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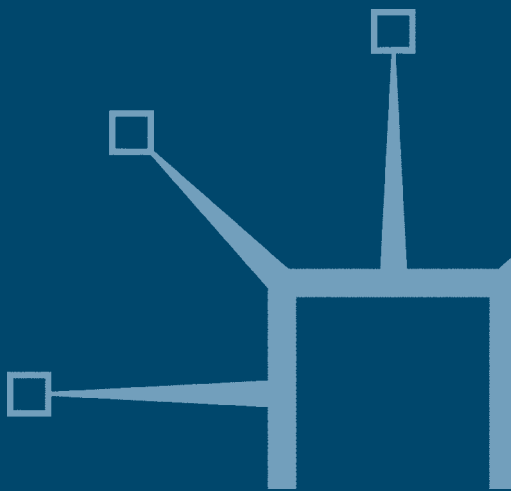
The Political Economy of Gender in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

Eudine Barriteau



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The Political Economy of Gender in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

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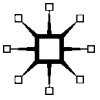

First published 2001 by
PALGRAVE
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE is the new global academic imprint of
St. Martin's Press LLC Scholarly and Reference Division and
Palgrave Publishers Ltd (formerly Macmillan Press Ltd).

ISBN 0–333–73282–0

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Barriteau, Eudine.
The political economy of gender in the twentieth-century Caribbean / Eudene Barriteau.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0–333–73282–0
1. Sex discrimination against women—Caribbean Area.
2. Man–woman relationships—Caribbean Area. 3. Women––Barbados. 4. Women—Caribbean Area—Economic conditions.
5. Women in development—Caribbean Area. I. Title.

HQ1237.5.C27 B37 2000
305.42'09729—dc21

00–069472

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (countries)
BDB	Barbados Development Bank
BLP	Barbados Labour Party
BVI	British Virgin Islands
BWU	Barbados Workers Union
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBI	Caribbean Basin Initiative
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Violence Against Women
CGDS	Centre for Gender and Development Studies
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
DLP	Democratic Labour Party
ECONSOC	Economic Social and Cultural Rights
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
GAD	Gender and Development
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GMS	Gender Management Systems
HDI	Human Development Index
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDI	Medium Development Index
NCOW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
POWA	Professional Organization of Women in Antigua
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNC	United National Congress

UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US AID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAD	Women and Development
WICP	Women in the Caribbean Project
WID	Women in Development
WPEO	Women's Political and Economic Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Acknowledgments

This work started as a dissertation in the Department of Political Science, Howard University and has evolved into an analysis of gender relations in the twentieth-century Commonwealth Caribbean. Many colleagues, mentors, friends and family helped me along the way. Jane Flax supervised my work and inspired me with her incisive analysis and intellectual generosity. I thank committee members Cynthia Burack, John Cotman, Mervat Hatem and Rick Seltzer. I also thank Mrs Gwendolyn Sumlin for her valuable assistance.

The best part of writing this work was living and working in the trenches of gender relations in the Caribbean. The insights gained from attending numerous conferences, visiting women's bureaux, conducting research, lecturing, coordinating the Certificate Course on Gender and Development Studies, and delivering workshops in the region enabled me to interact with colleagues and women and men grappling with changes in our societies. I am fortunate to have ongoing conversations with colleagues and friends who are on the front line conducting Caribbean feminist research: Rhoda Reddock, Pat Mohammed, Barbara Bailey, Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Peggy Antrobus, Hilary Beckles, and Joycelin Massiah. I benefited from discussions with an international community of feminists: I thank Connie Sutton, Jane Parpart, Devaki Jain, Ann Denis, Angela Miles, Joyce Endeley, and Patricia McFadden for sharing. Other colleagues who have shared their ideas with me or assisted my work at the Centre include Tracy Robinson, Alan Cobley, Andrew Downes, Gemma Tang Nain, Maxine McClean, Aviston Downes, Christine Barrow, Joan Brathwaite, Richard Clarke, Richard Goodridge, Jeniphier Carnegie, Joanne Grainger, Eliseus Joseph, Keturah Babb, Jeanette Bell and Neilsen Waithe. I am indebted to past and present staff members of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI Cave Hill who assisted me in so many ways: Sharon Taylor, Veronica Jones, Rhonda Walcott, Jacqueline Morris, Sherry Asgill, Elizabeth Wilson-Ciconte, Carmen Hutchinson Miller, Deborah Deane, Olivia Birch and Veronica Michael who although temporary became as involved as

other staff members. Barry Jordan of the UWI computer centre rescued me from the terror of a collapsed hard drive and I am very grateful.

I tested my ideas on a circle of friends who continue to encourage, inspire or assist me. I thank Diane Cummins, Roberta Clarke, Margaret Gill, Sonia Hinds, Eugenia O'Neal, Pansy Hamilton, Linette Vassell, Sheila Stuart, Colin Bellamy, Randy Hallett, Frances Hinds-Griffith, Esther Harris and Marcia Martindale for listening and caring, but more importantly for sharing their own observations on gender relations in Caribbean societies. One friend in particular not only listened, debated and analysed late into the night with me but, sometimes to my dismay, made it her mission to monitor my progress and keep me on track with writing. Joy Workman, I thank you, but I dreaded those regular queries of 'Eudine, how the book coming?'

My family provided encouragement constantly and I thank the Barriteau clan, especially the Washington DC chapter, Grace, Edna, Winifred, Shirley, Babs and all my nieces and nephews for believing in me. I thank my brothers Wilbur and Patrick for their loving support. I thank Hugh Foster for sharing in the care of our son, especially when I traveled, thus enabling me to negotiate better my own public/private tightrope. My mother, Mabel, worried constantly about 'this late work you doing every night', but I know she is proud of me, and I continue to draw strength from her indomitable character; Pat Emmanuel, I wish you could see me now. Al, thank you for walking with me through the valleys and helping me always to see the mountain tops. I dedicate this book to you and my precious son, Cabral, my pillars of love and support.

Preface

My work constitutes a comprehensive analysis of the operations of gender systems in the twentieth-century, Commonwealth Caribbean to reveal the absence of gender justice and equity for women. I assess the mechanisms that states have institutionalized to deal with the thorny issue of women's subordination in Caribbean societies as being inadequate and not grasping the fundamental issue that structures women's lives very differently from those of men. I show that after twenty-five years of policies and practices not only do the Caribbean states comprehend very little about women as an equally primary constituency of citizens, but they are now losing interest in channeling state resources to women.

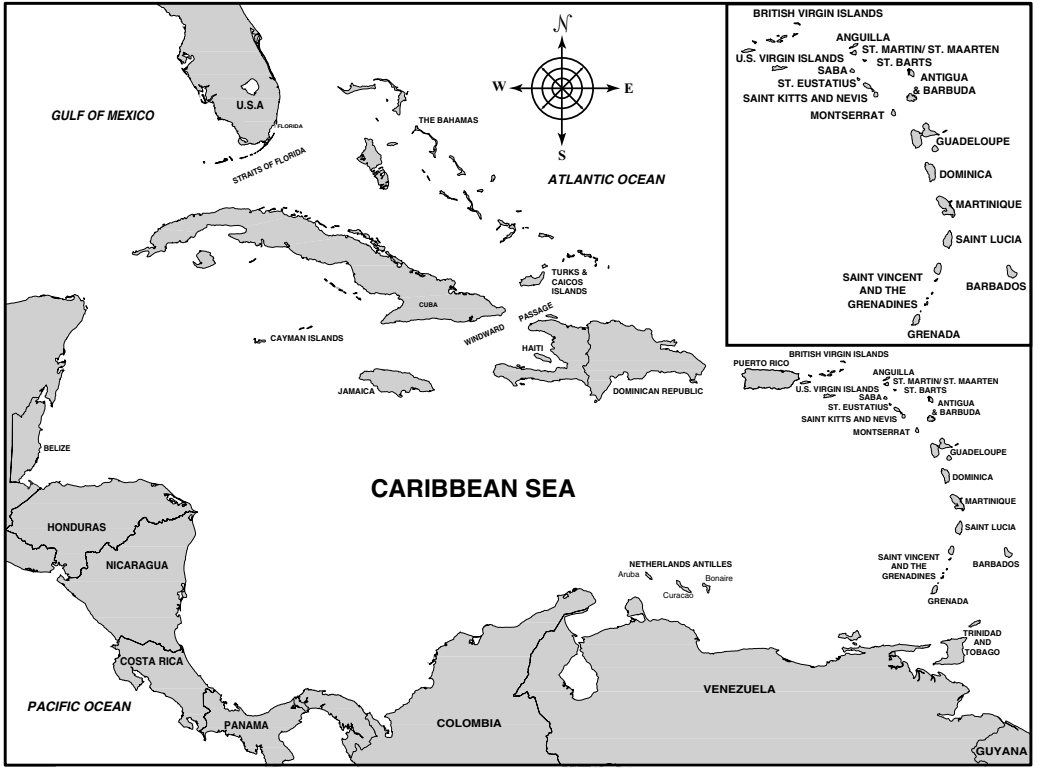
My analysis moves easily between dissecting the inadequacies of the dominant feminist frames and the WID and GAD policy approaches that flow from them, to women's machineries and state policies. While I establish the limitations of the WID approach, I caution that GAD, gender main-streaming and Gender Management Systems pose even greater problems in states' attempts to address women's inequalities because they are conceptually unclear, structually unsound and create fragmentary programs that side-step the real issues in women's lives – ongoing attempts by institutions and individuals to maintain conditions of inequality for women.

I place my investigation in the political economy of the Caribbean at the end of the twentieth century. I incorporate regional and international changes in the economy and the political and social culture in exposing how contradictory tensions in ideological and material relations of gender reproduce conflicting messages to women about their relevance.

These tensions also generate misunderstanding for men about their gender identities and create a fertile ground for the sowing of hysterical ideas such as the male marginalization thesis. While I critique the latter, I reinforce the urgent need for research that examines configurations of Caribbean masculinity, even as I advise that men and the state need to pay more attention to understanding the lives of women.

I undertake a case study of how the Barbadian state, the quintessential model of a post-independent Caribbean society, constructs and maintains its relations with women as revealed in its development plans. I provide some empirical evidence to substantiate this by examining the economic activities of 32 women who started, own and control (manage) their businesses. This evidence proves, in spite of established state mechanisms, that state and NGO officials know and understand very little about women as economic agents. I conclude with some recommendations prefaced by a need to accept that there can be no single or simple approach to alter asymmetric gender relations. However, the ultimate goal of transforming relations of domination should be grounded in reflective practices and a commitment to multiple and differing levels of struggle.

Maps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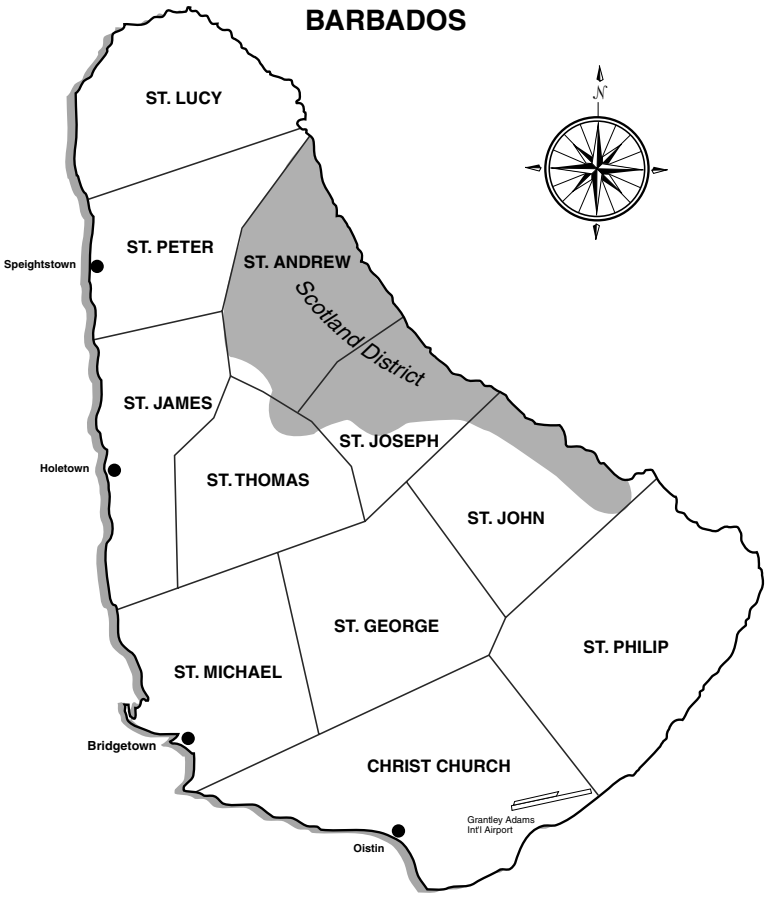
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Introduction: Mapping the Terrain

> Today we are living at a unique moment of history when the two major revolutions of the twentieth century converge, creating a world of uncertainty, a world of contradictions, a world of rapid social change. I speak of the economic, political and cultural revolution which has come to be known as globalization, as well as the social revolution which questions gender attitudes, behaviour and the structural imbalances of power between men and women.
>
> (Massiah 1999: 2)

In this book I investigate the construct and operations of relations of gender in the political economy of the modernizing, twentieth-century Caribbean. My analysis centres on women and Caribbean states but it is situated in the post-war, post-independent Caribbean on the brink of the twenty-first century. My investigation is located at the juncture where regional experiences with the rapid changes in the global political economy intersect with fundamental developments in the social relations of gender. Caribbean governments are wedded to the politics of neoliberalism and are fumbling through its self-sustaining economic maze of globalization. Our governments are finally connecting the implosions and upheavals in Caribbean social systems with the vicious havoc wreaked by hegemonic and exclusionary trade regimes masquerading as fair trade agreements (*Barbados Advocate*, 4 December 1999). Within that economic maelstrom, Caribbean women straddle the crossroads of production and reproduction. Within this cauldron of political and economic turmoil

Table 1.1 Basic Socioeconomic Indicators for Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, 1989–97

	Population 1992	*%F*	*%M*	*Real GDP* per capita *(US$) 1995*	*External debt service ratio (%) 1997*	*Life expectancy at birth (years) 1997*	*Infant mortality rate per 1000, 1997*	*Adult literacy (%) 1997*	*Women's share of adult labor force 1995*	*Defence expenses 1995 US$ millions*	*Daily calorie intake 1996*
The Bahamas	255 095	51.0	49.0	15 738	2.3	73.8	18	95.8	47	21	2 443
Barbados	262 653	52.1	47.9	11 306	13.7	76.4	11	97.6	47	14	2 307
Antigua and Barbuda	85 700	n.a.	n.a.	9 131	4.7	75	17	95	n.a.	n.a.	2 365
Trinidad and Tobago	1 283 000	50.1	49.9	9 437	19.6	73.8	15	97.8	41	3	2 751
St Kitts and Nevis	41 800	n.a.	n.a.	10 150	3.9	70	30	90	n.a.	71	2 240
Grenada	91 200	n.a.	n.a.	5 425	5.7	72	24	96	n.a.	n.a.	2 731
Belize	189 392	49.1	50.9	5 623	9.2	74.7	35	75	23	14	2 862
Dominica	71 500	50.2	49.8	6 424	8.2	74	17	94	n.a.	n.a.	3 093
St Lucia	135 975	51.5	48.5	6 530	3.3	70	24	82	n.a.	n.a.	2 822
St Vincent and the Grenadines	107 600	51.0	49.0	5 969	8.3	73	18	82	n.a.	n.a.	2 434
Jamaica	2 460 000	50.9	49.1	3 801	9.2	74.8	10	85.5	46	28	2 575
Guyana	717 458	50.8	49.2	3 205	7.1	64.4	59	98.1	33	7	2 392
Turks and[(a)] Caicos	12 300	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	74	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Anguilla[(a)]	9 700	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.0	75	5.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British[(a)] Virgin Is	17 000	48.7	51.3	n.a.	n.a.	69	29.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Montserrat[(a)]	11 000	50.3	49.7	n.a.	4.7	71	11	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

[(a)] All statistics under British dependencies come from Mondesire and Dunn 1995 and reflect 1989–92 values.
Sources: Mondesire and Dunn 1995; UNDP 1999.

we enjoy unprecedented credit for all that is wrong for Caribbean men[1] and, often, all that is adverse about Caribbean society.

In this analysis I define the Caribbean as the independent, Anglophone island states and British dependencies within the Caribbean sea, the Central American country of Belize, and the South American country of Guyana. Also referred to as the Commonwealth Caribbean, these countries share a similar historical, political, social and cultural legacy. They are former colonies of Britain or, in the case of a few (Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, BVI, The Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands), British protectorates.[2] This definition is influenced by the common experience of British colonialism and how this has shaped the contemporary Caribbean state and its institutions. It is also due to familiarity with the research in this area and respect for the differing historical, political, economic and cultural legacies of neighboring countries, which I view as equally Caribbean.

The 1999 United Nations UNDP, Human Development Report classify Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas and Barbados, as having high Human Development Indices (HDI) (UNDP 1999: 134). Belize, St Kitts-Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago fell from a high HDI rank in 1995 (UNDP 1995: 226) to join Grenada, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, Jamaica and Guyana, and are ranked with a Medium Development Index (MDI) (UNDP 1999: 135). The majority of countries are ranked as middle income with a *per capita* GNP between US$3205–9437. The exceptions are The Bahamas, Barbados and St Kitts-Nevis, the only Commonwealth Caribbean countries which have *per capita* incomes in excess of US$10 000 at US$15 738; US$11 306 and US$10 150 respectively. Guyana was listed as a low income country in 1995 with a *per capita* income of US$695 or lower (UNDP 1995). By 1999 its *per capita* had climbed to US$3205, still the lowest among the countries as shown in Table 1.1.

Political culture and demography

The political culture of these countries is rooted in the liberal ideology of the Enlightenment. The Anglophone Caribbean countries have been weaned on a British, democratic parliamentary system. The Grenada revolution disrupted this liberal democratic tranquility when the Maurice Bishop administration experimented with a

socialist oriented government in 1979–83. In 1984, the country returned to the Westminister model. In the aftermath of the radicalization of Caribbean political economy, primarily due to the socialist oriented revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, and the military coup in Suriname, the United States changed its foreign policy in the region. The US has always maintained a military presence in the Caribbean and cooperated extensively with European colonial powers in the post-war period to consolidate its geopolitical interests (Phillips and Young 1986). It had traditionally regarded political events in the Anglophone Caribbean with benign neglect. Through the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, and the United States Agency for International Development (US AID), the US pressed for an expanded role for the private sector and a reduction in governments' involvement in the economies.

In trying to understand the region's unique political culture, Jorge Dominiquez surmises that the Caribbean is the only part of the contemporary world where the descendants of enslaved peoples govern sovereign countries (Dominiquez 1998: 20). He believes this legacy may have placed a premium on freedom in the emergent political culture. The Anglophone Caribbean has had its share of attempts to overthrow elected governments or seize state power by unconstitutional means, yet the region has a stable political culture in which capitalists and workers acknowledge they need each other (Dominiquez 1998: 22). Even though there are ongoing struggles to redistribute economic resources, the state often plays the role of the middle man retarding or facilitating the desire for leverage by the competing interest groups in civil society.

These socioeconomic and demographic features merge with racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics that are relevant to understanding gender systems in the Caribbean. Afro-Caribbean people dominate in the populations of The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean countries. In Trinidad and Tobago, the population is almost equally composed of Indo-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean people. Forty-nine to 51 per cent of the population of each country is of Asian, East Indian ancestry. In Trinidad and Tobago, East Indian women were 39.6 per cent of the total female population in 1980 (Mohammed 1988: 382). However, East Indian laborers are also part of the migration legacy of Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. In Barbados, Barbadians of European origin

Table 1.2 Amerindian population of CARICOM 1994

Country	*Population*
Guyana	40 619
Dominica	3 400
St Vincent and Grenadines	6 000
Belize	26 000
Trinidad and Tobago	400
Total	76 419

Source: Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 16.

form about 4 per cent of the population (Barbados 1992). There are Caribbean citizens of Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish and French descent (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 13). However, each Caribbean country has citizens of European origin.

Belize is probably the most diverse country ethnically. Its population comprises Creoles, Mestizos, Garinagu or Garifuna, Mayan and Ketchi Mayan, and Mennonites (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 13). The population of African ancestry accounts for 36.4 per cent, but the Mestizo population is the largest single segment, at 43.6 per cent (Belize 1991). Indigenous peoples constitute small but significant numbers in the populations of Guyana, Belize, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines, as shown in Table 1.2. The Dominican Caribs live primarily in a territory called The Carib Reserve and have a local government structure. In all the countries indigenous people are among the poorest of the population. They suffer from shortages of basic infrastructure and have marginal access to the resources of the state (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 15).

Aims and objectives

This book offers a feminist critique of economic development planning from the vantage point of the Caribbean. Feminist theories, like political theories, are concerned with the distribution of power within societies. The critical assumption is that gender relations mask relations of power. Existing critiques of Western economic

development examine its Eurocentric character and biases against developing countries (Gendzier 1985, 1998; Bodenheimer 1971; Blomstrom and Hettne 1984). These critiques focus on exposing the political ideology informing the process of development and the failure of the prescriptions to transform the economies as implied in the models. What still has to be undertaken in the context of the Caribbean is an extension of that critique to show its gendered nature.

