic impact on Caribbean economies. In addition, the truism needs to be reiterated that economic growth can not to be equated with genuine development. In fact, there are numerous examples which demonstrate that an economy can grow without actually improving the situation of the majority of its people (See e.g., Wilber and Jameson 1990).

The United States has become a primary focus for immigrants from the Caribbean region. They absorb about 70% of all migrants from this region. However, almost 100% come from Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. As we shall see later in greater detail, the large majority comes to this country by legal means. As in the past, they are driven by a combination of factors. With the persistent lack of development and opportunities for employment, many people in the English-speaking Caribbean continue a decades-old culture which regards migration as just another option to eke out a living for themselves and their families. They do not migrate because they want to, but simply because they see little other chances to earn themselves an honest living, send their children to school and university, and comfortably retire in their old days. In fact, quite a few of them return to their home country to retire or to build a business there from their hard earned savings.
PATTERNS OF MIGRATION BEFORE 1965

In the time before 1965 four periods or phases of migration within and away from the Caribbean are often distinguished (See e.g. Blackman 1985; Marshall 1987): the first, from the 1830s to the 1880s; the second phase, ca. 1890 to the 1920s; the third, 1920s to 1940; and the fourth phase from 1940 to 1965. To a large extent, the first phase was characterized by in-migration from East Asian contract workers, particularly from India and China. Following the abolition of the British slave trade and, later, the abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1834 the Caribbean islands in British possession experienced a severe labor shortage since many former slaves were no longer willing to work on the plantations. Together with declining profits for sugar in the international markets, this caused an economic crisis in these economies which had centered on the production of sugar. In order to replace the lost manpower, the planters decided to import contract workers which were hired mainly in India and China. Until the termination of this arrangement in 1917 Indian immigrants for example to British Guiana numbered about 240,000, to Trinidad 145,000 and to Jamaica 37,000 (Hope 1985: 239ff.). Their presence directly contributed to another brief period of sugar prosperity. Towards the end, however, the importation of indentured laborers from India and China became “a means of cheapening labor rather than a necessity for the maintenance of the sugar industry” (Hope 1985: 239). Smaller contingents from China, Lebanon, and Syria also contributed to the inflow of foreigners to the English-speaking Caribbean during this phase and, in fact, they established a tight (often commercial) network of close family relationships throughout the region. Indeed, in many cases families from Lebanon, Syria or of Palestinian background (all three groups sometimes referred to as Levantines) can trace their origin to the same village. Most of the above immigrants came for economic reasons or because they had been discriminated in their home countries. While many of the Chinese became involved in the retail trade, the Levantines operate many Caribbean hotel chains, cinemas, travel or real estate agencies, soft drink operations and some members of both groups have in the process become quite wealthy (Hope 1985: 249). In many instances they (i.e., in particular the Levantines) have become influential in public organizations such as chambers of commerce, tourist boards, or in political parties.

A secondary wave of migration, one that already foreshadowed the second phase, occurred within the region during this period. Dominated by Barbadians, significant numbers of—mostly seasonal—laborers in search for better wages and land moved around in the English-speaking countries of the Eastern Caribbean. Because in their agricultural economies the plantations occupied most of the cultivable land, in many of the smaller Eastern islands moving from the plantation automatically meant moving away from the island. The labor shortage was particularly
acute in Trinidad and British Guiana, and their wage rates were twice as high as in the other islands. Consequently they became very attractive targets for migrants from the other islands. It is therefore not surprising that between 1850 and 1921 Barbados alone sent 50,000 persons to these two countries (Marshall 1987, 19). Between 1835 and 1846, 19,000 Eastern Caribbean migrants entered British Guiana and Trinidad and Tobago. Smaller contingents of several thousands moved during this period from Dominica to the gold-fields of Venezuela and from Barbados to Surinam. In many instances these movements continued even into our time.

These early streams (or rather: spurts) of intra-regional migration were largely determined by global conditions affecting the sugar market and the sudden emigration even became a concern for planters in the islands affected by it. Already in 1839 Barbados had enacted two laws to discourage emigration and in 1973 made amendments to assist certain poor classes of emigrants. However, presumably because of the high population growth rate in Barbados following the end of slavery emigration was soon regarded “as the only alternative to starvation and pestilence” (Marshall 1987, 18). The situation was similar in many of the other islands and it marked the beginning of the policy of active encouragement which has been a feature ever since.

Following the collapse of the sugar prices in the 1880s Caribbean workers left their countries in search for job opportunities. During this second phase, thousands migrated from the British West Indies to the United Kingdom, Cuba, and several countries in Central and South America. Just like the subsequent labor exodus into the Panama Canal Zone, in the mid-1880s substantial amounts of workers had gone to Costa Rica where they participated in railroad construction and agricultural labor. A secondary wave during this period went to countries like Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Honduras. With the beginning of the World War I the search for military forces and labor power attracted contingents of Caribbean migrants to the United Kingdom.