My primary aim is to analyse and expose the constantly mutating social relations of gender and its effect on women in the Commonwealth Caribbean at the end of the twentieth century. I devise and apply to Caribbean society a theoretical framework to explain the ongoing contradictions for women with these relations. As the twenty-first century begins, I demonstrate that an original departure in social relations is the rupturing of traditional relations of gender inherited from the post-slavery, post-indenture ship, 'emancipated', nineteenth-century Caribbean.

A major objective of this research is to reveal the operations of gender systems within Caribbean societies, specifically in the relations between women and the state. The study of the experiences of women entrepreneurs provides one of the better means of understanding and rethinking the diverse experiences of Caribbean women. I use the insights this produces to problematize the current modes of inquiries into the lives of Caribbean women.

Women who establish, own and control their businesses at least should be economically visible. I argue that they are not. Instead, these women are marginalized in areas regarded as outside the sphere of the household or informal economic activity. If women who objectively appear to be socially and economically privileged, and who operate within the formal, capitalist sphere of the economy are marginalized in the discourses and operations of the state and its institutions, then the perceived visibility given to the activities of working-class or other women is suspect and requires reinvestigation.

I want to contribute to reconceptualizing the experiences of working-class Caribbean women. Many of the studies on working-class Caribbean women construct a woman-as-victim that does not capture the multiple dimensions of our lives (Barriteau 1992). These studies do not recognize 'both the messy multiplicity of lived experience and the power relations within which those relations are played out' (Hewitt 1992: 317).

The Women in Development (WID) literature has not adequately addressed economic and other relations for women entrepreneurs (UNECLAC 1990). This underscores the need to explore their exclusion and what this means to understanding the construct of gender within the WID discourses on and within Caribbean and other societies. In revealing the economic and social subjectivities of women entrepreneurs, I challenge the dichotomous categories created by defining groups of women in opposition to each other. The WID discourse objectifies Caribbean women. Women are either portrayed as working-class downtrodden victims or 'privileged'. The discourse focuses overwhelmingly on the former but both categories are exclusionary, ignore the pervasiveness of gender and therefore create false representations.

The discourse places both working-class and middle-class women in inferior positions within Caribbean societies. It pays attention to working-class women because they are constructed as victims. As revealed in liberal and socialist feminisms, the emancipatory impulse of Enlightenment thought is to liberate the downtrodden. The theories ignore middle-class women because they are 'privileged' and do not merit theoretical and practical attention. In both cases women are objectified. The discourse assumes that it privileges working-class women where instead it devalues them by demeaning their agencies. It devalues middle-class women by assuming they enjoy special privileges on the basis of class relations that enable them to escape the pervasiveness of gender relations.

I am dissatisfied with the imagery constructed by the theoretical and practical approaches to low-income women. I am concerned that their complex subjectivities are unexamined. I reject this narrow, reductionist portrayal of Caribbean women and seek to redefine our multiple subjective positions. In the process I stake a claim for alternative feminist theorizing.

This book sets out to answer several questions posed by the convergence of these historical moments. Why, at the end of the twentieth century, are Caribbean women disappearing from the discourse and programs of development as rapidly as they were forced in some twenty-five years ago? What utility have women served and why are women no longer necessary to economic development strategies? Why have governments and international development and finance agencies applied the concept of gender to the development discourse

now to mean a mandatory focus on men and boys, even though no evidence is produced of the ways in which the state systematically discriminates against them? What dynamics now exist in the global political economy that make women as workers irrelevant in national development strategies? What is the ideological climate of gender that generates increasing levels of hostility to women and girls and conspires to force them back into a mythified, halcyon, privatized sphere of regulated, domestic life?

In trying to answer these questions, I concentrate on the post-independence period from the 1960s to the end of the twentieth century to expose the contradictions, complicity and confusion of Caribbean states in addressing issues of equity and justice for Caribbean women. Even though the context in which the Caribbean experiences globalization is relevant, I do not focus on documenting the effects of its processes. Like Martha Roldan, I am less concerned with chronicling the damaging effects on women of structural adjustment, retrenchment of the welfare state, and the feminization of certain types of labor. Instead, I am more interested in revealing why particular gender dynamics are embedded in these processes (Roldan 1996: 57).

I juxtapose developments at the national level of gender relations between women and Caribbean states with ongoing changes in the regional and international political economy. I do this to underscore several objectives. The first is to reveal that approaches to incorporating women's interests into developmental strategies have not been informed by an agenda to correct and transform inherited and inherent inequities for women that are entrenched in the political economy of state systems. Instead, I argue that the gendered nature of economic development policies pursued by the state creates conditions of economic subordination for women. First, the region's wholesale embrace[3] of modernization approaches to development erects barriers to centralizing women's involvement in economic development. Secondly, deeply embedded, unproblematized, patriarchal ideologies of gender prevent policy-makers from going beyond instrumental approaches to women's involvement and relevance to Caribbean societies.

I maintain that Caribbean states deploy an instrumental approach to women. They create mechanisms and policies to have women's interests serve the goals of the states, whether or not these

developmental strategies work to promote women's best self-interests. When researchers and policy-makers examine conditions affecting Caribbean women they sometimes express dismay about the 'heavy burden' women carry (Brathwaite 1957: 547). However, they do not connect these adverse conditions to unequal power relations between women and men in the society, and between women and the state.

Barbadian political economy: a case study

In this volume I deconstruct development planning in Barbados and study relations between women entrepreneurs and the Barbadian state as an appropriate case study through which to investigate the nature of gendered relations in the Caribbean. The experiences of women entrepreneurs in Barbados illustrate the asymmetric character of these relations. The ways in which the state incorporates women into development policy reveal the resilience of patriarchal notions of women's economic and political 'citizenship'. Through a dissection of Barbados' development plans, I expose the conceptual and practical inadequacies of economic development planning for women. This investigation demonstrates that women's economic, political and cultural subordination is not peculiar to working-class, rural or traditional women. I contend that the contradictory tensions in current gender systems still constrain Caribbean women's access to power, status and material resources, even though, at last, women have begun to make gains in the material dimensions of gender. I demonstrate how gender relations mask unequal power relations between women and men but, more importantly, between women and the state.

By examining adverse relations of gender for a constituency of women viewed as 'privileged', the precarious position of all women is thrown into sharp relief. The case study provides an opportunity to analyse how these relations are reconstituted and complicated by post-independent states to create marginalization.

Relations between women and the Barbadian state constitute an ideal type for examining the state and gender in the Anglophone Caribbean. Four main factors preselect Barbados for a Caribbean case study: comparatively early state initiatives on behalf of women; the performance of the Barbadian economy; the political and social

culture of managing economic change; and the stridency of the organized men's movement. For the following reasons, Barbados provides the best contemporary example in the Caribbean of the contested power dynamics inherent in relations of gender.

Barbados was one of the first Caribbean countries to establish a national, governmental machinery to concentrate on women's interests when it set up a women's bureau in 1976. The post-independent Barbadian state moved rapidly to dismantle punitive, archaic legislation that circumscribed women's political, economic and civic autonomy.

Race and racism

The discourse on race, racism and racial domination permeates the society and its perceptions of social relations (Lewis 1968; Beckles 1989; Karch 1982). I define race as a social construct, a created set of social relations that recreate groups of people as physiologically distinct and, as a result, perceived as superior or inferior to others. The social relations of race create ideologies and material outcomes that are located in a broad discourse on race. Race as a social relation, its accompanying ideologies and its discourse are mutually constituting. They are not discrete categories having an objective or independent reality from each other.

I am not concerned with the origins of race but, instead, I focus on the context in which race as a social relation may be used and how its experience may be manipulated by both the state and interest groups. I explore the intersections of race and gender as social categories in an attempt to reveal how racial ideologies and identities affect and are affected by women.

The Barbados economic model

The Barbadian economy is held up as a model to other, more resource rich, Caribbean countries as an example of efficient, economic stewardship and management in the absence of natural resources (Ross-Brewster 1996; Myers 1999: 27). It has been called 'The Singapore of the Caribbean'. It is the only Caribbean country to have had an IMF-imposed structural adjustment and stabilization

program which, at the stubborn insistence of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) government, and supported by civic society, did not include a devaluation of its currency. More significantly, after three years of stringent adjustment, the economy experienced growth and continues to grow. Many of the more burdensome impositions have been removed even though structural adjustment measures continue and a 15 per cent value added tax (VAT) has been introduced.

In 1993 the Barbados government, the private sector and the trade unions created economic and political history in the Caribbean when they signed the first Protocol of the prices and income policy. The Protocol was a strategy initiated by generating a social compact between the government and civil society representatives in order to protect the economy from further shocks (Central Bank 1999: 20–1). In the context of what was attempted this new tripartite partnership worked exceptionally well. Between 1993 and 1998 the social compact yielded three protocols and a turnaround of the economy. Regional leaders and economists have promoted this model of economic and social cooperation as the way forward for Caribbean economies in crisis (Ross-Brewster 1996; Myers 1999: 27). Now the tripartite partnership seems to be in jeopardy with some members of the private sector increasingly suggesting that the activities of the Barbados Workers Union (BWU) on behalf of its members are not operating in the 'national interest' (*Barbados Advocate*, 8 October 1999).

Since 1995, the UNDP has been calculating the GDI and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), as part of its annual human development reports. In 1995 Barbados ranked first in the GDI and GEM of all Caribbean countries reported on. In the 1998 report Barbados slipped from the rank of 11th in the world on the GDI to 16th but it still remained first among those Caribbean countries reporting. In the HDI introduced in 1990, Barbados also consistently ranks first of all Caribbean countries although its rank slipped from 20th in 1993, to 24th in 1998 and 29th in 1999 (UNDP 1999). In the latest ranking, the closest other Caribbean countries listed as having high HDIs in the world ranking are Bahamas at 31, Antigua and Barbuda at 38, and Costa Rica at 45 (UNDP 1999).

On the eve of the twenty-first century, the Barbadian state is marked by a resurgence of a feverish, nation-building enterprise that belies the country's existence as politically independent for 34 years.

The current Barbados Labour Party (BLP) administration seems to be laying the groundwork for declaring the country a republic early in the twenty-first century. Between 1998 and 1999 the state established ten national heroes,[4] introduced a national holiday to honor them, renamed Trafalgar Square National Heroes Square, and announced the pending removal of the Statue of Admiral Nelson from the same square.[5]

The government has appointed several commissions, one of which is the Pan African Commission that has a mandate to develop trade and cultural links with African countries. Another is the National Committee on Reconciliation, which is charged with investigating race relations in Barbados and advising the government accordingly. The first committee is all male while the second has two women. When state discourses become overtly nationalistic women tend to disappear. There is more than a linguistic overlap between patriarchy and patrimony. Some of the members of the Pan African Commission are also members of the National Men's Forum which espouses an anti-feminist philosophy (Marshall 1998b: 9; Prescod 1999: 6).

Men and the state

Even more significant to the thrust of examining gender relations in the political economy of a modernizing, Caribbean state is the fact that Barbados, of all Anglophone Caribbean countries, has an organized men's network with a strident anti-feminist, anti-women agenda. Throughout the decade of the 1990s it has used popular communication strategies, such as town hall meetings, exclusive men's only meetings, newspaper editorials and columnists, to articulate concerns that the Barbadian state has conceded too much to women. It insists that boys and men are in crisis and that this crisis is generated by women's economic, and increasingly, political gains. Because of this, the National Men's Forum declares it intends to mount a campaign to put men back into their rightful positions as leaders of families, the work place and the nation. Members identified with the network include academics, politicians, senior civil servants, trade unionists, religious leaders, lawyers, school principals and retired educators, journalists, social workers, businessmen, and black nationalists (Marshall 1998b: 9; Prescod 1999: 6).

The marginalization of women's interests in Caribbean state systems therefore constitutes multiple restrictions. On one hand women have to contend with persistent prejudices, increasingly misogynous diatribes and levels of violence and, on the other, the contention that men are the ones who are disadvantaged in Caribbean societies. The argument that Caribbean men have been deliberately marginalized by governments and international donor agencies has gained both currency and force in the last decade of this century. This thesis holds that these power-brokers have paid special and unmerited attention to women's needs and interests to the detriment of boys and men (Miller 1991, 1994: 124–31).[6] This erasure of women's interests, even while insisting that it is men who are marginalized, exposes the fundamental issue of gender relations, that is, the issue of unequal distribution of political, social and economic power.

I use the contradictory and discriminatory tendencies of a liberal Caribbean state as a background to undertake the following:

- to demonstrate the relevance of postmodernist feminist theorizing in comprehending the multiple realities of Caribbean women;
- to expose the existence of gender in the Barbadian state's relations with women;
- to destabilize the views held of women's economic agency; and
- to deconstruct the homogenous construct of Caribbean women as oppressed, working-class victims.

I examine relations of gender by interrogating the approaches to economic development used by the Barbadian state. These approaches are represented in the five-year national development plans that are the state's main instruments of development policy.

I deliberately investigate the experiences of women entrepreneurs within and beyond the Barbadian state. Researchers and WID specialists assume women entrepreneurs are a group of women who enjoy economic and social privileges in their relations with the state. Studies of Caribbean women are studies of Caribbean working-class women.[7] The literature shows that past analyses focused on women primarily as sellers of their labor power. The specific areas of research included investigations of women as low-income workers in garment factories or export processing zones (EPZs), as domestic workers, as victims of domestic violence, as single mothers, as

workers in the informal economy, or as miraculous survivors. The mythology surrounding the latter view is particularly painful. While it publicizes the resourcefulness of Caribbean women it pays inadequate attention to the considerable material and psychological costs women absorb in carrying the responsibilities abdicated by the state, men, and in some cases, adult children.[8]

I suggest that this focus is problematic for all Caribbean women for several reasons:

- it conflates the imagery of Caribbean women to that of working-class women as victims;
- it obscures the relations of subordination that women of all socioeconomic classes face;
- it encourages the state to design incremental policies to adjust some conditions of employment;
- it leads to the design of public policy for women as clients of the welfare state and not as equal citizens with competing but relevant demands;
- more important, it permits the state, and women and men, to ignore asymmetric relations of gender.

I use postmodernist feminist theorizing to deconstruct the gender systems influencing approaches to social and economic development. I do this by expanding on and applying a theoretical framework that I have developed around the concept of gender and gender systems to reveal ruptures and disjunctures for women in the political, social and cultural economy of the twentieth-century Caribbean. I investigate the gender systems operating in post-independent states to provide detailed analysis and examples on how Caribbean states have compromised women's interests (Barriteau 1998b).

Before the application of the postmodernist feminist concept of gender in examining the lives of women entrepreneurs, they appear as privileged groups within Caribbean societies. According to Marxist discussions of class structures, these women are 'capitalists': they own and control their means of production; they should enjoy favorable interactions with and within capitalist states (Miliband 1973). The capitalist credentials and aspirations of Caribbean states are unquestionable. Neoclassical economic analyses view these women

as middle class and propertied. They are not members of the working poor. Instead, they are the private owners of productive property (Galbraith 1987: 19). They do not face the same economic, political and social conditions that Caribbean women who are higglers, hawkers, domestic helpers, sex workers, itinerant traders, wage workers, housewives, and the unemployed negotiate and battle with daily.

Yet, as women, they are subjected to asymmetric social relations of gender. The socioeconomic relations of class and race which they experience and occupy may constrain or mitigate how they experience gendered relations. But women entrepreneurs are not excluded from the pervasiveness of its presence and the particular limitations these relations impose.

Analysing women's formal economic activity as owners and managers of capital represents a relatively recent approach in studies of women and development in the Caribbean. Existing research on women's work focuses overwhelmingly on women in the informal economy, as petty traders, factory or domestic workers, or as dependent on men for survival.

This work is the first to examine women's entrepreneurship in the formal economy of an Eastern Caribbean country. Since the birth of the WID field in the early 1970s, there has been a proliferation of research on women in the South. As the discourse became more sophisticated and specific, the works took on a regional and in-depth focus. The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) marked the centering of research on women in the region. It was the first multi-disciplinary project to examine women as subjects in the Anglophone Caribbean but its research questions did not extend to women entrepreneurs. Research on women has continued in the works of Reddock (1994), Bush (1990), Momsen (1993), Beckles (1988, 1989) and Sheperd *et al*. (1995) among many others. However, none of these works has examined the social relations of gender at its intersection with economic development policy in the Caribbean. Research has continued to concentrate primarily on women in the informal economy or as waged workers (Duarte 1989; Harrison 1991; Freeman 1998; Trotz 1998). Roslyn Lynch (1995: 4) analyses women as workers in the formal economy, while McKay's research (1993) examines the experiences of a small group of women who own or operate small hotels in Negril, Jamaica.

Gendered development planning

The development goals which post-colonial/independent states pursue are influenced by pragmatic and conservative accommodation of successive waves of globalization in the international political economy and their permutations in the Caribbean. However, I am not interested in constructing a deterministic or reductionist argument:

> I theorize 'post colonial' very differently from conventional interpretations. Rather than focus exclusively on the complications and continuities of the colonial legacy I hold states and governments accountable for gendered features of civic and political life that continue and are sustained beyond the formal dismantling of the colonial relationship. In other words I see potentially transformative spaces between what is bequeathed and what continues to be practiced. I want to make visible the new political agency of state systems that are overlooked especially as these relate to transforming relations of gender.
>
> (Barriteau 1998b: 194)

If, as Don Marshall argues, that Caribbean, 'State power has proved quite an unreliable instrument for sustaining and expanding the conditions for robust capital accumulation' (Marshall 1998a: 1), the Caribbean state experiences no such weaknesses nor unreliability in the instruments and policies it deploys to constrain women's full political and economic citizenship.

Therefore, I aim to establish and demonstrate the necessity of examining the social relations of gender in the discourses on Caribbean political economy. Focusing on the experiences of women, who are in many ways made powerless by the workings of these relations, facilitates a re-examination of macroeconomic and social policies that are supposed to be gender neutral but are not. I situate the centrality of gender as an analytical category in investigating the lives of all women in Caribbean societies. I am specifically interested in examining the activities of state systems to reveal how the state relates differently to women and men as economic and political citizens.

The relevance of gender both as an analytical category and a social relation as class and race is well established in feminist studies of the political economy of Asia (Ong 1987; Wee and Heyzer 1995),

Africa (Parpart and Staudt 1989; Parpart 1995; McFadden 1998), Latin America (Rios-Gonzalez 1990; Gideon 1999) and international comparative studies (Nash and Fernadez-Kelly 1983; Sen and Grown 1987; Charlton *et al*. 1989; Parpart and Staudt 1989; Chhachhi and Pittin 1996). In the Anglophone Caribbean it is a growing field helped by the contributions of several Caribbean feminists and Caribbeanists (Green 1994; Safa 1995; Safa and Antrobus 1992; Yelvington 1993; Pearson 1993).

However, none of these studies specifically examines relations of gender in the context of economic development planning in the Anglophone Caribbean. Don Marshall's recent study on Caribbean political economy, NAFTA and regional developmentalism (Marshall 1998a) pays no attention to gender as an analytical category nor as a social relation even though the creation of NAFTA has had particular implications for women's labor in the Caribbean and the Americas. An edited volume of essays on *Conflict, Peace and Development in the Caribbean* also saw no need to investigate how relations of gender complicate these issues in the region (Beruff *et al*. 1991).

As we enter the twenty-first century Caribbean feminists cannot afford to allow regional governments to escape the responsibility and accountability of addressing relations of gender as relations of power. The discourse on gender and development in the region is now being manipulated to limit a necessary, continuing examination of the multiple, contradictory and often harsh realities of women's lives. Unless this is reversed, Caribbean women will continue to experience increasing pressures to have their societal relevance defined in terms of traditional reproductive roles. Misogynists in the region are determined to ensure that the twenty-first century is even more repressive than the nineteenth for Caribbean women. This book attempts to expose and alter that agenda.

The twenty-first century does not look promising for Caribbean women. The social relations of gender are at their most hostile and unstable for women than at any other time in this century. Despite significant, overdue improvements in material relations of gender, ideological gender relations continue to construct and police gender identities for women as inferior, second-class citizens whose long-overdue, accretive gains must now be rolled back or at least contained.

In Chapter 1, I contextualize and introduce the Caribbean setting at the end of the twentieth century. I map out the political culture

and demographic features of the region, discuss the features of Caribbean political economy, and describe the objectives of my analysis.

Chapter 2 introduces the interaction of the social relations of gender with the political economy and contextualizes Caribbean gender systems. I present a model of gender systems and reveal how critical changes in the material and ideological dimensions of gender are reinforced or complicated by changes in the regional and international political economy.

In Chapter 3 I examine women and gender relations in the twentieth century. I develop a typology of Caribbean gender systems and uncover its operations throughout the major periods in the socioeconomic and political life of the region. I conclude the chapter by establishing the contemporary gender system influencing the social, economic, and political context in which women exist.

Chapter 4 critiques the institutional mechanisms established by Caribbean states to formulate and implement national policies on women. I highlight the confusion and fragility of state mechanisms dealing with women's affairs and demonstrate that GAD strategies as presently implemented do not represent an improvement of the WID strategies of the 1980s. The analysis delineates the turning point when these strategies were abandoned or are on the verge of being abandoned for supposedly gender-neutral strategies that are in themselves grossly misunderstood.

Chapter 5 substantiates and extends the theoretical arguments made in Chapters 2 and 3 by investigating the construct and effect of gender in the development policy of Barbados, the quintessential example of a post-independent Caribbean state. I use this investigation to advance the theoretical strengths of postmodernist feminist analysis. Gender is used analytically to expose the particular ways in which women have been constructed in the discourse of development, and incorporated into state planning. It captures instances of these gendered, imbalanced, power relations. I discuss the centrality given to population control through regulating women's fertility as a goal of development. It demonstrates how Barbadian governments have targeted population control through the regulation and control of women's fertility. I show how the state uses and reconstructs certain gender roles to achieve its objectives, at the same time reinforcing gender asymmetries. A gender-neutral policy would take as

its goal altering disadvantageous constructs rather than reinforcing them.

In Chapter 6, I use gender analysis to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs in the post-colonial-independent Barbadian state. The chapter provides empirical evidence to question generalizations about women's economic activities. More significantly, I use the findings to argue for a reinvestigation of power relations between women and restructuring, independent welfare states.

Finally, Chapter 7 examines the implications of the analysis for rethinking development policy and recognizing the enduring character of relations of gender in the institutions and mechanisms that the state deploys in its bureaucratic capacity. I expose the limitations of existing concepts and argue for revising the theories claiming to analyse issues affecting women in developing countries. I conclude with recommendations for advancing gender justice in Caribbean societies grounded in reflective practice and commitment to multiple and differing levels of struggle with implications for feminist analyses, practice and policy decisions.

2

Theorizing the State and Gender Systems in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

> This treatment of the female as an invisible presence; that is made absent when she is present, is a continuing factor in the political and intellectual backwardness of our institutions.
>
> (Lamming 1992b: 16a)

> … in the situation as it exists in the West Indies a heavy burden is placed upon the women, a heavier burden than most people think reasonable and desirable. But for a proper assessment of the situation mere expressed evaluations are not enough.
>
> (Brathwaite 1957: 547)

The contradictions which Lamming identifies isolate one effect of the social relations of gender for women in the Anglophone Caribbean. What he describes as an invisible presence is instead the constructed marginalization of women. In his 1953 novel, Lamming captures the complexities of life in colonial Barbados (Lamming 1986). He creates a vivid, gritty account of the intersections of race, class and gender in a British colony in the Caribbean. Ostensibly devoted to portraying 'the three-dimensional class world' of Barbadian society governed by 'class prejudices as much as by racial animosities' (Lewis 1968: 242), Lamming acknowledges the effects of gender relations in Barbadian life. As he analyses 'the ambiguous process of defining personal and communal identity in Barbadian society' (Cooper 1985: 3), of demarcating the public and private domains 'of tiny geographical distances and immense social distances'

(Lewis 1968: 242), Lamming reveals an awareness of the creation and presence of gendered identities.[1] The ubiquitous woman-as-mother, as general worker, characterizes colonial Caribbean society and defines contemporary social relations.[2] This continuing structuring of women's relevance only through their reproductive roles is one source of the complications women experience as citizens in the post-independent Caribbean.

Lamming records women's visibility in the private dichotomized sphere of the urban, village household. Over a quarter-century after the British colonial relationship formally ended, Lamming returns to this dichotomy and addresses the themes of presence and invisibility for Caribbean women. He recognizes and confronts the gendering of Caribbean social relations and how these continue to influence political and social conditions affecting women in Caribbean society (Lamming 1992a: 14–15). This treatment of women, ever present within our societies but continuously pressured into a constructed type of invisibility, persists unabated.

The institutions and activities of the state assume a central importance in Caribbean countries. Independence symbolizes a break with European colonial domination. Citizens believe in the institutions of the state but hold civilian supremacy as a central democratic principle that distinguishes Caribbean states from that of Latin America (Dominiquez 1998: 18). Democratic political competition and Keynesian welfare state systems are valued and respected by both civil society and governments in the region. Citizens believe political independence represents attempts to end all oppressive relations associated with foreign rule (Beckles 1990). Citizens of newly independent countries believe their states will establish new practices of justice, equality, inclusiveness and respect for the rights of all citizens. In the Anglophone Caribbean there is no history of dictatorships and trampling of political rights even though there may be infringements nibbling at the parameters of these principles.

Thirteen Caribbean states gained political independence from Britain between 1962 and 1983[3] and in the early 1970s formed the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM). Several of the smaller territories continue to maintain variations of politically dependent relations with Britain but share with the independent countries a similar orientation and ideology on gender issues.[4] Successive government administrations introduced some progressive changes in

the way their respective states relate to women. Starting in the 1970s, reflective of global trends/directions these governments introduced legislative and administrative measures to redefine and regularize some of the juridical and administrative aspects of these relations. Between 1974 and 1993 they established national machineries ostensibly to oversee the integration of women into national development strategies as shown in Table 2.1. The CARICOM countries ratified the 1967 United Nations Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 39). They assume Caribbean constitutional provisions that proclaim that every person is entitled to 'the fundamental rights and freedom of the individual whatever his [sic] race, place of origins, political opinion, color, creed or sex'[5] guaranteed equality for

Table 2.1 Caribbean Countries and Establishment of National Machineries for Women

Country	*Date of independence*	*Date of national machinery*
Jamaica	1962	1974
Trinidad and Tobago[(a)]	1962	1979
Barbados	1966	1976
Guyana[(b)]	1966	1981
Grenada	1973	1979
St Christopher and Nevis	1983	1986
Dominica	1978	1980
St Lucia	1978	1986
St Vincent and the Grenadines	1979	1985
Antigua and Barbuda	1981	1981
Montserrat	[(c)]	1982
British Virgin Islands	[(c)]	1992
Turks and Caicos	[(c)]	1999
Bahamas	1973	1981
Anguilla	[(c)]	1982
Belize	1981	1979
Cayman Islands	[(c)]	1995

Notes: [(a)] Became a republic in 1976; [(b)] became a republic in 1980; [(c)] British dependencies.

women and men within the state. Tracey Robinson states, 'the written constitutions of the Commonwealth Caribbean all contain a chapter devoted to the protection of "Fundamental rights" and Freedoms … it is often assumed that Caribbean constitutions embrace the principle of equality for men and women. The sections are routinely cited in reports from Caribbean countries on the status of women to illustrate that women's rights are viewed as fundamental rights and freedoms within the constitutions' (Robinson 1999: 1–2).

Caribbean governments' actions to correct some of the inequalities for women in the post-colonial state permit some observations. These governments admit that the colonial state did not function neutrally on behalf of all women, children and men. However, it is inaccurate to assume the measures adopted or introduced since independence have corrected whatever inequalities exist for women.

Basic inequalities still exist for women as citizens within Caribbean states. These inequalities are partly due to the gendered nature of state institutions and partly due to the resilience of ideological relations of gender. Gendered relations between women and the state have not been evaluated. Even more damaging, a focus on women is now unfashionable, outdated and unnecessary. The latest, inclusive strategy for social transformation, is bringing the men back in or, phrased as a social challenge, it becomes 'the problem of male marginality'.

While these measures introduced by governments are commendable, they only partially address the myriad social, economic and political conditions which women face as secondary economic and political citizens. The post-independent initiatives represent initial steps to incorporate women's labor into modernization strategies of development. What it also did, but perhaps did not intend to, was to recognize the agency of women. The desire to use women's labor but leave their subordinate status intact is another source of the contradictory tensions around women and full citizenship. Unless the relationship between the state and women is problematized and the current assumptions of equality, neutrality, and citizenship exposed as flawed, the state will have no impetus to alter the discriminatory practices that serve to marginalize women politically, socially and economically.

Theorizing gender systems in the Caribbean[6]

A distinguishing feature of twentieth-century social relations is the rupturing of traditional relations of gender inherited from the post-slavery, post-indentureship, nineteenth-century Caribbean (Barriteau 1998b: 186). Examining gender systems in the twentieth century reveals this historical baggage to contemporary gender relations (Brereton 1998; Beckles 1998). The autochthonous state continuously contests, challenges and manipulates the gender identities of women to serve state interests while simultaneously wishing to hold intact the fundamental belief in women as a second-class citizen. I reveal the paradox between extending full citizen ship rights to women as a means of maximizing their input into the political, economic, social and cultural economies of states while clinging to the enduring legacy that women are intrinsically subordinate to men and should be. It is as if the states have adopted an apartheid strategy in dealing with equality in relations of gender. Women have legal permission to exist but they must show their 'passbook'.

Women's lives and feminist scholarship and practice have seriously challenged the inherited gender identity of 'woman' as a barren ontological and epistemological category. Through a combination of indigenous and external pressures, evolving states have altered inequality of access to its resources for women. It has attempted to remove, amend or reform the legal inferiority or dependency assigned to women in constitutions and laws. However, as Tracey Robinson demonstrates, when these laws are interpreted they frequently reinforce the ideological view of women's rights as secondary to that of men (Robinson 1999a).

By questioning the prevailing myths about Caribbean women and by prioritizing the multiple, complex realities of our lives feminist scholars have destabilized the definition of masculinity as omniscient and omnipresent even as this definition seeks to escape any commonality with the concept of the feminine. This is a significant breakthrough. I welcome, support and respect the dialogue on men looking at men's issues even though I harbor serious reservations about the direction and tone of some of the dialogue (Barriteau forthcoming).

The origin of the men's movement in the Caribbean is a response to Caribbean feminism. Feminist scholarship and practice have

forced men to examine themselves as located, constructed, beings. Changes in the ideological and especially the material relations of gender prove existing constructions of masculinity and femininity are unacceptable. The challenge is to ensure that the misogynist movement does not enforce a return to an artificial but powerful, idealized notion of Victorian womanhood.

Gender and gender systems defined

In the Anglophone Caribbean the concept of gender is used in popular discussions, the WID literature and the media, yet there is obvious confusion as to what is meant by gender. As it relates to feminist analyses of women's experiences of relations of domination the concept is misused and abused daily. At one level gender has come to stand erroneously as a trendier synonym for the biological differences and signifiers implied by the word 'sex'. Now, on almost all questionnaires there is the mandatory category 'gender' in which one is supposed to reply male or female. A popular radio competition in Barbados told listeners to 'send your answers in with your name, age and gender'. Errol Miller writes, 'Also there is justification for exposing all students to all areas of the curriculum without reference to the gender of the student' (Miller 1994: 127).

Unfortunately these are simplistic interpretations. They satisfy commentators who want to ride the crest of an apparent awareness of gender without wanting to trouble themselves to pursue the extensive scholarship on this aspect of feminist analysis (Flax 1987; Scott 1986; Chodorow 1995; Nicholson 1994; Barriteau 1992; Mohammed 1994).

In another common interpretation gender is used in the grammatical sense of masculine gender, feminine gender and neuter gender. At least there is an historical explanation for this usage (Baron 1986:90). Rosi Braidotti reminds us that, 'Gender is not originally a feminine concept. It has a previous identity, derived from research in biology, linguistics and psychology' (Braidotti 1991: 8).

Feminist investigations and insights on the pervasiveness of the social relations of gender reconceptualized the meaning of the term to refer to a complex system of power differentials played out in the different experiences of women and men. Mary Hawkesworth notes that, despite its linguistic origins, feminist scholars adopted the

concept, 'to distinguish culturally specific characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity from biological features' (Hawkesworth 1997: 650).

In examining how modernizing Caribbean states relate to women, I develop and use three interrelated aspects of the concept of gender. These are:

- the construct of relations of gender and gender systems;
- the methodologies of gender analysis;
- the distinguishing features of gender systems.

I define gender as referring to complex systems of personal and social relations through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to, or are allocated status, power and material resources within society (Barriteau 1994). My definition recognizes that there is an important personal dimension to gender as well as the cultural and the political. I support Nancy Chodorow's arguments for the relevance of understanding the contributions of personal meanings to gendered subjectivity (Chodorow 1994). However, in this analysis I emphasize the political, economic and cultural dimensions of gender. I highlight the interaction of the political, economic and ideological dimensions of gender in the arena of the state and the economy since this is an area that is largely under-theorized in Caribbean analyses.

I use postmodernist feminist insights to define a concept of gender that sees women as socially constructed beings subject to asymmetrical gender relations (Flax 1990a). In this definition, women cannot be understood ontologically or epistemologically through androcentric perspectives. The socially constructed relations of gender do not explain women in relation to an autonomous, unproblematized, category of 'men', and it rejects the definition of women as deficient men. This is a recurring and consistent construct in Western political philosophy (Flax 1992a: 453). From a postmodernist feminist perspective, both women and men experience relations of gender although they experience these from radically different locations of personal, social, economic, and political power.

Gender relations constitute the continuous social, political, economic, cultural and psychological expressions and interactions of the material and ideological aspects of a gender system. Gender relations encode and often mask unequal power relations between

women and men and between women and the state. In other words, often what is understood as, 'That is how Caribbean man stay,' or 'Is a woman what you expect?' is really a way of reducing the power dynamics of gender to ascribed roles. The extent to which the material and ideological dimensions of gender relations reinforce each other are frequently ignored. The extent to which prevailing ideologies augment or affect women's access to status, power and material resources is often unexamined.

An unequal gender relation is a relation of *domination*. Its inequality is rooted in an asymmetry of power that has differential material and ideological outcomes. This point is not clearly understood in popular or academic discourses on gender. So that when commentators grasp that there are gender biases within a particular policy or a set of social interactions, they assume that all that is required to change this is 'new socialization in schools and homes'. At times benign and at times inane prescriptions follow these simplistic analyses. They do not recognize that power and domination are at the roots of gender inequality and these need to be confronted and acknowledged as a first step to overcoming gender biases.

It does not necessarily mean that because contemporary gender relations are relations of domination, that those experiencing that domination are permanently victims. Women are not automatically or intrinsically victims – neither are men. The flip side of Errol Miller's 'Male marginalisation thesis' and the backlash debate it has fueled, is that it recasts Caribbean men as the victims of a conspiracy among Caribbean feminists, elite male power-brokers and international development institutions (Miller 1994). Miller's arguments have become biblical pronunciations by the Men's Movement.[7] Instead of being permanent victims Caribbean women, like women elsewhere, experience conditions of inequality and asymmetric power relations that can and should be altered.

By gendered relations I refer to the asymmetry in the contemporary social relations of gender that generally inscribe inequalities for women materially and ideologically. It places one socially constituted being at a disadvantage because of the absence of gender neutrality. Gender neutrality assumes an impartiality towards women and men in a social environment in whatever issues are at stake.

We limit an understanding of gender relations to the level of interpersonal relations between women and men and the operations

of gender ideologies. We do not view economic or political relations between women and the state, or men and the state as also relations of gender. We tend to privatize gender relations, to confine and relegate discussions of gender to discussions relating to the private sphere of society. This reflects a deep-seated, societal desire to view relations of gender as external to the scope of a state's relations with its citizens.

Most analyses of gender relations concentrate on the construct of gender ideologies and the processes of gender socialization (Brodber 1982; Barrow 1986; Brown and Chevannes 1995; Besson 1993, 1998; Momsen 1998; Payne 1998; Leo-Rhynie 1998; Mohammed 1998). This research provides necessary insights into the ideological dimensions of gender systems. Frequently what is missing is a focus on the simultaneity of changes in the material and ideological relations of gender. When a state removes discriminatory wage differentials between male and female workers it alters the material aspects of gender. As part of the thrust to modernize the economy, governments in the post-colonial Caribbean may have opened up women's access to public resources, but they have done so without paying sufficient attention to the need for changes in the ideological dimensions of gender, or how changes in the material relations reproduce and complicate new ideological relations.

To support a feminist epistemological project and to advance political agency, feminist scholarship cannot afford to have the concept of gender reduced to a descriptive term that modifies other words. We should not attempt to do gender analysis without a commitment to understanding, investigating and explaining the multiple relations of domination that women experience. The social relations of gender intersect with other oppressive relations such as those that arise from race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual preferences and any other social relation that has the potential for individuals and groups to dominate one other. Henrietta Moore correctly argues that the concept of gender has no meaning beyond its interactions with other social relations (Moore 1994: 15).

The methodologies of gender analysis

The second aspect of gender I prioritize refers to an analytical frame with its own conceptual tools and techniques, its own

methodologies that allow us to investigate and question social conditions affecting the constituted beings 'women' and 'men'. As an analytical category, gender has been pivotal to advancing feminist scholarship. Mary Hawkesworth categorizes the multiple and varied contributions of the concept analytically to:

> repudiate biological determinism; analyze the social organizations of relationships between men and women; investigate the reification of human differences; conceptualize the semiotics of the body, sex, and sexuality; explain the distribution of burdens and benefits in society; illustrate the micro techniques of power; illuminate the structure of the psyche; and account for individual identity and aspiration.
>
> (Hawkesworth 1997: 650)[8]

The several components of the concept of gender cannot be understood in isolation from each other. Jane Flax (1990a) and Joan Scott (1986) indicate how our understandings of particular social worlds and histories and the perceived differences between the sexes will change when gender is used as an analytical category.

Deploying gender as an analytical category changes what is asked in research. Nevertheless, many aspects of that analytical shift to a methodology of gender needs to be problematized and theorized if we are to minimize the conceptual and practical confusion that now bedevils the use of the concept (Barriteau forthcoming). Abandoning the practice of explaining women's multiple, complex and continuously contested experiences through male-centered approaches opens up a fuller, richer focus on the heterogeneity of 'woman' the constructed being.

The distinguishing features of Caribbean gender systems

Post-colonial Caribbean states inherited a set of social relations influenced by the Enlightenment discourses of liberalism (Barriteau 1994: 110). Gender systems constitute a significant aspect of that inheritance. I define a gender system as comprising a network of power relations with two principal dimensions: one ideological and the other material. These dimensions map out the broad contours of

gender systems. The material dimension reveals access to and the allocation of power, status and resources within a given community or society. The material dimension exposes how women and men gain access to, or are allocated, the material and non-material resources within a state and society. Feminists' analyses of the material relations of gender make visible the distribution of economic and political power and material resources (Folbre 1994; Barriteau 1996; Safa 1995; Sparr 1994).

The ideological dimension involves the construct of masculinity and femininity. It indicates how a given society's notion of masculinity and femininity are constructed and maintained. The ways in which masculinity and femininity are constructed reveal the gender ideologies operating in the state and society. The statements of public officials, the bureaucratic and social practices of institutions and individuals, and representations in popular culture provide evidence of what is expected of, or appropriate for, the socially constituted beings, '*women*' and '*men*'.

Gender ideologies reveal what is appropriate or expected of the socially constituted beings 'women' and 'men'. They also expose how individuals create gender identities. The social expectations and the personal constructions of gender identities form the core of gender ideologies within a particular society. These ideologies establish the sexually-differentiated, socially-constructed boundaries for 'males' and 'females'.

These boundaries are complex and interact often in unexpected ways. They encode differing penalties, rewards and outcomes for women and men who transgress them. At times, these boundaries are rigid and overt and the penalties to women for attempting to subvert them are great. Subverting societal boundaries that encode gendered relations of power invoke the greatest penalties for women in patriarchal societies. At other times the boundaries for the expression of appropriate gender identities are more nuanced. At times, societies may permit women to take on responsibilities essentially constructed as masculine as long as these do not produce a corresponding shift in gendered relations of power.

The gender contestations in the Caribbean at the start of the twenty-first century are between an inherited, socially maintained gender identity for women and the personal subjectivities, experiences, wants and needs women bring to this identity. Caribbean

women are no longer content to be told who they are or should be. Rhoda Reddock's research supports the view that Caribbean women may have been dissatisfied with externally reproduced representations of themselves for a long time but lacked the mechanisms for effective, collective resistance (Reddock 1998). The mechanisms for resistance have now changed. Women can now more easily reject ideas of womanhood viewed as alien to their needs and interests. It is irrelevant whether it is the majority of women or a feminist minority doing this resistance, because rejection of the phrase 'the proper role for women in society is…' destabilizes the belief that women need the permission of others to exist.

The maneuvers of the ideological and the material dimensions of a gender system disclose whether it is just or unjust. In a just gender system there would be no asymmetries of access to, or allocations of, status, power and resources in a society. There would be no hierarchies of gender in the concepts of the masculine and the feminine. In an unjust gender system there is unequal distribution of, and access to, resources and power. Figure 2.1 illustrates the dimensions and interactions of a gender system.

When I examine gender ideologies and the unbalanced distribution of resources of power, status and material means, I conclude that post-colonial Caribbean states continue to function with unjust gender systems (Barriteau 1998b). Contemporary gender systems are unjust because there are inequalities built into, and continuously reinforced in, their structures and practices. These inequalities occur in both the ideological and material dimensions of gender systems. Furthermore gender systems in the Caribbean are unjust for women.