The second phase set the directional pattern for Caribbean migration for much of the rest of the century. From now on the majority of the migrants either moved around within the region or (at least temporarily) out of it. Without doubt, Caribbean migration during this phase was dominated by the construction of the Panama Canal although banana cultivation in Central American countries and Colombia caused many Caribbean workers to move among these countries depending on the rules of demand and supply. It can be noted, that their general tendency to work only for a specified time (with or without contract) and then move back to their home countries to either invest or spend the earned money allowed a relatively large number of Caribbean laborers during this time to participate in the economic opportunities offered to them in Central America.
Due to the increasing involvement of U.S. economic and political interests in the region, it is hardly surprising that during this phase the United States also became a target for Caribbean migrants and this inflow constituted the first wave of West Indian immigration to this country. Although in 1914 a bill had been placed before Congress (which was subsequently blocked by President Wilson) to exclude West Indians because of their race and although many of them only came as seasonal workers, an increasing number of Caribbean migrants stayed permanently in the United States. According to U.S. population census data about the number of foreign-born blacks in the United States grew from about 20,000 in 1900 to almost 74,000 in 1920 (Cf. Kasinitz 1995, 25). There was a clear acceleration of West Indian immigration during this time as annual inflow rates increased from 832 in 1902 to a relatively stable rate of between 5,000 and 8,000 per year afterwards and reached a high of over 12,000 in 1924, shortly before the inauguration of new immigration restrictions (Kasinitz 1995, 24). The vast majority of these were West Indians (including Haitians). Between 1900 and 1920 alone, for example, 10,000 to 12,000 Bahamians went to Miami in order to participate in the booming construction industry there and between 1904 and 1914 an estimated 44,000 Jamaicans alone migrated to the United States (Marshall 1987, 22).

This second phase of migration in the Caribbean also ushered in new relationships between the islands which had hitherto been denied by colonialism. Thus, between 1902 and 1932, over 120,000 Jamaicans traveled to Cuba to work in the cane-fields (Cf. Marshall 1987, 22). Many of them stayed permanently and thereby contributed to a deepening sense of relationship between these neighboring islands which continues into our days.

The third phase (ca. 1920-1940), roughly the time between the two world wars, was marked by a steady reduction of opportunities for migrants which prompted the first significant wave of returning migrants. The new U.S. immigration law of 1924 established national quotas which restricted immigration from the Caribbean. At the same time, those who in search of work had earlier migrated to other Caribbean territories were increasingly forced to return to their home-countries as economic opportunities contracted in their hosts’ economies. For example, Venezuela whose oil fields had earlier attracted thousands of West Indians in 1929 restricted the entry of foreign-born black people (Marshall 1987, 23). In addition to these, a number of migrants returned from the United States and Cuba. Without doubt, the swelling the numbers of the unemployed contributed to the acceleration of the thrust for independence in several of the English-speaking Caribbean countries.

The fourth phase, roughly coinciding with the beginning of World War II, lasted until the early 1960s. Again, war and the subsequent reconstruction provided a formidable opportunity for
Caribbean workers to complement sometimes severe labor shortages (e.g., farm labor, domestic helpers, and seasonal workers) in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. As Kasinitz (1995, 26) points out, this was the smallest of the waves of Caribbean immigrants coming to the United States and it “probably never exceeded 3,000 per year until the close of this period and was generally far below that.” Many of this group were people joining family members who had come to the United States during the previous period, and young professionals who came here as students and continued to stay after completing their degrees.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS OF THE POST-1965 GENERATION

The year 1965 marks the probably most significant turning point in the history of Caribbean-Americans’ migration to the United States. In this year the Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act became law and abandoned the national quota system that had come into effect with the policy change in 1924. In its stead a ceiling of 120,000 immigrants for the entire Western Hemisphere (however, there was no ceiling from 1965 to 1968) with no preference system and without country quotas was imposed. After 1976 a 20,000 immigrants per country limitation was imposed. However, this arrangement proved to be of particular advantage to the micro-states of the English-speaking Caribbean which had become independent after 1962. Whereas during colonial times they had only been allowed to send 600, they were now allowed to send 20,000 per year (immediate family members not included in this number) which for many of them was a huge proportion of their total population (Miller 1985, 350). On the one hand, this was a great economic relief for their beleaguered economies. From another point of view, however, the large outflow of often highly qualified citizens meant a serious loss of people power many of the smaller countries. Thus, countries like Dominica, Belize, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent lost between 16 to 23% of their base population during the 1970s (Simmons and Guengant 1992, 98).