The interactions and operations of gender systems are messy, contingent and are continually contested and negotiated. Gender systems, like other social structures and relations, can and do change over time. Particular interest groups of the state and civil society will try to keep certain features fixed or constant, and try to guarantee outcomes. The Men's Movement in Barbados is trying to ensure that the post-independent state remains a constellation of modernizing, masculinist, patriarchal, state power. However, women and men's personal and collective contestations, their challenges to existing relations of power, and attempts to change those relations will spawn unintended outcomes. The representations of gender ideologies and

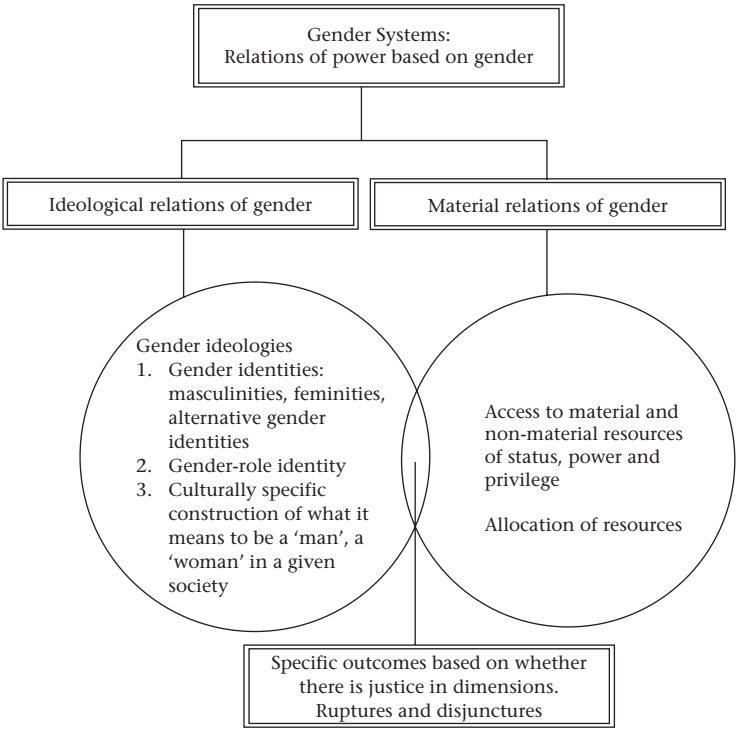

Figure 2.1 Gender Systems: Relations of Power Based on Gender

Notes:
1. Gender relations interact and are mediated and complicated by other social relations.
2. The separation is analytical. In social interactions they reinforce or negate each other. Interventions of the state are primarily aimed at material relations of gender, e.g. reform legislation, equality of access to education and health care. However, there are immediate consequences in ideological relations of gender from opening up the public domain to women.

Source: Barriteau 1998b: 193.

the ways in which women and men gain access to or are allocated resources of power, status and material means are also constantly changing.

At differing periods states may seek to act in the best interests of varying constituencies of citizens, but this is insufficient to mediate unequal gender relations. The policies governments implement may

reproduce existing gender asymmetries, they may intensify them, decrease them, or capture them for other state uses but they are not and will not be gender neutral. In order to move towards gender neutrality states must confront the hierarchies created with the construct of the masculine and the feminine. It is a construct that influences the distribution of resources and encodes relations of domination. States should recognize the nature of the unevenness in their gender systems in the same way they take stock of their political and economic systems and attempt to address imbalances as defined by state interests. If states refuse to do this then state policies will be gendered. Unevenness in contemporary gender systems that are ignored produce state policy that is gendered and expose gendered power relations.

In the post-independent period governments have introduced redistributive measures to facilitate their own goals which, at the same time, give women access to public resources. This indicates the extent to which structural and material aspects of gender systems can and do change.

Examining these measures also indicate that governments have concentrated on altering the material aspects of gender relations while de-emphasizing the ideological aspects and the interconnectedness of both. Researchers generally analyse gender systems through ideological constructs. The challenge is to forge an inclusive analysis. Caribbean women persistently challenge prevailing gender ideologies. One way we do this is by reconstructing new gender identities. This is a serious and welcome source of ruptures and change in our gender systems. A goal of feminism is to transform unjust gender systems.

When a state exists with an unjust gender system it cannot have gender neutral policies. Gender-based powers permeate all social relations. On this basis it becomes difficult to argue that some state policies really reflect benign neglect. If these policies are indifferent to existing gender relations then the effect of these policies is to allow these situations to continue. For example, if racism is rampant within a state and state policies are indifferent to the asymmetric power relations racism maintains, then those policies permit racism to flourish. Similarly, if state policies do not recognize the unevenness of gender relations these policies are not neutral, they are gendered.

The post-independent state and the Enlightenment legacy

The ideological foundation of the Caribbean state is built on the Enlightenment discourse of liberalism with all its inherent, embedded contradictions for women. The contemporary institutions and ongoing practices of the state are stubbornly and, say some critics, proudly maintained according to the tenets of liberal political and economic theory (Lewis 1968: 226–56).

Some of the foundational features of this discourse are:

1 the belief that rationality is the mechanism or means by which individuals achieve autonomy;
2 the notion that an individual and citizen is a male household head;
3 the separation and differentiation of society into the private and the public, the world of dependence, the family, and the world of freedom, the state and work;
4 the gendering of that differentiation so that women are posed in opposition to civil society, to civilization.

(Flax 1990b: 6)

These features became significant in the post-emancipation period. The notion that an individual and citizen is a male household head had no relevance for enslaved black women and men since they were equal in their inequality under slavery (Mair 1974). However, European gender ideologies fed by the Enlightenment discourse of liberalism introduced a differentiation in the material and ideological relations of gender for women. After emancipation that ideology promoted the notion of the male breadwinner and the dependent housewife. It also generated subsequent psychic and material burdens for women and men.

It introduced discrimination in land settlement schemes for women and the treatment of their labor as supplementary to that of men (French 1995: 126). The critical point is not that nineteenth-century British colonial policy took a vicious, misogynist turn; rather, it is that women would now experience state policies informed by Enlightenment thought that, whether originating in Marxism or Liberalism, viewed women's labor as secondary or supplementary (Folbre 1986; Marx 1967: 372).

In liberal ideology the public sphere is the world of the economy, civil society and the state (Barriteau 1998a: 443–5).[9] Although Jurgen Habermas's theorizing of the public sphere is unsatisfactory from a feminist perspective, his establishment of three analytically distinct arenas of the public is useful (Habermas 1989; Fraser 1994: 199). The public sphere is therefore the realm of the formal and informal economy, public discourse, rationality, civic responsibility, freedom and equality, rights, and citizenship. Nancy Fraser's warning not to conflate the arenas of the public, or to be tempted to view these distinctions as merely a theoretical issue, is relevant here. She notes that there are practical political consequences to any conflation. The differentiation enables us to determine whether gender issues are being subjected to the logic of the market or the state in its administrative bureaucratic function (Fraser 1994: 198). In asking how the Caribbean state relates to women, not only do we need an understanding of the different arenas of the public, but we need to recognize the fictional nature of the public/private divide, question the purposes this divide serves, and expose how the issues of the public and private in fact criss-cross and transcend each sphere continuously.

The private is the realm of domesticity, and for women a pivotal site for relations of domination. According to liberal political theory it comprises the world of the family, conjugal and sexual relations. The private sphere is part of civil society but it is incorporated differently. It is theorized as separate from the public world of the economy, public discourse and the state. Ruth Lister maintains that one of the achievements of feminism is that it, 'has succeeded in shifting the boundaries between public and private on a number of important issues such as domestic violence and marital rape' (Lister 1995: 10).

Historically the private domain has been a complex, contested location for women. Liberal ideology structured the private domain in a hierarchical manner. Women were subordinate to men, conceptually and practically. They were not considered household heads irrespective of the real dynamics of household decision-making,[10] or in the context of Caribbean realities, the very real absence of adult male partners or spouses.

The organization of domestic life is a site where women generally experience some of the more punitive aspects of gender relations that are expressed in domination and a denial of agency: but it

occurs not only there. Policy-makers have come to accept feminist investigations that domestic relations for many women have largely been problematic and in some cases, life threatening (World Bank 1995: 21–42). What they have yet to admit is that the gender ideologies that underpin women's inequalities in domestic life also exist and recur in the public sites such as the economy and political participation.

Adverse gender relations transcend this inherited dichotomy of liberalism. In the public/private divide, liberal ideology theorizes and locates women in the private sphere and locates our activities, contributions and relevance to societies as belonging there. My central thesis is that this public/private divide is at the core of many problems which women experience in liberal societies because, not only is civil society divided into these two spheres, but the private is made subordinate and inferior to the public.

Liberalism also assumes an equality of all participants in the public so that, even though liberal theorists admit women may be subordinate to men in the private, these theorists assume women participate as equals in the public once the state creates access. This is not true. The hierarchies embedded in the organization of domestic life follow women into public spaces. When they attempt to reject these, by articulating the equality implied in the core assumptions of liberalism, women meet with resistance and condemnation. This characterizes the current climate in the Caribbean.

Of the two competing traditions within liberalism – freedom and equality – post-independent Caribbean states have selected equality as a basis for redefining their relations with women, even though freedom is the most prized value in our political culture (Dominiquez 1998). The egalitarian impulse has contributed to states' attempts to undo the structural conditions of inequality built into the fabric of social life for women. States have done this primarily by removing structural barriers for women to participate in the economy and the polity. By so doing they have attempted to give to women an equality in the public sphere that both the state and society deny women in the private. Ideologically, and in terms of daily experiences, Caribbean women remain tethered to sexual and gender differences.

The concept of equality of participation and relevance for women in the public, and hierarchical subordinate relations in domestic life is another root cause of contradictions in contemporary gender

systems. The post-independent Caribbean state has gradually opened up the public for women. The state attempts and successfully manipulates and alters material relations of gender while attempting to ignore, or hold constant, the ideological relations of gender. The state alters material relations of gender since these affect the market and, therefore, economic growth and development as defined by its model of development – the modernization paradigm. States seek to maintain ideological relations of gender as they are. They assume these relations operate primarily in the private sphere and therefore benefit maintaining the *status quo* or the structures of domestic life.

The Enlightenment legacy remained unchallenged when the political status of Caribbean countries changed from British colonies to independent nations (Howard 1989; Thomas 1988; Lewis 1968). That is not the core of women's problems: the difficulties occur in the hierarchies created in the dichotomies of Enlightenment thought. Not only is civil society divided into a public and private but the private is subordinate and inferior to the public. Rationality and the use of reason becomes the means by which individuals free themselves of the constraints of domestic life and prepare for a public life of service, civic duty, and freedom. As developed in Kant's work, the use of reason marks the beginning of autonomy and the preparation for public life. But Kant excludes women from the use of reason. He assumes we are too embedded in domestic life. In Enlightenment thought women represent the family and sexual life, not the cerebral qualities of public virtues Enlightenment thought poses for women. As Flax argues, 'although women may be "hostile" towards civilization both our exclusion from parts of it and our labor within its necessary "outside" continue to be an ironic necessity' (Flax 1990c: 7).

The state and modernization strategies

Post-independent, Caribbean states' primary area of intervention for women is in material relations of gender, in the public arena of the economy, but in highly circumscribed ways. Historically, states do not take the lead in public discourse on women. When state institutions become involved they are usually drawn into dialogue and interventions by women's and other interest groups. One aspect of the changes in late twentieth-century gender relations is that several Caribbean states actively promote a dialogue on men's rights.

As the economic expression of liberal ideology, capitalism requires a critical mass of both skilled and unskilled workers – women and men. 'The industrialization by invitation' variant of development required cheap, easily manipulated sources of labor. In the Caribbean that translated into women workers. As the foundation of capitalist production the market requires equality of access to whatever labor is necessary. States investing in maintaining the market will also invest in enhancing women's participation in the market to serve the goals of the state.

Caribbean states make a key assumption that is flawed. Governments assume they can modernize Caribbean economies by following the conventional approaches to development, and retain a pre-modernization cultural/ideological purity of rigid roles for women and men. At some point ruptures will appear, and they have. States cannot willfully alter material relations of gender and assume ideological relations will remain static. I maintain that the deep divisions in relations of gender are the rupturing of ideological relations of gender.

By the project of modernity, I refer to the practices of politically-independent Caribbean states to embrace a distinct set of policies, practices and discourses dedicated to achieving the 'Enlightenment promise'. This promise of a greater understanding and mastery of nature, the progress of reason in human affairs, and steady, sustainable development in the quality of life (Hall *et al*. 1992: 2), has lingered since the earliest colonial encounters. The idea of modernity embraces a linear view of progress. In the political economic expression of modernity, states are committed to pursuing modernization theories of development. A bourgeois liberal state structure expresses the socio-political dimension (Barker *et al*. 1994: 15).

Modernization strategies to development are practically expressed in five-year development plans. Caribbean governments repeatedly affirm their main development objectives as a commitment to developing the economic capacity of the country. Clive Thomas identifies five major elements of economic policies pursued throughout the Caribbean since independence (Thomas 1988: 269). These are:

- policies that are purely technocratic, pragmatic and rational;[11]
- acceptance of colonial and early nationalist strategies with a heavy reliance on imported capital;

- the promotion of political and social stability as a vital necessity;
- the introduction of measures to facilitate the inflow of foreign capital; and
- careful and continual upgrading of the social and physical infrastructure.

(Thomas 1988: 269–71)

An examination of development plans exposes the means by which gendered relations are use to filter 'women' out of development policy.

British colonial policy formally introduced modernization development strategies to the Caribbean in the 1940s in the aftermath of widespread social and economic upheavals in the late 1930s. Our history reveals that the Caribbean/West Indian interaction with Europe is one of the best examples of the unfolding of the European defined project of modernity (Beckles 1990). The Caribbean region itself is the oldest colonized sphere in the contemporary world (Momsen 1998: 118; Besson 1998: 133). In the post-independent period many of the policies governments introduced that benefited women were deliberate attempts to create a modern labor force for expanded integration into a rapidly restructuring, capitalist, world economy. Nevertheless, these policies also generated ameliorative, remedial measures in the material dimensions of gender. Governments articulated these as part of the post-colonial/post-independent project of modernity.

The phenomenon of the post-independent state actively introducing measures that generate benefits for women provokes contradictory and paradoxical outcomes. The state intervenes to free women for expanded gender-defined roles in a modernizing political economy. In the process, women gain by becoming empowered in ways that enable them to further challenge oppressive gender ideologies and identities. Compounding these developments is the fact that the strategies the state employs destabilizes unequal gender relations through material means. One of the consequences is that women have further mechanisms to contest unequal ideological relations inscribed in hierarchical gender identities and roles.

The material changes the state oversees are generated by a combination of factors: changes in the international political economy combined, in some cases, with pressure by donor governments, the

activism of the Caribbean's women's movement (Wieringa 1995), and a reluctant admission by some governments that women have been and continue to be penalized in their public as well as private lives.

A lesser known example of a donor government attempting to force changes in women's access to resources in developing countries is the modification of the US Foreign Assistance Act in 1974. The US was one of the first industrialized countries to officially reorganize women's roles in the development process. The Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act required that US foreign assistance be administered, 'so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of foreign countries' (US AID 1978).

This, in effect, gave birth to the integration of the WID policy approach. It also meant that early WID policy implicitly inherited the problems of prioritizing capitalist production and western values and institutions. The Percy Amendment tied aid to developing countries to the extent to which these countries attempted to integrate women into development policy (US AID 1978). The US expanded its influence in the Caribbean in the post-Second World War period. To what extent was the mushrooming of Women's Bureaux in the region a response to this influence? Now that there is no longer this emphasis by the US state in its foreign policy in the region, to what extent has the absence of this international support contributed to the new pressure women's machineries are currently experiencing?

Theorizing gender relations in the post-independent state

Political scientists classify post-independent Caribbean states as liberal democratic, bourgeois democratic, authoritarian, popular statist, national democratic, or socialist (Emmanuel 1990: 7; Riviere 1990; Thomas 1984; Stone 1986). In their analyses they have not investigated whether the state is gendered; neither have they examined the differential impact of the state's activities on women and men within its geo-political domain.

In the literature, the Caribbean state is portrayed as the 'centre piece of the political system' (Emmanuel 1990; Riviere 1990; Munroe

1972; Duncan *et al.* 1978) and is generally described as 'the official incorporation of state power' (Emmanuel 1990: 60). Lewis (1968), Duncan *et al.* (1978), Munroe (1972), and Lewis (1983) theorize the Caribbean state as a given, a natural occurrence. The activities of successive governments are seen as the expressions of the inherent, exclusive power of the state. As Emmanuel observes, the literature emphasizes three typologies:

> historical accounts of the colonial origins and constitutional administrative evolution of states, contemporary studies of political opinion and electoral behavior, and generalized interpretative-ideological analyses about the structures, functions and powers of contemporary state systems.
>
> (Emmanuel 1990: 1)

Clive Thomas (1984) is one of the first political scientists to theorize about the nature of the state in Caribbean societies. Thomas constructs a theoretical framework to explain the emergence of an authoritarian form of state in 'peripheral' societies like those of the Caribbean. Thomas ascribes 'a central place to bourgeois democratic practice in the transformation from colonial (dependent capitalist) to socialist transformation' (Thomas 1984). In his theorizing Carl Stone seeks to:

> reinterpret the history and political economy of contemporary state systems; examine the inter-relationship between political factors and economic management; formulate empirical indicators useful for comparison of political and economic systems; and develop concepts and indicators which enable an integration of political and economic analysis.
>
> (Riviere 1990: 5)

Both Emmanuel and Riviere evaluate the existing research as dominated by concerns with class, classificatory types of state systems, power of states in relation to social forces, and ideological functions of states. They contend that there has been inadequate discussion of the role of non-class factors in the evolution of the state (Emmanuel 1988: 12; Riviere 1990).

Riviere seeks to remedy the inadequacy in the discussions of non-class factors by adding 'the need to explore size of states in demographic and resource terms' (Riviere 1990: 6). He contends that the notion of juridical sovereignty has also received inadequate treatment. Riviere offers a point of departure from which to explore and address the focal issues confronting the management of power in the contemporary period. These issues are ongoing crises confronting states and how to manage them (Riviere 1990: 6).

The cumulative narrative on Caribbean state systems presents the state as natural rather than created, and power as a zero sum phenomenon. The state is theorized as all powerful in the domestic arena. Competing interest groups vie to share that power or the state uses that power on behalf of the dominant class. The state has a severely constrained capacity in the international arena. Its ability to exercise power is limited by small size and relatively poor resources (Lewis 1983). In analysing the vulnerability of small Caribbean states, Searwar recommends the full participation of marginalized groups, in particular women and youth, to build cohesive societies (Searwar 1991: 236). His recognition of women's precarious position in relation to the state and his arguments for inclusion are rare exceptions to the prevailing gender myopia on women and the state.

Their cumulative investigations do not involve a gender-based investigation of the state's relations with women or men. In discussing the internal constraints which states encounter, the theorists do not interrogate the state's operations to show its differential impact on women and men. Their analyses pay no attention to the notion that the state is androcentric in its construct or that the process of policy formation is gendered.

Hilary Beckles is aware that, 'Ongoing projects of nation-state building that promote allegedly gender free notions of nationalist cohesion should be unmasked as skillful projections of modernizing masculine state power' (Beckles 1998: 53). Unfortunately, the tenor of Beckles's critique of the evolution of a feminist genre in Caribbean historiography is to chide Caribbean feminists for failing to offer what he considers viable alternative constructions of the nation-state rather than for him to continue to dissect the inherently problematic, masculinist core of the twentieth-century Caribbean state as Linden Lewis (2000) has begun to do. Beckles forges a critical opening but

retreats into an intellectual 'ghettoization' of feminist accountability, scholarship and practice. His position reflects a fundamental philosophical divide that is so widespread it appears natural. It plays out in the academy and everyday life.

This fault line reifies the dichotomies around the private and the public (discussed earlier) or, quoting Jane Flax, 'The separation and differentiation of society into the private and the public, the world of dependence, the family, and the world of freedom, the state and work' (Flax 1990b: 6). Beckles suggests, since the masculinist, nation-building project of the state uses power to the detriment of women, then only feminists (women) are responsible for exposing this, since we are the ones who are disadvantaged by the gendered imbalance of state power. It is not an issue for the arena of general, public discourse that should engage all Caribbean intellectuals. I challenge Beckles to think through the trajectory of his intellectual stance.

Caribbean women do not experience the state as a monolithic, homogenous, single entity. Instead the Caribbean state women confront is 'an incoherent multifaceted ensemble of power relations. It is highly concrete and yet an elaborate fiction; powerful and intangible; rigid and protean; potent and boundary less; centralized and decentered' (Brown 1992: 12). These power relations are a potential vehicle for subordination and domination but they are not fixed, immutable or uncontested (Brown 1992: 12).

The twentieth-century Anglophone Caribbean state is a liberal, democratic, masculinist construct whose activities and power relations affect the ways women's economic, political, social, and personal activities are perceived and maintained (Brown 1992: 14). Brown argues the state can be masculinist without overtly pursuing the interests of men. 'The multiple dimensions of socially constructed masculinity have historically shaped the multiple modes of power circulating through the domain of the state' (Brown 1992: 14).

Power within the Caribbean state is not centralized, fixed, nor immanent; it is continuously created and continuously shifts its sphere of operations between macro and micro institutional levels. State power is exercised by a minister of Finance, and entry-level postal workers in rural post offices. The latter may daily extend the boundaries of state power in areas unknown both to the public and to ministers who may assume they alone define the scope of that power.

Conclusion

Liberal political and economic ideology continues to shape the institutions of the post-independent Caribbean state (Searwar 1991; Marshall 1998a; Griffith 1997). It sets the contours of the politics of participation. It determines the development models followed thus shaping the political, economic and social environment in which women exist. Liberalism maintains one set of rules for the market, the polity, and the arenas of public discourse and another set for the household. Caribbean women's lives straddle the contradictions between the two.

Caribbean feminists face two main challenges. We must problematize and publicize the political agency of post-independent states and insist that policy-makers occupy them to subvert the legacy and transform existing practices. We must expose the social and economic consequences of refusing to engage with social change at an integral level. I avoid blaming colonial powers for the continuities in the modern constitution of asymmetric relations of gender, even though the colonial relationship bequeathed a particular legacy. As they relates to maintaining unjust gender systems, states have choices and they choose to maintain unjust gender systems because the latter satisfies indigenously defined objectives of state interests.