In the period 1965-75 the total immigration from the West Indies to the United States surpassed that of the previous seventy years and approximately 50,000–mostly middle-class–immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean were legally entering the country annually by the early 1980s (Kasinitz 1995, 27). Indeed, immigration from Jamaica alone reached approximately 20,000 during that time. It is hardly a surprise, therefore, that the number of total immigrants from the Caribbean increased from 123,000 in the 1950s, to 470,000 in the 1960s, and nearly 750,000 in the 1970s, creating serious backlogs of persons with already approved visas, but unable to enter the United States because their country’s limit had been exhausted (Simmons and Guengant 1992, 95).
With the 1965 act the United States also consciously changed the racial and ethnic composition of its immigrant population. Between 1900 and 1965, 75% of all immigrants had been Europeans. Since 1968, however, 62% came from Asia and Latin America, and by 1978 this percentage had grown to 82% (Pastor 1987, 253). As Table 1 indicates, the number of immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean as a percentage of immigrants from the entire region has also steadily increased since the 1960s.

Table 1: Immigration to the United States from the Caribbean (Anglophone and total), 1961-84

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Anglophone Caribbean</th>
<th>Total Caribbean</th>
<th>Anglophones as % of Total Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-70</td>
<td>142,345(^1)</td>
<td>470,213</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-80</td>
<td>331,365</td>
<td>741,126</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-84</td>
<td>134,638</td>
<td>213,986(^2)</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Kasinitz 1995, Table 2; Pastor 1985, Table 1.2; author’s calculations.

\(^1\) Figure is for period 1960-70
\(^2\) Figure is for period 1981-83

Table 2: Gender ratio of immigrants from selected Caribbean countries, 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>12,230</td>
<td>14,617</td>
<td>26,847</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>22,562</td>
<td>26,046</td>
<td>48,608</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>87,264</td>
<td>109,547</td>
<td>109,547</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>29,752</td>
<td>36,155</td>
<td>65,907</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It also has to be noted that—following the general trends—immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean consisted increasingly of single women or female-headed households. In the past, immigration from the region was often depicted in terms of male migration. Before the late 1950s women as a group did not figure prominently as immigrants. This, however, changed during the 1970s. As Bonnett (1990, 140) points out, between 1972-79 at least 51% of the immigrants
from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St.Kitts/Nevis, and Antigua were female. As Table 2 (above) indicates, the ratio of female to male immigrants from the first four countries reached about 80-87% in 1980. This feminization of Caribbean migration implies, as we will see later, a different adjustment process for the migrating individuals.

Several reasons are behind this change in the gender composition of Caribbean immigrants to the United States. Apart from the liberalization implied in the Hart-Cellar Act, which allowed women to take advantage of the family preference scheme, shifts in the United States labor market proved beneficial for a number of Caribbean women with or even without higher education. Since the late 1960s more and more American middle class women moved into jobs previously considered a male domain which in turn created demand for the jobs they vacated. For example, many of them left hospital nursing to better paying and more prestigious positions in the private sector (See e.g. Toney 1989, 72). The same mobility also created demand for services such as general domestic helpers or care-givers for children, elderly and even for pets. These jobs simply were closed for men who, in addition, suffered from the decline in the industries (e.g., manufacturing or trades) they had traditionally been able to join upon arrival in the United States. Another reason is that with the greater independence most female migrants experience in the United States, many husbands or male common law partners refuse to follow and stay with their female partner because from their perspective the female employment situation implies a loss of power, particularly if they are not able to find better or comparable employment in the United States (Toney 1989, 80). As recent research demonstrated, the gender imbalance among English-speaking Caribbean immigrants to New York City evened out in the 1985-90 period and the pattern was more or less in balance (Conway and Walcott 1999, 18-19). However, most recent data indicate that the trend has again reversed and that women once again seem to supply the majority of immigrants from the region. Thus, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the total of 19,089 entries from Jamaica to the United States in 1996 consisted of 10,280 females and 8,809 males; the figures for Guyana were 5,120 and 4,369 respectively (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997, Table 13, 55).

While both women and men of the more recent cohorts have improved their labor force participation rates, the increase was much more marked for new female immigrants and, comparing their success in the job market, the women appear to have turned around the relationship. Thus, while in the 1975-80 period 68% of male arrivals from the four most important English-speaking Caribbean countries (i.e., Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados) sending immigrants to New York City were able to enter the labor force, this percentage had risen to 79.3% in the 1985-90
period. The corresponding figures for the female arrivals from these countries are 56.3% and 82% respectively (Cf. Conway and Walcott 1999, Table 2). Apart from the difference between the genders, these figures indicate that both men and women appear to have successfully adjusted to the changed structural conditions in the host country.