3
Women and Gender Relations in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

> The surge in construction activity had a significant impact on the male unemployment rate which fell approximately 2 percentage points to close the year at an estimated 8.3 per cent. In contrast, several jobs usually held predominantly by females in the informatics, electronics and textile industries were lost as companies streamlined their operations. Consequently, the female unemployment rate remained above 15 per cent.
>
> (Central Bank of Barbados 1999: 8)

> And so, with precious few exceptions, the boys are left to languish in that desert of academic uncertainty which empowers rapidly increasing numbers of females without so much as a backward glance to appreciate the human devastation that is taking place. … Such is their confusion that they will even take to the soap box spouting co-ed propaganda, completely ignoring that a school system in which, for example, 75 per cent of head teachers are female is unlikely to produce any assessment favourable to boys. Not in academic studies. Not in the humanities. Not in socialization. Not in physical education.
>
> (Editorial, *Barbados Advocate*, 6 February 1996)

At the end of the twentieth century, commentators often typecast Caribbean women as the witches of medieval Europe. Women are responsible for the destruction of families (but not crops as yet),

high rates of divorce, male economic and social marginalization, and the comparatively poorer performance of boys and men at every educational level (Barriteau 1998a: 437). Newspaper articles and editorials warn of the damage being done to boys by being raised in female-headed households, attending co-educational schools and being taught primarily by female teachers (Barriteau 1994: 283):

> Recent symposia dealing with the status of men cannot be faulted for their exploratory purpose. … Discussions confirmed a growing suspicion that males in our society, as elsewhere, were increasingly being disadvantaged, particularly within the educational and legal system.
>
> (*Barbados Advocate*, 1 January 1999)

According to this type of analysis Caribbean countries are in danger of slowly but surely becoming matriarchal societies: 'women outnumber men, make up most of the work force, own most of the homes' (*Barbados Advocate*, 6 March 1996).

The final verse of a 1996 calypso from the Barbados annual Crop Over festival warns:

> I am happy for the progress Bajan women have made
> But is it worth the price our sons have paid?
> Women now play the role of mother and father too
> But when you check the schools male teachers are few
> In every circle females now dominate
> No role models for boys to emulate
> A rooster cannot teach a fowl to be a hen
> It wasn't God's plan for women to teach boys to be men.
>
> (Worrell 1996)

If rapidly increasing numbers of women are being empowered by an academic environment which systematically disadvantages boys, why are women unable to translate their educational advantage into greater labor force participation and, especially, more competitive levels of remuneration? What is the wedge between women's skills level and their earning capacity? I suggest the answer lies in the differences between changes in the ideological and material relations of gender.

Dunn and Dunn's 1998 study of the offshore data services enterprises in Barbados and Jamaica underscores the harsh realities for women and employment in the 1990s. Their in-depth study confirmed their hypothesis that global competitiveness, technological change and national investment policies all influence the content and quality of jobs, the choice of the work force and working conditions in offshore data services enterprises (Dunn and Dunn 1999: ix). Unfortunately, the popular understanding of changing economic roles of women and men does not reflect the influence of modifications in the national, regional or global political economy. They offer the following:

- Composition of the workforce changes from female to male in line with the sophistication of the technology.
- Labor practices also vary in direct correlation with the level of technology used.
- The gap between wages for data entry workers (female) and software programmers (male) is quite wide.
- A common factor is that skill and technology do not affect unionization. Most of the sector is non unionized, although there are efforts in that direction in Barbados.
- Equality of opportunity and treatment are influenced by gender. Although there is no evidence that male and female data entry workers are paid at different rates, women dominate the ranks of lower paid, less skilled workers, while the majority of software programmers (with high skills and high wages) are men.
- Low wages in Jamaica (which findings indicate can be low as 1/10 of the rate in the United States) are apparently insufficient to provide basic needs. Combined with other factors this leads to a high labor turnover among data entry workers.
- Stress emerges as a major factor affecting workers in the sector. Conflicting domestic duties add to stress because the majority of the workers are women with children. Practical gender needs such as child care and proximity of housing to work centers are not included in planning for the sector, neither is transportation. Employees experience considerable stress and varying levels of productivity and attendance. Together these factors have given rise to the perception that workers have 'poor work attitudes'.

(Dunn and Dunn 1999: ix–xi)

Rosemary Antoine concludes that it is a very difficult task to pursue the goal of securing economic, social and cultural (ECONSOC) rights for women in the work place. This is so even though there are new issues such as the increasing casualization of labor, the feminization of such labor and the exacerbated impact of these when structural adjustment measures are imposed (Antoine 1997: 587). She notes that in the CARICOM countries, states have not even embarked on the first steps to secure women's rights in the work place since there exists a great paucity of legislation and constitutional references devoted to women's issues at work (587). There is the widespread belief that women are enjoying economic advantages in comparison with men[1] juxtaposed against the documented evidence of women's continuing struggle for economic survival along with the inadequacy of existing legal mechanisms to bring relief.

Caribbean women and gender relations

Two outstanding features of contemporary gender relations are continuous ruptures and contestations, and an absence of gender justice. When the material and ideological dimensions of gender systems advance opposing interests major ruptures occur.

The material and ideological dimensions may overtly pursue the same goals and yet reproduce an unjust gender system. Superficially gender relations may appear to be in equilibrium because society's definition of what ends the material and ideological dimensions should serve may correspond and reinforce each other. The constellation of power relations may mean the state can enforce the official ideologies governing access and representation. During these periods women's contestations and rejection of the unjust nature of a gender system will be diffuse and more covert. Rhoda Reddock and Linnette Vassell document the struggles of Caribbean women in the early twentieth century to resist prevailing gender ideologies and economic deprivations (Reddock 1994, 1998; Vassell 1995).

The appearance of equilibrium may mean that resistance to dominating relations of gender is not at the level of organized groups or movements, or the latter may have been forced to be more circumspect in their quest to promote gender justice. It may mean challenging constructs at the personal level. But from slavery,

indentureship through to the contemporary Caribbean, women have always attempted to overcome violations of gender justice (Reddock 1995; Mohammed 1994; Brereton 1995; French 1995; Vassell 1995).

Throughout the twentieth century the gender identities of Caribbean women have been contested and women's citizenship called into question. Tables 3.1–3.3 historicize and summarize features of Caribbean gender systems and how they affect women. The analysis is clustered around four historical periods in the political, social, and cultural economy of the region. Each period registers significant developments in the political economy of states and the changing character of gender systems in the twentieth century. Each period is marked by severe economic and political/social crises at the regional and global levels. These crises trigger adaptations in the political economy. Yet Caribbean states and societies try to ensure ideological purity and continuity around relations of gender, especially those affecting the identities and roles of women.

1900–37: Economic and social deprivation

The twentieth century began with the region mired in deep poverty. The economic base was narrow and agricultural: Caribbean countries depended on the export of primary crops of sugar, cotton, and cocoa. Trinidad began an embryonic industrialization program after pitch and petroleum were discovered (Drayton 2001). The great depression of the 1920s following on the heels of the First World War exacerbated the now endemic poverty of the region. This level of economic deprivation had its roots in the inequities of slavery and the institutionalization of economic, political and economic injustice for the vast majority of women and men in the post-emancipation period. The British Caribbean colonies became more deeply integrated into the capitalist world economy. They experienced the traumas and shocks of widespread unemployment and political upheaval of rabid, capitalist crises.

In this period, gender systems are distinguished by a mutual reinforcement of the societal belief in the inferior, subordinate status of women in domestic life, the economy and political participation. At the level of the state and society, both the material and ideological dimensions of gender actively supported the unjust character of

Table 3.1 Historicizing Gender Systems in the Caribbean: the Early Years

Historical period	*Caribbean political economy*	*International political economy*	*Material relations of gender*	*Ideological relations of gender*	*State of gender relations*
1900s–37 Post-slavery colonial society	Labour unrest; riots; birth of nationalist movements; mass migration to Panama, US; deeper integration into world economy	First World War; Great Depression	Severely limited access/ distribution of resources to women	Inferior sub-ordinate status of women	Appearance of stability; absence of gender justice
1937–50s The war years	Consolidation of the labor movement; universal adult suffrage; colonial welfare state; modernization approaches to development	Great economic and political devastation; Second World War; Marshall Plan; Bretton Woods institu-tions	Public sphere slowly opening to women	Subordinate status of women	Evidence of instability; absence of gender justice

early twentieth-century gender systems. As a result gender systems appear to be stable. There appears to be no contestations over the gender identities of women. Major social groups mounted no organized, widespread challenge to either the ideological or material relations of gender. Yet the existing material relations of gender foreclosed any notions of economic equality, civic relevance, and political participation for women. Ideologically women's gender identities were explicitly expressed in terms of roles, and the roles for women were confined to that of homemaker, nurturer and reproducer of the labor force. The elite, propertied and educated could vote but the majority of women did not have this right and their social status was derived from that of the male head of households:

> The West Indian family is certainly not matriarchal, since the status of women in society is undefined and weak. Although it is the woman who keeps the family together, it is the man who rules. (Simey 1946: 81)

In Trinidad and Jamaica educated, middle-class women resisted this restrictive definition of womanhood and citizenship. They organized conferences, lobbied for seats for women on the city councils, wrote letters to the press and held public debates (Reddock 1995) but the British colonial state remained aloof and indifferent to articulating women's self-defined interests.

Materially women enjoyed very limited access to a state's resources. Maxine Henry-Wilson observes that before 1942 in Jamaica the rules for admission to the civil service made married women ineligible for any appointment (Henry-Wilson 1989: 250). Bridget Brereton records a similar situation for women in Trinidad. In 1919 government's rules required that married teachers resign from teaching (Brereton 1995: 89). And what about working-class women, women who would not be denied permission to hold on to jobs after marriage because they would not have those jobs in the first place? In Jamaica at the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of these women, black women were in low-paying occupations:

> Men dominated the professional, industrial and commercial categories with women's access to the higher occupations [being] quite limited during these years (1891–1921). Women were

> primarily involved in own-account activities, such as dressmaking, hairdressing, higgerling. According to the 1921 census, about 40 per cent of women were employed as domestics. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, there were two significant characteristics of the Jamaican labour force participation. First, the sexual division of labour in industry relegated women to the routine, labour intensive monotonous and sedentary. Secondly, there were significant differences in the wage structure and working conditions of males and females.
>
> (Henry-Wilson 1989: 234)

For Indo Caribbean women the rigidity of transplanted Asian cultural traditions exacerbated the inequalities in gender systems:

> The predominantly Northern Indian culture which was brought to Trinidad and Tobago included such practices as the denial of education to girls, the segregation of men and women in public, the strict selection of a marriage partner from within the same caste, arranged marriages, the joint family system where young couples resided with the husband's parents, the subservience of the daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and husband; and many others.
>
> (Baksh-Sooden 1991)

The colonial state maintained severely restricted educational opportunities in a context where education was the greatest means of social and economic mobility (Cole 1982). Janice Mayers notes:

> during the first half of the twentieth century there was discrimination against girls in access to public secondary education both in terms of the facilities provided, and in the means provided for taking advantage of the offering.
>
> (Mayers 1995: 258)

Mayers' recount of an appeal by a female teacher to the Board of Education for an increase in salary in 1921 provides an excellent illustration of material and ideological relations of gender reinforcing each other to the detriment of women:

> The Board rejected her application on the basis of inadequate funds, the fact that the regulations would not permit it and the

> customary rationalization that male responsibility required that they be paid more.
>
> (Mayers 1995: 271)

Young women from the middle class were educated to serve men as accomplished wives and homemakers. Those from the working class were trained to serve as domestics, seamstresses and laborers (Carty 1988).

As the case of the teacher demonstrates, as workers women did not receive comparable wages for comparable work. This did not only apply to white-collar occupations. Women who were laborers also received less pay than men. Women had limited access to employment in the public sector and, on marriage, they were forced to resign these positions. The ideological belief in the inferiority of the woman as citizen was supported by the economic realities of restricted access to, or allocation of, public and private resources. Ideologically and materially the social relations of gender confirmed and reinforced the inferior status and position of women in the early twentieth century:

> The woman's position in the community is by no means equal to that of a man, who is generally accepted to have superior rights, and this apparent paradox underlies many of the social problems to be discussed later. It may well be that no general advance towards giving women their due place in society and, in particular, public life can be made until the value of their contribution as homemakers rather than as unskilled laborers is more clearly understood in the West Indies.
>
> (Simey 1946: 17–18)

Even when Simey makes what seems an admirable claim for due recognition of women's contribution to Caribbean development, it is couched in an insistence that their domestic roles be more valued. Yet the majority of Caribbean women have never had the luxury of contributing to their societies except through the traditional roles of homemakers.

1937–50s: Nationalist developments

The second period began with severe economic and political turbulence in the world economy and the region. During this period the

Table 3.2 Historicizing Gender Systems in the Caribbean: Public Openings

Historical period	*Features of Caribbean political economy*	*Features of international political economy*	*Material relations of gender*	*Ideological relations of gender*	*State of gender relations*
1950s–1970s Nationalist govts; regional experiments	Post-colonial/ independent state; end of mass migration; industrialization by invitation; economic and social mobility; end of agricultural dominance of the economy; growth of services	Fragmentation of the British Empire; decolonization: Asia, Africa, Caribbean; Bandung Conference/non-aligned movement; UN decade of development; 1973–5 global crises; first world conference on women	Legal equality of access; many biases in distribution	Subordinate status of women; women juggling work/home demands and conflicts; women's organizing	Deep divisions between ideological and material dimension; absence of gender justice

Table 3.3 Historicizing Gender Systems in the Caribbean: Backlash

Historical period	*Features of Caribbean political economy*	*Features of international political economy*	*Material relations of gender*	*Ideological relations of gender*	*State of gender relations*
1970s–2000s Fragile national govts	Severe economic crisis and failure of nationalization; US created CBI to stem socialist influence; IMF/World Bank SAPs; women's labor in EPZs; growth of off-shore industries, tax havens, money laundering; weak labor movement; dominant drug culture; social implosion	Waves of debt crises; end of Cold War; unipolar world; Balkanization of Europe; end of Apartheid; information revolution; GATT⇒WTO	Backlash; various affirmative action programs for boys and men; renaming of women's bureaux; changing mandate	Strong currents of misogyny; increased levels of reported violence against women; women challenging gender identities; male marginality thesis widely accepted	Very overt ruptures; absence of gender justice

global political economy was terrorized by Nazism, Fascism, the Holocaust, imperialist expansion in Northern Africa, the deployment of atomic weapons, and the general devastation caused by the Second World War. The Bretton Woods institutions of the World Bank (IBRD) the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) were created in the aftermath of the war, primarily to rebuild European and Japanese economies. West Indian, Asian and African nationals of British colonies had volunteered or migrated by the thousands to help the British Colonial Empire fight for the liberation of invaded, European countries. Led by India in 1948, an immediate consequence of the end of the war was the rapid move towards decolonization in Asia, Africa and, to a lesser extent, the Caribbean. The use of technology for mass destruction rather than for greater human progress destabilized the foundational belief in the Enlightenment promise of mastery over nature for the good of humanity (Flax 1990). The US hegemony and influence in the Caribbean basin expanded rapidly and American foreign policy doctrines increasingly filled the void caused by a shrinking British Empire.

Caribbean men and women were overcome by waves of deep political and economic discontent which they gave vent to in riots, rebellions and lootings. These swept through the region between 1935 and 1939 (Marshall 1998a; French 1995; Reddock 1994; Howe 1993). These upheavals first appeared as spontaneous protests over wages and labor conditions but they subsequently revealed deep-seated political and economic dissatisfactions among Caribbean women and men. The various British commissions appointed to investigate the sources of West Indian discontent became acutely aware of the precarious conditions under which women lived. Still they continued the legacy of dealing with questions of women's societal inequality in the context of family life and reproductive work.

The *ad hoc* British colonial policy of trusteeship and funding of social welfare schemes eventually yielded to more systematic statements of policy on colonial development and welfare (Simey 1946). The Moyne Commission recommended a central planning committee to address the welfare of the colonies (Colonial Office 1947: 4). The move towards planning also reflected international changes in British economic policy following the devastation of Europe in the

Second World War (Williams 1989) and the creation of the discipline of economic development.

This period was marked by several changes in the political economy of Caribbean states which, in turn, held specific implications for women's experiences with material and ideological relations of gender. Pre-war nationalist movements gained momentum from the anti-imperialist movements set in train by the Second World War. According to Howe (1993: 139), the ethos of British colonial authority had weakened and, by the mid-1950s, colonial parliaments in the larger Caribbean countries had negotiated more direct control in their legislative, executive and administrative affairs. They instituted the Cabinet system of government.

During this time the colonial state introduced cardinal changes in the way it interacted with women and laid the foundation for extending citizenship rights to them. This drastically altered material relations of gender and exposed deep upheavals in gender systems. The formation of a colonial welfare state also further modified the material dimensions of gender systems. The attention paid to primary and secondary education, health and nutrition, especially health care for women in their reproductive years, meant that the colonial state again supported women primarily in their reproductive roles. However, these developments represented significant beneficial spill-overs for women's material and psychological well-being. These measures were a direct result of the Colonial Development and Welfare Program initiated by the British Colonial government in response to the findings of the Moyne Commission (Deere *et al*. 1990: 9).

All women and men who had previously been denied the right to vote because of restrictive property qualifications, finally had the right to participate in choosing political directorates. Adult suffrage opened up the public sphere to women although full participation remained hemmed in by the ideological belief in women's second-class status as citizens.

Expanding women's citizenship through political participation constituted qualitative and quantitative change in Caribbean political systems and societies. Expanding the capacity of the state to accommodate women as citizens required the state to allocate resources for personnel, bureaucracies, technologies and programs. Even though these changes may be costly they are easier to implement because the means of effecting them are material. Empowering

women through political participation or engendering governance requires a fundamental reorganization of Caribbean political culture. It is essentially ideological and harder to achieve. Neither the colonial nor contemporary states have been interested in altering patriarchal value systems, nor in problematizing the power vacuum women experience as citizens. Historically Caribbean state systems have been exclusionary of women's interests in the public domain (Henry-Wilson 1989; Reddock 1994; Mohammed 1994; Barriteau 1994).

Some Caribbean women engaged in subversive strategies to take on political roles that were not sanctioned by the colonial state or society. Maxine Henry-Wilson states that women from 'respectable classes' exerted influence primarily through social work and that, for some time, this involvement was really a front for political activity (Henry-Wilson 1989: 239). Rhoda Reddock adds that during the 1950s emerging nationalist, Marxist and socialist parties often recruited members of the middle strata women's organizations in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana (Reddock 1998: 59).

In Guyana, the Women's Political and Economic Organization (WPEO) set itself an overtly activist and political agenda. Established in 1946, its aim was 'to ensure the political organisation and education of the women in British Guiana in order to promote their economic welfare and their political and social emancipation and betterment' (Peake 1993: 114). According to Linda Peake the WPEO encouraged women to register as voters in the 1947 election. It deliberately attempted to influence the direction of local government:

> Indeed it urged women in the charitable organizations to exert pressure on local government to bring about improvements in social welfare in general, and in housing in particular. Within its first three months it attracted approximately 160 members, both working and middle class women.
>
> (Peake 1993: 114)

Indo-Caribbean women in the public domain

Participation in the public domain was even more complex for Caribbean women of Asian or East Indian origin. Gender ideologies mediated by an Asian cultural legacy prescribed rigid gender-role

identities as wife and mother (Seapaul 1988: 90; Poynting 1987: 235; Mohammed 1988: 389). Occah Seapaul and Pat Mohammed identify the societal and religious constraints and limitations placed on East Indian/Trinidadian women. Seapaul highlights the passive role ascribed to women by traditional Hindu custom that required her to focus her energies and interests on the domestic domain:

> It was accepted that the roles for which Hindu women were destined were those of wife and mother. Marriage was the only profession to which they could have looked forward. The established culture that forced her into remaining in domesticity naturally restricted the developments of her interests and satisfactions which lay beyond the home.
>
> (Seapaul 1988: 90)

Patricia Mohammed pinpoints the contradictions Indian women experience in wanting an expanded role in the public domain:

> They were keepers of the culture, they were passive and submissive, they were expected to sacrifice their own ambitions for the benefit of their brothers and husbands. Despite all of this, we can see that some Indian women had begun to commit themselves to goals which identified with the national interest.
>
> (Mohammed 1988: 390)

In 1947, the last year in which the franchise was limited by property and income qualification, the Voters' Register in Guyana revealed the following about Indo-Guyanese women. They comprised 1.8 per cent of all voters, 6 per cent of all Indian voters and only 9.9 per cent of all female voters (Poynting 1987: 236). To support the belief that marriage was to be their priority the conditions of marriage were heavily regulated. Kumar Mahabir states that the Hindu Marriage Act of 1946 (Trinidad and Tobago) stipulates fourteen years as the age of consent for the marriage of Hindu girls. The act also prohibited divorce for the Hindu woman 'in many instances' (Mahabir 1992: 40).

Education was particularly problematic for Indo-Caribbean women during the colonial period. Not only did they have to deal with colonial state structures that planned for women's education in stereotypical ways, they had to grapple with an inflexible, patriarchal, Asian cultural legacy. Adhering to imported cultural traditions

(Razavi 1999: 414), Indo-Caribbean families preferred to educate boys since there was a very widespread acceptance that women were destined for the roles of wife and mother. In 1946 in Trinidad only 30 per cent of Indian women were literate and for those over 45 years, only 10.6 per cent could read (Poynting 1987: 235).

As a result educational attainment and employment opportunities complemented each other for Indo-Caribbean women. Poynting reports that the 1931 census records only four per cent of Indian women as professionals while over 83 per cent were employed as domestic servants, general and agricultural laborers (Poynting 1987: 235).

In 1948, the ambitions and aspirations of an educated, nationalistic, middle class, who had witnessed the liberation and rebuilding of Europe, propelled the British government to establish the University of the West Indies (UWI). And while women made up only a small percentage of the original student body, they now had access to tertiary and professional education within the region, even though there were very limited places in regional high schools for them. The impact of free tertiary education for women is now being felt in the 1990s. Ministers of governments, UWI officials, and public commentators are expressing alarm that 70 per cent of the UWI's student body is female. In an address at the launching of the UNDP 1997 Human Development Report, university economist Dr Frank Alleyne urged researchers to include men among the vulnerable groups in society, while noting that the Cave Hill campus of the UWI has a 68 per cent female enrollment (*Daily Nation*, 21 June 1997). The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has agreed to provide seed funding to CGDS to undertake a regional research project on gender differentials in educational achievement. This came in response to concerns raised by Ministers of Education of CARICOM countries at a UWI Council meeting in St Kitts in March 1997.[2]

Despite an expanded and growing state sector the institutions of the colonial state and colonial development plans articulated no official policy on women. However, a deconstruction of development policy exposes the opposite. A construct of differentiated economic roles was instituted around women's reproductive functions. Traditional gender roles were deliberately inscribed into this phase of development policy. These policies referred to women on issues of population, fertility, unemployment, health, and labor force

participation (Barriteau 1994). Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of this process through a case study on gender and development planning in Barbados.

1950s–1970s: Independence and nation building

This period began with the larger countries on the verge of achieving political independence after the failure of a half-hearted attempt at the West Indian Federation. Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana all attained independence by the mid decade of the 1960s and they immediately embarked on expansionist, state-building policies. Agricultural production remained the dominant foreign exchange earner in many economies but tourism and light manufacturing began to emerge as significant sectors. In the Windward Islands of Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada, governments depended heavily on agricultural production especially bananas, both to earn foreign exchange and 'to provide employment for a significant proportion of the adult population' (Marshall 1998a: 65).

By the end of this period Caribbean economies were relatively diversified. Tourism, off-shore banking, manufacturing, services, and mining replaced agricultural exports in almost all of the economies. St Lucia, Dominica and St Vincent remained very dependent on the export of bananas to Europe. In the 1990s these countries harvested an economic nightmare as the US, acting on behalf of its banana interests in Latin America, used the World Trade Organization (WTO) to destroy the preferential access granted to Caribbean banana exports to Europe under the ACP, Lomé Convention.

Over the course of these two decades Caribbean countries endured many varieties of economic and political turmoil. In Trinidad and Tobago the military was used to squash a Black Power rebellion-cum-revolution in 1970. In other Caribbean countries governments hastened to turn into law highly punitive and restrictive Public Order Acts to control the restless, unemployed young men and women of the region (Duncan 1991: 247). In Grenada widespread public protest over the governmental abuse by the Gairy administration was met with heavy, brutal police action in 1973. By 1979 both Dominica and Barbados experienced real threats or attempts at mercenary invasion, while Barbados played the role of regional policeman when it sent soldiers from the Barbados Defense Force to assist

in quelling a revolt in tiny Union island, part of the state of St Vincent and the Grenadines (Duncan 1991: 246–7).

Migration, matrifocality and economic development

During this period migration outlets to the northern, industrialized economies of the US, Great Britain and Canada finally dried up. At the beginning of the 1990s the economies of the advanced, industrialized countries endured a number of crises with severe repercussions for Caribbean countries. Inflation and recession put a dampener on demand for cheap, unskilled labor, even though the Caribbean supply was bursting at the seams.

From the beginning of the twentieth century Caribbean households and economies counted on remittances from 'foreign' or 'over-in-away' sources to buttress micro through to macro levels of economic and social activities. Barrels of food and clothing, purchases of school supplies and payments of other educational costs, the construction of homes, and direct investments in the economy are some of the benefits Caribbean people and countries gained from migration to Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Cuba, the US, Great Britain and Canada. Janet Momsen reports that migration is an institutionalized aspect of Caribbean society. She observed that from the 1950s to the 1980s most Caribbean countries lost 10 per cent of their population to migration (Momsen 1987: 346). Momsen adds that remittance income in Jamaica in 1970 was over five times the net inflow of public external capital; by 1980 the level of remittances was only two-thirds that of net public capital inflows (Momsen 1987: 346).

Male migration dominated from the 1900s to the 1950s. It contributed to the growth of female-headed households, women's comparative economic autonomy and the much misunderstood phenomenon of matrifocality in the region (Newton 1984: 170; Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 11; Momsen 1987: 346). In the postwar years women started migrating in increasing numbers as domestic labor to Aruba and Curacao in the region, and to Great Britain, the US and Canada. They sought work as nurses, general workers and domestic helpers. In the 1990s women have migrated even without assurances of jobs. Mondesire and Dunn (1995: 11) report that the 1991 census for Grenada reveals 'an extraordinarily high

level' of 91 per cent female migration between 1975 and 1990. The World Bank reported in 1993 that the Caribbean region has the highest rate of migration in the world (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 11) underscoring the critical economic role of migration in Caribbean societies. Perhaps the most singular contribution is the fact that migration absorbed surplus labor and acted as a safety valve for social pressures on narrow state sectors with restrictive welfare and employment-generating capacities. Caribbean governments have yet to devise a comprehensive policy to deal with the thousands of young women and men who swell the ranks of the unemployed yearly and who, unlike their grandparents' generation, cannot as easily migrate in search of work.

Women and political participation

Whether as students, intellectuals, housewives, or workers Caribbean women have become increasingly politicized. By the 1950s many of the structural obstacles to women's participation in the political processes of Westminister parliamentary democracy had been removed.[3] At the beginning of that decade the British colonial authorities widened the narrow franchise of earlier decades to give the vote to all women and men 21 years and over (Emmanuel 1979: 1). Almost as soon as the formal political process allowed it, Caribbean women competed with men to become holders of political office. In Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica many women were either members of nationalist government administrations or key members of radical parties and movements.

The granting of universal adult suffrage in the 1950s had an immediate impact in the Eastern Caribbean since most women could not vote or stand for election before then. Women contested elections in Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, Montserrat, St Kitts–Nevis–Anguilla, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Lucia. In these countries a total of thirty women contested national general elections between 1951 and 1979 (Emmanuel: 1979). Grenada, Barbados and Dominica stand out as having a comparatively larger number of female candidates for that period. Antigua offered one woman candidate in the 28 years covered by the data. By 1979 nine women had contested elections in Grenada, followed by seven in Barbados and five in Dominica, see Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Women Candidates in National Elections in the Eastern Caribbean, 1951–79

Country	*Name of candidate*	*Election debut*	*Outcome of first election*	*% Vote received*	*No. of contested elections*[b]	*Political affiliation*
Antigua	Ms Edith Richards[a]	1956	Lost	2.6	1	Independent/ Union
Montserrat	Mrs Margaret Kelsick	1958	Lost	23.7	2	Montserrat Labour Party
	Miss Mary Taitt	1970	Won	52.3	3	Progressive Democratic Party
St Kitts–Nevis–Anguilla[c]	Miss Mary Charles	1971	Lost	22.3	1	Peoples Action Movement
Dominica	Mrs P.S. Allfrey	1957	Lost	20.4	2	Independent
	Miss Mary Charles	1970	Lost	35.6	2	Dominica Freedom Party
	Mrs Fadelle	1966	Lost	4	1	Dominican United People's Party
	Mrs Beryl Harris	1961	Lost	26.1	1	
	Mrs Mabel James	1961	Lost	36.1	3	Dominica Labour Party
Grenada	Mrs Nadia Benjamine	1972	Won	69.8	1	
	Mrs Cynthia Gairy	1961	Won	64.3	5	Grenada United Labour Party (GULP)
	Mrs E. James	1962	Lost	47.7	1	
	Mrs E. Lahee	1957	Lost	28.1	1	
	Ms H. Mascoll	1957	Lost	13	1	Peoples Democratic Movement
	Mrs Waple Nedd	1972	Won	72	1	GULP

	Miss Gloria St Bernard	1957	Lost	7.9	1	Grenada National Party
	Ms B. Sylvester	1976	Lost	36.5	1	People's Alliance
	Mrs E.L. Sylvester	1954	Lost	22.9	1	Independent
St Lucia	Ms R. Michel	1979	Lost	45.9	1	St Lucia Labour Party
	Mrs Y.H. Rock	1964	Lost	41.9	3	United Workers Party
	Mrs L. Vos	1961	Lost	2.2	1	People's Progressive Party
St Vincent and Grenadines	Mrs P. John	1974	Lost	2.5	1	Mitchel/Sylvester Faction
	Mrs Ivy Joshua	1957	Won	83.3	6	People's Political Party
Barbados	Mrs E.E. Bourne	1951	Won	51.5	3	Barbados Labour Party
	Mrs Gertude Eastmond	1971	Won	52	2	Democratic Labour Party
	Mrs Carmeta Fraser	1976	Lost	22.4	1	
	Mrs Sybil Leacock	1976	Lost	43.4	1	
	Mrs L. Martin	1961	Lost	7.7	1	Barbados Labour Party
	Miss Billie Miller	1976	Won	50.9	1	
	Miss N. Weekes	1971	Lost	42.5	2	

Notes: [a] The data listed Ms or Mrs for some women; for others their names were just given. The inclusion of these indicate that married women were the majority of candidates.
[b] Elections contested to 1979.
[c] After 1966 Anguilla was not part of the state electoral system.

Source: Compiled from the appendices in Emmanuel 1979.

The conditions for women and political participation in the state of Antigua–Barbuda bears watching. The one woman who had contested elections between 1951 and 1979 did so as an independent candidate. The governing Bird administration has directed state power for over thirty years. Are we to conclude that the Antiguan–Barbudan state has no confidence in women as political candidates, or are we to assume that Antiguan–Barbudan women are somehow more apolitical than women elsewhere in the Caribbean? The Inter-Parliamentary Union tried to provide some clues:

> Women in Antigua have not been successful as candidates in the electoral system. The majority of women consider running for office to be part of a man's world. They therefore vote for men in preference to women. In the political history of Antigua and Barbuda, only two have been put forward as candidates by the opposition party. They were not successful.
>
> (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1997: 43)

In 1997 women in Antigua launched a new women's organization called Professional Organization of Women in Antigua (POWA). They appear very organized and determined to make a difference. We wait to assess their impact on women's political leadership.

It is difficult to disentangle the precise influence of gender and class relations, party affiliation, and prevailing socioeconomic conditions on women's electoral performance during that period. Unsuccessful in the 1970s, Eugenia Charles later emerged as the first, and so far only, female Prime Minister in the Commonwealth Caribbean and is a formidable, if controversial politician. Mrs Cynthia Gairy and Mrs Ivy Joshua won on every occasion they competed. Not only did they win by relatively high margins but they were candidates of the victorious party. More relevant in their case is that they were the wives of the respective political leaders and Premiers/Prime Ministers of their countries. Eric Gairy and Ebenezer Joshua were charismatic, powerful leaders who dominated the political life of their era.

Throughout this period gender systems remained unstable and unjust. Ideological relations of gender continued to reinforce the notion of a subordinate status of women even though women more openly began to challenge their exclusion from public office. Caribbean states reluctantly began to realize that changes in the

political economy to facilitate modernization strategies to development were beginning to challenge traditional gender roles.

Indo-Caribbean women were also reconstructing their gender identities much to the concern of religious leaders and the Hindu and Islamic middle classes:

> In the current period, Indian girls and women from all classes are being educated at increasingly higher levels, and are actively competing on the job market. Segregation of the sexes presently still exists only at Hindu and Muslim religious services and functions. The death of the caste endogamy began during the indentureship period, and the institution of arranged marriages is now but a relic of the past, as both men and women have over many generations fought their families for the right to choose their partners. The joint family system has been crumbling; as many newly married couples have the financial independence to live on their own. Daughters-in-law especially those who are educated and employed are refusing to play a subservient role to their mothers-in-law and husbands in personal, household and financial matters.
>
> (Baksh-Sooden 1991)

Expanded educational opportunities and the increase in employment possibilities, due to the 'Industrialization by Invitation' approach to development, deepened the divisions and contradictions of ideological and material relations of gender. Caribbean development planners drew extensively on the theorizing of Caribbean Nobel laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis, who formulated 'the two sector surplus labor model' (Howard 1989). This was repackaged for implementation as 'Industrialization by Invitation' and 'Operation Bootstrap' (Carrington 1971; Cox 1982). Lewis's theorizing relies heavily on foreign investment as the main engine of economic growth (Lewis 1978). He advocates export-oriented industrialization. This of course was a policy prescription for the creation of export enclaves requiring cheap labor, a euphemism in developing countries for women's labor (Kelly 1987; Ward 1990).

By the mid-1960s newly independent states replaced colonial welfare policy with formal development planning. On examining these plans a few fundamental features remain consistent throughout the

shifts in state policy. The development planners remain committed to neoclassical, modernization strategies to development. Women now occupy an anomalous, unstable, contradictory position in the power relations of the post-independent state. The intent of post colonial development planning has been to control population, produce economic growth, improve living conditions, develop human resources, create higher levels of industrialization and enhance technological development, in other words, pursue the Enlightenment promise. Several states hinge the attainment of these objectives on regulating the fertility of women. Population control and economic development became inseparable. Gender systems remained unstable and unjust.

1970s–2000: Economic restructuring/gender backlash

Caribbean states introduced many changes in gender systems and continue to contribute to an ongoing reconstruction of gender roles and identities. Four principal features stand out: the state's official recognition of women; retrenchment of the welfare state; expansion of private sector influence over economic policy and entrepreneurial development; and a deepening intolerance for women's right to participate as equals in society. Combined, these features generate and, at the same time, obscure new and complex economic and social relations for women.

During the last moments of the twentieth-century Caribbean, states are undergoing a further erosion in their economic viability. Our economies have become more deeply integrated into the capitalist world economy and are therefore absorbing the shocks of slow to negative growth and stagnation that plague global economic activity during the period. Despite the fact that Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana, respectively, have mineral resources of oil, bauxite, diamonds and to a lesser extent gold, the shocks and tremors in the global economy, coupled with poor economic management, mean that these countries are unable to exploit these mineral resources fully.

Trevor Harker identifies the principal external shocks impacting on Caribbean economies during the 1970s and 1980s as:

1 Oil prices shocks of 1973–4 and 1979–80.
2 Reduction in demand for raw materials and other exports of Caribbean countries.

3 The impact of high interest rates upon debt and its servicing.
4 The contraction of economies in the region benefiting from the petroleum trade and spin-off activities.
5 A shift in terms of trade of raw materials; continued sluggishness of industrial countries; reduced intensity of raw materials inputs.
(Harker 1989: 11)

According to Ivelaw Griffith, the economic base of the region continues to rest on agriculture (mainly sugar and bananas), mining, manufacturing and services (Griffith 1997b: 176). Of these he states that off-shore banking and tourism are the two most critical industries in the service sector, their being vital to the economies of the Bahamas, the BVI, the Turks and Caicos islands, Antigua–Barbuda, Barbados and Belize (176). Griffith goes on to show that, in the 1990s, Caribbean economies are characterized by 'low and negative economic growth, high unemployment, relatively high import food dependency and huge public debts' (177). While acknowledging that the region has made progress in life expectancy, general health care, education and real *per capita* income in some countries[4] he agrees with Trinidadian economist, Ramesh Ramsaran, that the region is in crisis, that poverty is rising in several states and Caribbean economies remain fragile and vulnerable (177). According to him the structural features producing this vulnerability are heavy reliance on foreign trade, limited production and export diversification, low savings, heavy dependence on foreign capital, and a dearth of capable economic and management skills. Griffith's major contribution to this discourse is to show how the attractiveness and rapid penetration of the political economy of drug-running is undermining Caribbean sovereignty and security (Griffith 1997).

In the 1980s, several Caribbean states removed many of the legal discriminatory measures against women entrenched in the laws and constitutions of states. However, this did not alter the gender ideologies and biases in the way these laws are interpreted when their application to women is tested. Tracey Robinson reports that all Caribbean countries have passed the following legislation dealing with domestic violence:

The Bahamas Sexual Offence and Domestic Violence Act, 1991; Barbados Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act, 1992, Cap

> 130a; Belize Domestic Violence Act, 1992; Bermuda Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act, 1997; British Virgin Islands Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, 1992; Cayman Islands Summary Jurisdiction (Domestic Violence) Law, 1992; Guyana Domestic Violence Act, 1996; Jamaica Domestic Violence Act, 1995; St Lucia Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, 1995; St Vincent and the Grenadines Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, 1995; Trinidad and Tobago Domestic Violence Act, 1991.
>
> (Robinson 1999a: 5)

Independent Caribbean countries ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 39). States have also introduced legislative reform to remove some of the more punitive measures adversely affecting women, some with a broader scope than others. Between 1976 and 1985 the Barbadian state introduced reform in twelve pieces of legislation ranging from the Marriage Act to the Accident Compensation (Reform) Act (Bureau of Women's Affairs 1985). Between 1974 and 1979 Jamaica, Antigua, Barbados and Grenada established women's bureaux, women's desks, advisory committees or some model of a national government machinery to promote the advancement of women (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 33). By 1994 eleven countries reported having national policy statements on women of which nine had been ratified by governments (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 35). These developments reveal changes in the material relations of gender. They have the potential to positively influence women's access to material resources as well as status, power and privilege.

Legislative reforms like these underscore critical moves in the gender systems of post-colonial states. By themselves they will not end gender-based relations of domination. However, they capture instances of the state's willingness to examine and alter some aspects of its gender system. Additionally they illustrate the depth of the material and ideological conditions of inequality that exist for women.

But these fundamental material changes are layered over with archaic gender ideologies on women's gender role-identities, which seriously restrict women's real gains. Tracey Robinson's central

thesis, which I share, is that,

> the general trend of constitutional interpretation in the Caribbean demonstrates a disturbing commitment to preserving the status quo that necessarily perpetuates a patriarchal vision of society, severely circumscribing women's ability to participate as equal citizens in post-colonial Caribbean states.
>
> (Robinson 1999a: 3)

Conclusion: toward the millennium round?

In keeping with its liberal foundations, Caribbean states sponsor mechanisms and legislation to effect legal equality but shy away from activities directly aimed at enhancing women's economic autonomy. The state does not examine the gender implications of economic crises and its consequences. The retrenchment of the welfare state and the implementation of IMF-sponsored structural adjustment policies have produced dire consequences for Caribbean women and their families. Caribbean states have also failed to connect widespread social, cultural and economic disruptions in women's lives to the shortcomings of existing development policy and practice. This has led to superficial analyses and irrelevant policies. The state ignores the contradictions between prioritizing the values of consumerism and mass consumption advocated by the modernization paradigm, and the increasing pauperization and subordination of many women and men:

> Caribbean women and men are expected to consume more to fuel the economy, but the welfare state is shrinking. Certain services of education, welfare, and health are returned to the private domain to be supplied by women's unpaid labor at great cost to their material and psychological well being.
>
> (Barriteau 1995: 154)

Ideologically, relations of gender are at their worst for Caribbean women. Women now exist in an hostile climate of gender relations. This hostility is fed by men and women who argue that the Caribbean feminist movement exists to emasculate and marginalize men. Repeated newspaper articles and editorials speak of the damage done to boys by being raised in female-headed households, attending

co-educational schools and being taught primarily by female teachers (Barriteau 1994: 283). This is a fairly pernicious charge since an average of 40 per cent of households in the Anglophone Caribbean are headed by women. There is increasing information on incidences of violence against women, which is due to several factors. Women are more likely to report these and seek help and protection. With the adverse economic climate of the last decade, some men have taken out their frustrations on women. Several men admit to feeling hostile to, and threatened by, women whom they assume are gaining material and psychological advantages over them. The problems of boys and educational achievement are very serious and require the full attention of state institutions but they must not be used as a red herring to halt or reverse policies to remove institutionalized, systemic discriminations in women's lives.

Material relations of gender have improved significantly for Caribbean women since the beginning of this century. Caribbean states deserve some credit for guaranteeing equality of access to basic resources. However, there is still no gender justice. Forms of gender discrimination are many and nuanced. The basic belief in a subordinate role for women still exists and is often reflected in state policy as well as cultural expressions. Women's contradictory position in society is complicated by some negative developments for Caribbean men. The fact that the ratio of women to men at the UWI is now 70:30 produces a range of interpretations, none concerned with how men construct their gender identities or what they subscribe to or reject in prevailing gender ideologies on masculinity. The troubling statistics on men involved in crime and especially a drug subculture is simplistically blamed on women's new gender identities: the women 'who refuse to be women and take their God ordained role in societies'. These simplistic analyses never entertain a backward glance at the rapid material gains in the international political economy of drug running and money laundering *vis à vis* the creeping economic death of traditional 'male' employment in agriculture and manufacturing. Reactionaries and misogynists are unwilling or incapable of analysing the pivotal changes in our gender systems. They offer silly explanations in place of serious investigations.

Whatever inequities men experience, they are not grounded in or supported by a societally or individually held belief in the basic inferiority of men. Gender ideologies still construct men as superior to

women and as primary citizens in the public and private domains. The legacy lingers. Prevailing gender ideologies construct men as superior yet there are negative economic and sociological consequences in the experience of 'manhood' for many, especially working-class men. We need to know more about what informs the content of the concepts of Caribbean masculinity. We need investigations informed by the methodologies of gender analysis to attempt to unravel what it means to be 'male', 'masculine' and 'man' in our societies.