Table 3: Immigrants admitted from selected Caribbean countries, 1986-96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua¹</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>1,319</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>3,270</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.'dos</td>
<td>6,331</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>1,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>2,663</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>4,031</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>88,233</td>
<td>25,013</td>
<td>23,828</td>
<td>18,915</td>
<td>17,241</td>
<td>14,349</td>
<td>16,398</td>
<td>19,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Kitts²</td>
<td>2,617</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Lucia</td>
<td>2,313</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.V.,cent</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad³</td>
<td>15,775</td>
<td>6,740</td>
<td>8,407</td>
<td>7,008</td>
<td>6,577</td>
<td>6,292</td>
<td>5,424</td>
<td>7,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>41,287</td>
<td>11,362</td>
<td>11,666</td>
<td>9,064</td>
<td>8,384</td>
<td>7,662</td>
<td>7,362</td>
<td>9,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>173,092</td>
<td>52,557</td>
<td>51,788</td>
<td>41,008</td>
<td>37,994</td>
<td>32,703</td>
<td>33,189</td>
<td>41,304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Including Barbuda
² Including Nevis
³ Including Tobago

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997, Table 3.

In 1990 the United States put another Immigration Act into effect which intended to fine-tune the demands of the domestic labor market and the potential supply of international migrants to this country. While the new act remains neutral to ethnicity, race and national origin, family immigration was strongly reaffirmed as the defining feature of United States immigration policy. In fact, four-fifths of all visas will be allocated on this basis. However, employment-based immigration under this act doubled under this act to 120,000 visas. Whether this new system accounts for the above noted increase in female immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean is
not clear, but the overall effect—if there is any—on the total number of admissions from the region was only marginal and temporary. As Table 3 (above) indicates, this figure seems to have recovered from a drop in the post-1990 period and reached almost the level it stood at in the late 1980s.

Table 4: Caribbean immigrants admitted by major occupation group (1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Trinidad/Tobago</th>
<th>Guyana</th>
<th>Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>5,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive/administrative/managerial</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>2,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>2,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision production/craft/repair</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>4,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator/fabricator/laborer</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>13,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming/forestry/fishing</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>1,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>4,376</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>11,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No occupation or not reported</td>
<td>11,070</td>
<td>4,501</td>
<td>6,230</td>
<td>75,057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997, Table 21, 70.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that migrants from the Caribbean used to be recruited from the middle and upper classes (i.e., professionals and skilled labor) rather than from the bottom of the social ladder. This was particularly true for the migrants of the first half of the century. Since the 1965 Immigration Act this trend has dissolved. Indeed, as Table 4 indicates, by the end of the 1990s, the number of Caribbean immigrants in the professional, executive, managerial category was a mere 6% of the total admitted number of persons. At the same time, two thirds of all Caribbean immigrants in this year did not report an occupation and although this figure includes minors this tendency represents a clear deviation from previous immigration patterns from the region.
Conclusion

Although there are some parallels between early and contemporary migration patterns, there are also some significant new developments. In particular the gender and skills composition of the latest cohorts differ from those of the earlier migrants.

Immigration can not only be regarded as a “safety-valve” as some commentators and regional governments have claimed. This metaphor refers to the real or assumed release of the beleaguered Caribbean economies of their surplus labor force which in the light of the persistent economic crisis remains permanently unemployed. The consequences of migration for the sending countries are more complex and contradictory. Besides possible relief there is also a certain loss of skills and people power—in the social science literature often referred to as “brain drain”—involved in the exodus from the region (See e.g., Duany 1994, 110). Thus, in the early 1990s the active recruitment of nurses to the United States created a serious crisis in the Jamaican and Trinidadian health sectors which suddenly found their hospitals understaffed. At the same time, the need to train new nurses and the already spent investment in the training of those who left have to be factored as a loss to the national economy. It is indeed a matter of great concern, when—as Maingot (1991, 111) reports—between 1977-80 50% of the output of Jamaica’s training institutions migrated.
REFERENCES:


Biography

HOLGER HENKE is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of History and Political Science at Iona College (New Rochelle, N.Y.). He has taught at the University of the West Indies (Mona) and Hunter College (CUNY). He has earned an M.A. degree in Political Science from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Geschwister-Scholl-Institut) and a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of the West Indies (Mona). A Fellow of the renowned Salzburg Seminar (Harvard University), his research interests include various aspects of Caribbean studies and foreign relations, international political economy, migration, ethnic and “race” relations and (political) culture in the region.

His forthcoming book about Jamaica’s international relations will be published in the summer of 1999 (The University of the West Indies Press) and he is currently preparing a book manuscript about English-speaking Caribbean immigrants in the US which will be published in 2000 (Greenwood Press). He is also serving as the assistant editor of the refereed journal Wadabagei. A Journal of the Caribbean and its Diaspora (Medgar Evers College, CUNY). In addition, Dr. Henke has published a number of articles and book reviews in academic journals and magazines.