There are dimensions to men's lives that feminist discourses and feminist theorizing do not capture because they were not intended to do so. We cannot assume that, because feminism requires a commitment to gender justice, the conceptual tools of our analysis will necessarily do that for men. Feminist theories developed a set of critical tools to expose why, across time and cultures, women have systematically experienced relations of domination. Men enter these analyses at times directly and at other times tangentially. Feminist analyses have correctly centered on women's lived experiences. We need ongoing theorizing of masculinity to engage with the theoretical work required to achieve two ends. It should deconstruct masculinity, it should interrogate it as to why gender identities of masculinity and the gender ideologies nurturing masculinity have produced, and continue to reproduce, hegemonic masculinities. We need a body of scholarship that approaches Caribbean masculinity in all its complexities but does not surrender to a compensatory project. This scholarship would resist the omniscient standpoint, the redemption factor and the new status of 'man the victim'. This should seek to locate men in Caribbean society, subject to relations of gender, but generally benefiting from the oppositional, hierarchical categories created between men and women.

In the meantime, we have to recognize that, despite the long-overdue and necessary material gains for women, Caribbean gender systems continue to be unstable and unjust. As we approach the twenty-first century reactionaries have a choice. They can abandon nostalgia and come to terms with the fact that gender systems have changed and will continue to do so in response to the interaction of individual, societal and international modifications. Or they can bury their heads in the mythology of the nineteenth century. The developments of the twentieth century have escaped them. Unfortunately, the past is never available. There is no second round.

4

Constructing Gender Containing Women: Promoting Gender Equity in Caribbean States

> Since the beginning of the 1990s, all the Latin American and Caribbean countries have completed the process of setting up national mechanisms for the advancement of women. This does not mean that the State as a whole has been transformed into a structure that generates gender equity; nor does it mean that the majority of government offices with responsibility for this issue have access to the means and resources necessary to accomplish their specific functions of promoting equality of opportunity for women and for men to participate in the life of society and to make use of their abilities.
>
> (ECLAC 1998: 2)

> The GAD approach aims for full equality of women within the framework of economic development. … In GAD as well as in WID, however, the original feminist concerns are diluted and appear in an instrumental garb; women are 'added' on all levels and all spheres. GAD, as an approach, does not fundamentally question the assumption of the dominant development paradigm itself, which is firmly rooted within the logic of modernization and the economic growth model.
>
> (Braidotti *et al*. 1994: 82–3)

Between 1975 and 1992 all Caribbean countries established some form of national mechanism to represent women's interest to their

respective societies and to international development agencies as shown in Table 2.1, Chapter 2.

These machineries started with much idealism but with very little conceptual or programmatic clarity on what they were exactly expected to do (Gordon 1984; ECLAC 1998). States introduced these mechanisms to satisfy national and international demands that they pay more attention to the political and economic citizenship rights of women. The response was to provide mechanisms that recognized women's relevance to modernizing state systems through their traditional roles as reproducers of the labor force and care givers in families or kinship groups. The original mandate has never been addressed. Caribbean states have not resolved whether or not women's full economic independence and political citizenship should engage public policy.

As Caribbean states enter the twenty-first century there is now even greater ambiguity as to whether these desks, bureaux, divisions, departments or ministries should maintain a focus on, or interest in, women as citizens who have been subjected and continue to experience different forms of institutionalized gender-based discrimination. The policy confusion leading to the evaporation of policies on women is additionally complicated by the colliding of these weak institutional mechanisms with two developments. They are a recognition of the limitations of WID discourse and the ascendancy of the male marginalization thesis. These three features have become intertwined and have produced perverted outcomes for women.

Institutional mechanisms within the state

Institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equity within Caribbean states have been historically weak and ill defined. Governments are relatively pleased with what they have put in place for what they state is the advancing of women's economic and political citizenship. Table 4.1 reveals Caribbean countries' ranking on the UNDP's GDI. Several have even assumed they have gone too far on behalf of women to the detriment of Caribbean men. Through changes in policy directives to women's ministries, the states in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, Antigua-Barbuda and St Kitts–Nevis have articulated a need to give the same attention to men's issues (Harris 1999; *Barbados Advocate* 14 May 1999). The

Table 4.1 Comparative Rank of Caribbean Countries on the 1995 and 1998 Gender Development Index

	1995		*1998*		
Country	*Rank in Caribbean*	*Rank in world*	*Rank in Caribbean*	*Rank in world*	*Change in world rank*
Barbados	1	11	1	16↘	−5
Bahamas	2	26	2	21↗	+5
Trinidad and Tobago	3	36	3	38↘	−2
Jamaica	5	52	6	65↘	−13
Guyana	8	70	9	95↘	−25
Cuba[a]	4	47	7	69↘	−22
Suriname[b]	6	54	5	63↘	−9
Belize[c]	–	–	4	56	–
Dominican Republic[a]	7	69	8	81↘	−12
Haiti[d]	9	105	10	144↘	−39

Notes: [a] Non CARICOM country; [b] Member of CARICOM July 1998; [c] No data for 1995; [d] Member of CARICOM July 1999.
No data available for countries of OECS and British dependencies.

Source: UNDP Human Development Reports 1995, 1998.

feeling of satisfaction surrounding the cumulative initiatives in the post-independent, nation-building period, is not weighed against what has been introduced and whether these mechanisms were ever allowed to develop the capacity to tackle the deeply entrenched ideology of women's inherent inferiority as citizens.

ECLAC examined the efforts by Caribbean and Latin American states to promote gender equity and produced a schema that identified the structural framework for assessing these efforts. This includes the legal mandate and position of the machinery within the state, staffing, source of funding, functions and sustainability of programs (ECLAC 1998: 7–13). When Caribbean mechanisms are held against this framework their fragility and inadequate capacity for promoting gender equity becomes very obvious.

Compared with some Latin American countries, no Caribbean country enjoys any degree of autonomy in state structures. None of them has a separate ministry, institute or any autonomous body

within the state. The women's machinery in Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, two British dependencies, is attached to the office of the Chief Minister. In the latter there have been discussions about moving the desk to a Ministry of Family Affairs.[1] In all the other countries the mechanisms exist within a ministry. In Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Dominica, Belize, St Kitts–Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Lucia the machinery is included as a portfolio in a ministry and also mentioned in the name of the ministry. The third UN ECLAC ministerial meeting, held in Trinidad and Tobago in October 1999, regarded this as a source of visibility for the mechanisms and recommended, wherever possible, this practice be retained. After twenty-five years women's machineries are pleading with states to protect their visibility.

There is a wide range of ministerial attachments: the Grenadian state has a Ministry of Housing, Women's Affairs, and Social Security; Trinidad and Tobago has a Ministry of Gender and Culture Affairs; Dominica's ministry is Community Development and Women's Affairs while St Kitts–Nevis has Health and Women's Affairs, a reversal of the ordering of the portfolios thirteen years ago. In the Vincentian state the machinery is located in the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Women's Affairs, while in Belize it is the Ministry of Human Resources, Women's Affairs and Youth Development.

All of these mechanisms exist within traditional sites in the state. Theoretically a location in the Ministry of Finance or Economic Affairs seems to suggest greater access to resources and higher ranking since these are the portfolios of Prime Ministers. With the exception of the dependent territories, bureau heads were adamant that they did not want to be located within Ministries of Finance. Those who previously had that experience noted the Prime Ministers never took their matters to cabinet and they competed with issues that ranked as far more important than their programs. This emphasizes the importance of consultation on the ground before policy recommendations are made.

In Barbados, Bahamas, and Antigua-Barbuda the mechanism is subsumed within a ministry. In Barbados, the Bureau of Women's Affairs will become the Bureau of Gender Affairs in the recently created Ministry of Social Transformation. Accordingly, it loses visibility since, prior to this, it was included in the name of a particular

ministry. In Bahamas it is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while in Antigua-Barbuda it has become the Directorate of Gender Affairs within the Ministry of Health. According to the ECLAC study none of the Caribbean mechanisms was ranked high enough in the state's hierarchy to provide the degree of autonomy and the level of power that would supposedly enable them to secure compliance with their decisions (ECLAC 1998: 7).

The national machineries have all been created by executive order, government resolution, or cabinet mandate. Their source of funding is governments' annual budgetary allocations. The British Virgin Islands has one staff member while seven other countries had between two and five members. More significantly, while they all reported on carrying out coordinating, regulatory, advisory, and promotional functions, in reality their greatest success was in promotion, notably creating national visibility for women's issues. They neither had the staff, the financial resources, nor the executive capacity to do more. ECLAC concluded that all the offices had achieved some degree of success in advocacy and limited programming in the area of domestic violence, but the machineries lacked substantive power.

Limitations of the WID discourse

Thirty years ago, when the field and disciplinary focus on women in developing countries took off, the underlying assumptions were that the process of development bypassed women and that national and international development policies should ensure that women were integrated into development policies and planning. It assumed that women were external to that process and specific strategies could be devised to ensure their inclusion.[2] It regarded the process of development itself as unproblematic for women (Moghadam 1992). The persistent work done by American feminists like Irene Tinker and others to lobby for the Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act contributed to creating an international policy framework to support the research of Ester Boserup's thesis on the marginalization of women in developing countries.

However, flaws soon surfaced in this discourse. Several factors influenced the incapacity of the WID focus to comprehend the

complex and multi-layered realities of women in the South. At one level fundamental cultural differences were elided, misunderstood or misinterpreted. The majority of the front-line studies forming the discourse was generated by policy-makers and feminists from industrialized societies writing from their viewpoints about the problems of women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.[3] They filtered their understandings, their definitions of problems and their prescriptions for improvements through Western lenses (Mohanty 1991; Barriteau 1994).

Well meaning though their research and advocacy efforts may have been,[4] the researchers mapped their concerns and their diagnoses of what was wrong for women in the North on the situations of women in the South (Tinker 1976: 33; Parpart 1995: 229). The dominant political and economic paradigms of the day and their methodologies defined the contours and limits of this research. The models they worked with contained inherent contradictions that they imported into the discourse on 'Women in Development' (Bourque and Warren 1987). The ease with which these well-intentioned development specialists could bypass both the differing historical and cultural specificities of the South, and the contradictory knowledges they offered, pointed to deep epistemological fissures in what could properly constitute knowledge.

Their analyses and advocacy were driven primarily by liberal feminist, and to a lesser extent socialist feminist theorizing. These dominant theoretical frames shaped the earlier studies of women in the South. The conceptual tools they offered either devised strategies for incorporating women into development or warned of the adverse impact of development as defined (Tinker and Bo Bramsen 1976; Goetz 1988; Sen and Grown 1987). These theorists and practitioners studied or planned for women's economic activities by concentrating on their waged or unpaid labor in sustaining capitalist production, or as economic actors in the informal economy (Beechey 1977; Gardiner 1979; Duarte 1989). These conceptual frameworks provided valuable insights into the problems Caribbean women experience(d) but, on the whole, they were ill equipped to grasp the multiple realities of women in Caribbean countries.

Their use spawned an excessive identification of women's work with subsistence or reproduction. It minimized the significance of the strategies Caribbean women have used to survive economic and

other adversities (Barrow 1986) and obscured the extent to which women became involved in other sectors of the economy.

Liberal feminism and Women-in-Development

Liberal feminist theory in particular emphasized the homogeneity of women's experiences and prescribed integrating women into development by involving them more actively in public life. The strategies advocated providing expanded job opportunities and thus integrating women into the modern labor market. The approaches stressed egalitarianism: their aim was to develop strategies and action programs aimed at minimizing the disadvantages of women in the production sector. They believed this would end a main source of discrimination against women (Rathgeber 1990: 490). The ideological undercurrent of the modernization paradigm of neoclassical economics was never made explicit but it influenced liberal feminists to assume women who were marginalized were located in the informal economy. The urban and rural dichotomy of the modernization paradigm parallels the formal and informal, public and private, production and reproduction, artificial divide of the economies of the South (Bromley 1978: 1033). They recommended incentives for moving women closer and, eventually, into the formal sector. One such development strategy is the investment in human capital – an approach often used by the IBRD and other international development agencies.

The majority of the projects and programs that emerged in the past three decades were rooted in liberal feminist prescriptions. However, a major limitation of liberal feminist approaches is that they tended to be ahistorical. They often overlooked the impact of race, class and culture. They did not problematize relations of gender nor were these prescriptions driven by a feminist intent to expose and overturn adverse relations of gender. They believed that gender relations would change by themselves as women became full economic partners in development (Rathgeber 1990: 490–5).[5] Liberal feminists viewed the formal economic sphere as gender neutral and believed women would benefit from this neutrality. The earliest studies and programs on women in development were therefore informed by a liberal feminist 'faith in the efficiency of the modernization project' (Goetz 1988: 418). This position is even more

problematic when we recognize that women's rights to full economic citizenship have been glossed over. Ongoing threatening changes in the regional and global political economy make states more reluctant to consider these.

Socialist feminism and Women-in-Development

Socialist feminist theorizing also posed challenges for women in the South although its weaknesses did not outweigh its usefulness in revealing pernicious conditions and experiences affecting women as workers in capitalist economies. Socialist feminists come closer to detecting the ideological dimensions to women's economic dependency and how this predisposes women to be more vulnerable than men in poverty (Lister 1995: 28).

Their concern with conditions of women in the South emerged during the latter half of the 1970s. It grew out of a dissatisfaction with the explanatory limitations of modernization theory. They were especially concerned that modernization theory could present an argument that the exclusion of women from earlier development strategies was an inadvertent oversight (Rathgeber 1990: 492). Socialist feminist theorizing assumed the development process made women central to capitalist production and viewed their involvement as more harmful than beneficial. Accordingly, women in the South provided cheap, expendable sources of labor (Safa 1981).

Their work also underscored the centrality of women in development processes. It challenged a basic assumption of liberal feminism that women could be brought into development, integrated into the process as a result of intervention strategies, international aid or concerned scholarship. Socialist feminists proved women are significant economic actors. In the context of the Caribbean, women have been economic producers since the introduction of slave labor regimes of plantation agriculture in the seventeenth century. However, they paid insufficient attention to the social relations of gender within classes or across classes. As Jane Flax argues, they locate the fundamental cause of gender arrangements in the organization of production or the sexual division of labor (Flax 1990a: 46). Consequently socialist feminist research on women in development focused on domestic workers, women's unpaid household work and women in industrial factories.

By focusing on women's informal economic activities or as wage workers, liberal and socialist feminist approaches to development imply that women who do not fit these categories are excluded from gender discrimination. Their work raises questions about the experiences of groups of women that have been obscured and the reasons why their experiences remain marginalized. Chapter 5 reveals the complications created for women entrepreneurs in Barbados, a group that does not fit the homogenizing categories of the WID discourse.

Gender-and-Development and women?

By the late 1970s to early 1980s, feminist scholars (followed somewhat later by development practitioners) recognized the inadequacies of earlier conceptual frames. Feminist investigations of the organization of everyday life and how it affected women became richer and more nuanced. The labeling and establishment of theoretical camp grounds yielded to an appreciation of earlier insights even as the limitations of earlier formulations were critiqued. Ongoing feminist investigations of women's shifting realities, continually punctuated by experiences of male domination, generated the refinement of the concept of social relations of gender.

Gender became the latest feminist tool to be used to attempt to unravel the persistence of women's secondary treatment and status in contemporary societies. As the concept evolved it benefited from many new currents in feminist theorizing. Jane Flax conceptualized gender both as a thought construct or category that helped us to comprehend particular social worlds and histories, and as a central social relation that partially shapes all other social relations and activities (Flax 1990a: 45). Joan Acker argued that the development of the concept as an analytic category resulted from attempts to find new avenues into the diverse and complicated problems of explaining the extraordinary persistence, throughout history and across societies, of the subordination of women (Acker 1990: 145). Joan Scott theorized gender as a constitutive element of social relationships, based on perceived differences between the sexes, and as a primary way of signifying relations of power (Scott 1986: 1067).

Jane Flax's theorizing of the concept is particularly helpful in locating earlier feminist contributions along a continuum of feminist investigations. She states:

> Feminist theorists have offered a variety of interesting casual explanations including the sex/gender system, the organization of production or sexual division of labor, child-rearing practices, and processes of signification or language. These all provide useful hypotheses for the concrete study of gender relations in particular societies, but each explanatory scheme also seems to me to be deeply flawed, inadequate and overly deterministic.
>
> (Flax 1990a: 46)

Somewhere between the inadequacies of the WID approach and new theorizing informed by the social relations of gender the Gender-and-Development (GAD) approach emerged. Unfortunately, the sophisticated and rich insights the social relations of gender brought to comprehending women's conditions never permeated its adoption by international development agencies seeking to move beyond the limitations of the WID approach.

The GAD approach does constitute a powerful critique of the WID/development policy approaches to women. GAD specialist Eva Rathgeber argues it is rooted in the theorizing of socialist feminists and bridges the gap left by modernization theories. She states it links relations of production to relations of reproduction and incorporates all aspects of women's lives in its analyses. The evidence in the twentieth-century Caribbean proves this is not true. However, Rathgeber insists that the GAD perspective explores and incorporates the connections among the contradictions of gender, class, race and development. She maintains that GAD transcends the predominant WID focus of designing intervention and affirmative action strategies to achieve a better integration fit into development efforts. According to her, GAD emphasizes a fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions (Rathgeber 1990, 1992). She identifies nine key characteristics of GAD:

1 Starts from a holistic perspective, looking at the totality of social organization, economic and political life in order to understand the shaping of particular aspects of society.

2 Is concerned with the social construct of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and to men.
3 Welcomes the potential contributions of men who share a concern for issues of equity and social justice.
4 Analyzes the nature of women's contribution within the context of work done both inside and outside the household including non-commodity production.
5 Rejects the public/private dichotomy which commonly has been used as a mechanism to undervalue family and household maintenance work performed by women.
6 Gives special attention to the oppression of women in the family and enters the so called 'private sphere' to analyze the assumption upon which conjugal relationships are based.
7 Emphasizes the participation of the state in promoting women's emancipation, seeing it as the duty of the state to provide some of the special services which women in many countries have provided on a private and individual basis.
8 Sees women as agents of change and stresses the need for women to organize themselves politically.
9 Recognizes the importance of class solidarities and class distinctions but argues that the ideology of patriarchy operates within and across classes to oppress women.

(Rathgeber 1990)

Rathgeber identifies a major operational constraint that has been ignored in the institutional rush to implement GAD. She states GAD does not lend itself to integration into ongoing development strategies and programs. Instead, to be effective a GAD strategy demands commitment to structural change and power shifts which are unlikely to be found in either national mechanisms or international agencies. Rathgeber cautions it is not easy to bridge the gap between Women-in-Development or Women-and-Development at a practical level. She warns that 'projects undertaken from a gender perspective are likely to have far reaching implications which question the very structure of the societies in which they are based. They are likely to be politically sensitive and personally threatening to members of privileged elite groups' (Rathgeber 1992: 25).

But this is precisely what did not happen in the implementation of GAD strategies in the region. The four Caribbean countries in which GAD strategies have been explicitly attempted did not question societal structures, nor question any aspect of the political economy of their respective state structures. Doing so would mean confronting the patriarchal character of Caribbean state institutions and the inherent inequities in their ethos and practices.

Instead, in the name of GAD, new gender-informed programming concentrated on 'main-streaming' gender and development issues. Examining the GAD approach in the region reveals seductive terminology, fuzzy concepts and even blurrier policy prescriptions. These challenges are not embedded in the scholarship on the social relations of gender. The net effect is a disappearance of women as subjects even though the realities of adversity still remain. These are seen in persistently higher unemployment ratios, declining or marginal participation in political leadership in Westminister parliamentary systems, and increased levels of reported cases of domestic and sexually motivated violence (ECLAC 1999).

Rosi Braidotti and colleagues note that gender training with its tools of gender analysis and gender planning became institutionalized in most development agencies by the late 1980s (Braidotti *et al*. 1994: 82). No one seemed quite sure what gender training and gender planning were although numerous manuals, models and approaches mushroomed to impart their skills to countries in the South.

In 1992, Pat Ellis Associates produced 'An Assessment of Gender Training in the Caribbean'. The objective was to 'determine the state of the art in gender training in the Caribbean. A survey was conducted in seven countries of the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) and Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados' (Pat Ellis Associates 1992: 1). The study revealed that 'the majority of trainers and institutions do recognize the importance of achieving gender equity within their societies and do, to some extent, understand the relationship between gender and development and the implications of this for bringing about change in existing gender relations' (Pat Ellis Associates 1992: 1). The paper defined four key concepts, none of which included the social relations of gender. However, in the explanation of gender training the paper noted 'a few respondents were of the view that gender training

is not normally related or linked to feminist theory' (Pat Ellis Associates 1992: 2). It marked a trend that continues today.

In 1999 the Gender Affairs Division of the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs, Government of Trinidad and Tobago produced a 198-page manual on 'Training and Sensitization in Gender Development'. It managed to do this without using the word feminist once or mentioning feminist contributions to theorizing the social relations of gender. The manual defines gender as 'the roles that men and women play and the relation that arises out of these roles. Gender also refers to the social programming of behaviour so that men and women act, behave and relate in ways that their society expects and accepts, thereby conforming to their norms and values' (Trinidad and Tobago 1999: 21).

The most sophisticated and systematic attempt to implement a GAD strategy in the Caribbean was introduced by the Commonwealth Secretariat Division of Gender and Youth Affairs in 1998. The Secretariat identified gender main-streaming as one of the key strategies to be used to work towards gender equality. It created its Gender Management System (GMS) to facilitate all aspects of gender main-streaming. It defined a GMS as a 'network of structures, mechanisms and processes *put in place within an existing organizational framework*, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of main-streaming gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1999: 11).

The success of the GMS depends on the functioning of a complex, cumbersome web of processes each with sub-systemic components. They involve an enabling environment, GMS structures, GMS mechanisms and GMS processes. But the complexity of the mechanism is not the alarming feature. The GMS intends to 'transform the structures within societies that create and perpetuate gender and other inequalities' by putting the GMS into existing bureaucratic structures within the state (Commonwealth Secretariat 1999: 12). The GMS is supposed to be the Commonwealth Secretariat implementation of a GAD strategy. This comes after it critiqued the WID approach for adopting an uncritical acceptance of existing social structures and aiming to integrate women into a better fit in the same.

The Commonwealth Secretariat piloted the GMS system in St Kitts for ten months in 1998. St Kitts is a country not noted for having any institutionalized, active state mechanism for dealing with women and gender issues prior to 1995, even though it has had a Ministry of Women's Affairs and Health since the mid-1980s (Harris 1999: 14). Neither does it have a strong, women's or activist movement in civil society. In the Anglophone Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, and Barbados all have established governmental structures with varying degrees of strength but with a relatively politicized women's movement. In the OECS countries, St Vincent and the Grenadines followed by Dominica have good institutional structure and leadership. Despite statements that the GMS needs an enabling environment made up of processes, mechanisms and structures, the existence of these were bypassed or overlooked in other countries because of the expediency of guaranteed political entry.

If the Commonwealth Secretariat could not work in the countries with potentially the greatest capacity to absorb the GMS, then it should have returned to the drawing board. It is wasting time and financial resources to try to implement a complex system riddled with internal contradictions in a country where institutional capacity and an enabling environment have to be developed simultaneously with the implementation of the new tool.

Sonja Harris, in a report on gender main-streaming in Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Montserrat, concluded that all the countries display limitations in their understanding of the technical policy/planning requirements of both the WID and GAD approaches (Harris 1999: 3). More significantly, she found there was confusion in the region as to:

- the legitimacy of continuing to focus on women given male 'underachievement' in education;
- the perception that male/female *relations* is the correct interpretation of the 'gender' focus;
- the perceived need to reach out to men in programming; e.g. in Health as women and children are already receiving services; and
- whether service delivery, or integrating 'the gender factor' in planning and programming, is the way to go and what organizational structure is required to manage the priority focus.

(Harris 1999: 3)

Whether or not the erasure of women's multiple realities was intended, this is fast becoming the outcome. For example, Harris reports that women have been losing jobs in St Lucia, Jamaica and Montserrat since 1995 (Harris 1999: 28). In Barbados, women's unemployment rose in 1998 (Central Bank 1999). With the exception of Montserrat, whose immediate social and economic problems stem from the eruption of the Soufriere volcano, jobs were lost through the effects of globalization, namely the closure of free zone factories, or in the informatics and electronic industries. In St Kitts–Nevis, despite the fear of women outperforming men educationally, there are no women elected of the 11 elected Parliamentarians and no female Chief Executive Officers in the private sector (Harris 1999: 12).

The national machineries' inability to maintain a focus on the adversity in women's lives as a way of responding to the male marginality thesis is a direct product of an integral misunderstanding of gender. The disappearance of 'women' from the discourse of development results from the undigested co-optation of some of the insights of more recent feminist theorizing without wanting to anchor those insights in their radical, subversive origins.

A major concern unexamined in reviewing the failure of GAD to mainstream gender is the fact that, as Eva Rathgeber admits, 'gender' is accepted as a more neutral term than 'woman' (Rathgeber 1995: 204). If, as she argues, GAD ultimately provides a deeper analysis and makes demands for changes that will affect more profoundly the structure of current social, economic and cultural processes, why have the policies coming from a GAD approach not done so? Why has gender been embraced as a more neutral term?

In the Caribbean, commentators and officials historically hostile to any initiatives that reveal women's subordinate status and seek to change it consistently use gender to mean the end of a focus on women and the channeling of resources to men. Many women and men in the Caribbean do not understand gender to have any connection to feminism or feminist theory and become very angry when these connections are made. Rosi Braidotti and her colleagues perceive the new problem posed by the uncritical replacement of WID with GAD. They state:

> The GAD approach aims for full equality of women within the framework of economic development. … In GAD as well as in

> WID, however, the original feminist concerns are diluted and appear in an instrumental garb; women are 'added' on all levels and all spheres. GAD, as an approach, does not fundamentally question the assumption of the dominant development paradigm itself, which is firmly rooted within the logic of modernization and the economic growth model.
>
> (Braidotti *et al*. 1994: 82–3)

The findings of Sonja Harris substantiate this. Rathgeber's insistence that a GAD perspective 'leads to a fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions, to a rethinking of hierarchical gender relations and ultimately to the loss of power of entrenched elites, which will affect some women as well as men' (Rathgeber 1995: 206) has not happened in the Caribbean. It will not happen here if the conceptual understanding of gender and the programs that flow from the strategy continue to be as muddled as it is now.

Whether it intended to or not, the GAD perspective has resulted in women as subjects being substituted or confused with an analytical framework used to investigate the subjectivity of women. Like Rathgeber, I do believe analysing the social relations of gender could lead to a fundamental restructuring of traditional gender hierarchies. However, this must come from an expressed political will that recognizes the opposition to, and power relations in, pursuing gender justice. Instead, as an analytical frame, gender has been hijacked and divorced from its subversive, feminist roots. We are left with neutral (sterile) techniques and tools that are being used to erase women epistemologically or serve as an excuse for abandoning meaningful social action on behalf of women.

As implemented, the GAD strategy simplistically assumes that the institutions and personnel that were used to maintain WID approaches could unproblematically introduce a transformative agenda. Largely staffed by rotated, politically-appointed personnel, women's bureaux are supposed to initiate programs to transform relations of gender. The programs, sponsored by international development institutions, do not problematize the existing institutional structure and capacity and are, in fact, not interested in doing so. The contradictions between operationalizing a theoretical perspective that challenges power structures inherent in gender systems, and a larger framework that does not find anything wrong with the

way gendered relations adversely affect women, is never made obvious. The only clue we have that gender trouble is brewing is the caution that the term gender is more acceptable because it is more neutral. Why? The concept of gender has been sanitized, bleached of any association with critical feminist theory. It is the epistemological hijacking of the century.

Here is a basic fundamental dilemma that is misunderstood. *WID approaches focused on bringing women into the mainstream of supposedly neutral areas of state power* (Barriteau 1992: 31). *GAD focused on bringing gender into the mainstream of state power*. The ill-defined, poorly understood concept of gender is what is isolated as in need of advocacy work. The constituency of women as a subject for political activity has been substituted for a methodology. It is no wonder such confusion reigns.

At the very least, the WID strategy understood what it wanted to achieve. Its limitations did not arise from not grasping its objectives. Rather, they arose from whether the realized goals would be sufficient to alter development practice. What WID represented was a quantitative change in state bureaucracies and culture. The WID approach asked states to expand their capacity in dealing with women through allocating resources for personnel, bureaucracies, technologies and programs. The means of effecting the changes WID desired arose in the material relations of gender as analysed in Chapters 2 and 3. It in no way attempted to challenge the hierarchies embedded in gender ideologies, the construct of gender identities to create women as subordinate citizens, nor even to examine the burdens and penalties attached to the gender identities for women as well as men. WID approaches were not at all interested in exposing how the gender identities we hold and the prevailing gender ideologies influence access to material and non-material resources for women and men. WID offered a clear well-defined focus. It wanted to guarantee women's equal access to resources. WID failed because legislation and policies that provide for equality of access do not remove biases and prejudices in distribution.

Empowering women in the Caribbean or engendering development requires a fundamental reorganizing of political and economic culture. It necessitates a commitment to centralizing issues of women's economic and political citizenship. It requires qualitative change in the political economy of state systems. The political will

should come from changes in ideological relations of gender. It is the required follow-on from the limitations posed by WID, but this has not been undertaken. Instead of activities to reconceptualize and alter how states would deal with women informed by gender analysis, the GAD strategy facilitated the state's retreat from examining complications in women's lives. The retreat is called mainstreaming gender.

By the mid-1990s, all international development agencies were firmly wedded to implementing the GAD approach. After the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women gender mainstreaming became the buzz word and, from a feminist perspective of the Caribbean, regrettably the practice. Rosi Braidotti and her colleagues warned of the incapacity of development agencies:

> to influence global economic processes or patriarchal structures that have led to women's subordination and their disproportionate pauperization relative to men. WID's and GAD's effectiveness will depend entirely on the goodwill of governments in the South, mostly represented by men, and their willingness to allow for far-reaching improvements of women's status in their own countries'.
>
> (Braidotti *et al*. 1994: 83)

Gender and policy confusion in the Caribbean

As a result, as a focus of international development assistance, and national governmental policies and machineries, Caribbean women as subjects for initiatives by states are being effaced. Somewhere in the transition from feminist investigations to bureaucratic interventions, the meanings of gender became collapsed into a synonym for women and men, devoid of any understandings of hierarchies, power and privileges.

Jane Flax theorized that relations of gender are (more or less) relations of domination and that gender relations have been (more) defined and (imperfectly) controlled by men. She adds that men like women are implicated by gender. They are not exempt from being determined by gender relations even though men appear to be and (in many cases) are the wardens, or at least the trustees within a social whole (Flax 1990a: 45).

In the Eastern and Southern Caribbean the countries of St Lucia, Antigua-Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago have either changed from having Women's Bureaux or are in the process of changing. Few have stated any explicit reasons for these changes. In Barbados, in 1997, the then Minister of Women's Affairs, Rudolph Greenidge confirmed that the name would be changed (*Daily Nation*, 4 November 1997: 3). According to the minister, the suggestion for the name change 'was in keeping with world-wide trends for similar institutions. Instead of focusing on women they are focusing on equalization of gender' (*Daily Nation*, 4 November 1997: 3). In 1999, Owen Arthur, the Prime Minister of Barbados, announced the Bureau of Women's Affairs would be renamed the Bureau of Gender Affairs with a mandate to look after the interest of boys and men (*Advocate News*, 6 March 1999: 6). In St Vincent and the Grenadines the Bureau of Women's Affairs will be renamed the Bureau of Gender Equality (Olliviere 1999), and in Trinidad and Tobago, since 1997, there is now a Division of Gender Affairs. In St Lucia the Prime Minister, Dr Kenny Anthony, commented on the status of gender relations in the country on International Women's Day. Shortly after that the Bureau of Women's Affairs was renamed the Bureau of Gender Relations. Antigua and Barbuda have had a Directorate of Gender Affairs (Taitt 1998) but, as Chapter 3 shows, that state has never had an elected woman sit in Parliament. To cap all these changes, the Women and Development Programme of the CARICOM secretariat was renamed the Gender and Development Programme in an executive management meeting in January 1999 (Tang Nain 1999).

Caribbean male marginality and gender equity

Contributing to the confusion in the region is the ascendancy of the male marginalization thesis in the 1990s. This is represented by the writings of Professor Errol Miller (UWI) but has in fact extended far beyond any arguments he advanced in his works on the subject (Miller 1991; 1994). Miller states in a more recent paper that the essence of his work is not to deny feminist scholarship in respect to our findings and claims concerning the marginalization of women within patriarchy. Rather it is to add the dimension of the marginalization of men of subordinate groups within societies in which race

and class have been actively contested as criteria for organizing society (Miller 1997: 36).

Miller arrives at a number of startling conclusions in his case study of the marginalization of the black male in Jamaica. He does so very cautiously by seeking to qualify each of these statements. Some of these include: primary school teaching and teacher education shifted from being male dominated to female dominated because 'those holding central positions in the society' wanted to restrict black men to agricultural and industrial labour occupations, they wanted to limit the upward mobility of black men in the society, they wanted to stifle the emergence of militant black educated men who could overthrow the power structure. He states, 'In a real sense the black woman was used against the black man' since a choice was made to allow black women to advance instead of black men through teacher education and elementary school teaching (Miller 1994: 124–31).

Miller concludes that the experience of black Jamaican men in being marginalized will become the experiences of all males of subordinate groups in patriarchal societies and goes on to list seven different groups of men regionally and internationally who can expect to share the fate of Jamaican black men. He attributes the creation of the women's lobby to 'the process that marginalizes the black male', rather than adverse conditions in women's lives forcing organization and articulation. Errol Miller's underlying thesis seems to be that men have an *a priori* right to the resources of the state over and above women and attempts to correct for the explicit denial of women's political and economic relevance are designed to punish men. Miller's arguments are construed popularly to mean women are to blame for all the educational problems men, especially young men, are experiencing (Miller 1994: 124–31).

He uses the term 'gender' very liberally in his analysis but does not define it. As critical as the concept is to his arguments, his understanding is regrettably limited to gender as a synonym for sex (Miller 1994: 127). By being incapable or unwilling to explore the power dynamics inherent in relations of gender Miller misses an excellent opportunity to provide an analysis of Caribbean gender relations from the perspective of men. Instead, he offers the masculinist equivalent of some streams of feminist analysis that reify women as permanent victims of men.

In his 1997 essay, Miller seems to have revised his earlier position. His conclusions bear repeating since they are unknown and are closer to feminist analyses of gender relations in the region. He states he does not hold the view that male under-achievement is caused by the pedagogical approaches of female teachers in schools or the socialization practices of single mothers in the homes (these are all popular arguments in the Caribbean). Rather, he views the feminization of teaching, the matrifocal forms of an increasing number of households, the poor participation of boys in school and the under-achievement of men at the work place as symptoms of the intense conflict and competition among various groups that comprise society. Miller's final statement is that the observed patterns are not the result of the absence or presence of male role models but the changing definition and apportionment of the roles themselves (Miller 1997: 44).

Miller's arguments, though largely misunderstood by their populist proponents, provide a theoretical crutch for the growing misogyny in the region. When the male marginalization thesis coincided with changes in state and international development approaches to women, Caribbean states became convinced it was time to alter their focus on women.

But what was this earlier focus? Have Caribbean states ever conceived of women as enjoying full economic, political and cultural citizenship when they had opportunities to correct for the distortions introduced by colonialism? In Chapter 5 I examine how the independent Barbadian state constructed relations of gender for women. When Caribbean states indicate they are shifting from a central focus on women to a focus on gender, this is what is being abandoned, a project that has barely begun.

5

Gender Systems in an Independent Caribbean State: the Barbadian Case

> … a threefold process whereby the feminine body was analyzed – qualified and disqualified – as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it; whereby, finally, it was placed in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure), the family space (of which it had to be a substantial and functional element), and the life of children (which it produced and had to guarantee, by virtue of a biologico-moral responsibility lasting through the entire period of the children's education … .
>
> (Foucault 1978: 104).

> National development projects geared toward increasing the health of the population, such as immunization campaigns, nutritional education programs, and the establishment of a network of primary health-care centers, all contribute to the 'accumulation of men', the complement to the 'accumulation of wealth'.
>
> (Dubois 1991: 11)

One of the ways Caribbean states assumed they could attain development objectives was by relying on carefully constructed, gendered, economic roles for women. Through the instruments of development policies and plans, Caribbean states create and strive to maintain asymmetric gender relations. Women, including business women, operate within the social, economic, political and

legal environment prescribed by the state. Just as there are multiple dimensions to the state and its power relations, so there are multiple ways in which the state interacts with women and creates and maintains gender-based relations of domination. Within Caribbean states women interact as clients, citizens, consumers, dependants and producers. The state's continuous redefinition and re-ordering of its gender relations set the parameters within which women exist and women entrepreneurs do business.

By focusing on gender as an analytical category and as a relation of domination, I reveal the power dimensions within the post-independent, modernizing Barbadian state. The state chooses to use gender relations to reinscribe gender roles in traditional ways. States enjoy some degree of leverage with internal mechanisms created during their nationalistic phase. The Barbadian state has chosen, and continues, to reinforce gender roles that place women at a disadvantage in society.

In analysing the economic and social relations of gender as forces within the politics of the Barbadian state, I reveal how the state attempts to use women's bodies to achieve development objectives. Foucault (1978: 108) argues that, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, women's bodies were given meaning and subjected to modern science. This constructed meaning reduces women's sexuality to its reproductive functions and, in turn, deploys these functions to serve the interests of the modernizing state. Foucault's analysis identifies the principal approach the Barbadian and other Caribbean states have towards women. It also underscores the continuity of Enlightenment thought and practice on colonial and post-independent Caribbean society.

Colonial development planning

In 1945 the British government introduced formal development planning to the Barbadian colony (Barbados 1945; Beckles 1990). By 1954 Barbadian politicians had successfully instituted the cabinet system of government. This gave 'elected members of parliament more direct control in the legislative, executive and administrative affairs of the colony' (Howard 1989: 22). Parliamentarians became involved in, but not responsible for, the planning process. As ministers of government they had no veto powers over financial

and budgetary decisions of the colonial governor. However, in 1961 Barbadian politicians successfully negotiated full internal self-government from Britain and for the first time development policy became the responsibility of Barbadians (Barrow 1987).

Contrary to the criticisms made by liberal feminists the process of development had not ignored women nor marginalized their contributions to economic and social growth (Tinker 1976; De Figueroa 1976).[1] Far from ignoring women, the state incorporates women in development planning in very specific ways. Governments' allegiance to liberalism and its gendered approaches to women enable them to undertake a particular construct of women's economic roles with and within Caribbean states.

WID specialists and Caribbean governments paid careful attention to the mechanism of development planning, but for different reasons. WID or feminist scholars criticized development planning for ignoring women and excluding their economic interests (Boserup 1970; Beneria and Sen 1981; Beneria 1981; Kandiyoti 1990). Barbadian governments emphasized the importance of development planning as the principal means of obtaining national objectives. The governments define development planning as:

> a tool for ensuring maximum efficiency in the implementation of a development strategy or policy. It is an organized, conscious and continual attempt to select the best available alternatives to achieve specific goals. It involves an attempt to allocate scarce human, financial and natural resources in a rational manner and with optimum production results.
>
> (Barbados 1979–83; Barbados 1965–68)

This emphasis on rationality and optimum production is consistent with governments' reliance on, and faith in, the ability of neoclassical, liberal economic models to achieve development goals. It also indicates why WID specialists assumed women were ignored in the process of development planning. WID practitioners were also interested in rationality and optimum production. They wanted the allocation of scarce financial and natural resources extended to include women explicitly (Childers 1976). Ultimately, liberal feminists and WID specialists wanted to improve economic efficiency for women by integrating them into development planning. Either they

misinterpreted the different and particular ways women were already included in development plans, or (and additionally) they did not problematize the liberal concept of economic efficiency or how its attainment may be premised on obscuring the particular, gendered constraints women face as producers.

On a first reading of these plans,[2] it is tempting to conclude that these policy instruments are indifferent to the economic activities of women. Specific references to women are conspicuous by their infrequent occurrences. When they do occur they seem unrelated to macroeconomic policy. In the first plan formulated by an indigenous administration, the only direct references to women appear under education and mental health. In part one of the 1960–65 Plan the only reference to women or females is under the subhead 'Scholarships and Bursaries to the University College of the West Indies, Scholarship for Girls':

> It is also planned to establish a special scholarship for girls. At an annual cost of $2 000 per scholar, a total vote of $20 000 will be necessary during the Plan.
>
> (Barbados 1960–65: 41).

In the second phase of this plan women appear only in a discussion of mental health. The planners note the sudden increase in women needing psychiatric care and comment, 'The number of female patients admitted for treatment at the mental hospital continues to rise' (Barbados 1962–65: 27). The plan then earmarks $112 400.00 to provide fifty additional places for women at the psychiatric hospital (Barbados 1962–65: 52).

The plans appear gender neutral. There is no specific explicit or implicit recognition that these policies can and do have impact on women and men differently. All the plans are gendered; that is, they encode asymmetric power relations based on gender. They confer differential access to power, status, but more importantly, the resources of the state. All these policies are intended to benefit the citizens of the country equally. However, the state prescribes particular, unequal roles and responsibilities for women within development. These roles circumscribe their access to the policies that are assumed to be gender neutral. The Barbadian state defines women first as mothers and nurturers and second as citizens. Women access their rights as

citizens through their state-circumscribed roles as mothers. Women take this baggage with them when they participate in the public sphere. The state makes no attempt to recognize how the primary role it assigns to women affects how they participate as citizens.

Political parties and the creation of gender ideologies

Significant changes occurred in the development plans created in the 1970s and 1980s as compared with those of the 1960s. There are two distinct phases in the formulation of development policy in the post-colonial/independent era. These are characterized by the state's continuing construct of gender roles in society, differing emphases on the role of the state in development planning, and the state's policies on entrepreneurial development. The 1983–88 Plan is the first to differentiate between female and male citizens, and to recognize that women as citizens may face a differing category of experiences. It is also the first plan to recognize women and to include explicitly 'women's affairs' in a development plan:

> The subjects of community development, women's affairs and youth affairs were transferred to the Ministry of Information and Culture and grouped with culture in the division of culture.
>
> (Barbados 1983–88: 147)

The sudden appearance of the subject 'women's affairs' in the 1983–88 plan signaled wider changes in the political economy of the state. From 1976 to 1986, a new government administration determined state policy. The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) won the general election in 1976 and held state power for ten years until losing the 1986 election. It replaced the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) which had held political power from 1961 to 1976. The DLP shaped the character, institutions and practices of the early post-colonial/independent state. The policies and programs it designed demarcated the extent and range of the state's multiple relations with women. Of the nine development plans created in the post-colonial period six were written by DLP administrations. The DLP recaptured control of state power in 1986 and lost again to the BLP in 1994.

Both parties espouse similar liberal political and economic ideologies. They are equally committed to maintaining the Westminster

parliamentary system that they inherited from Britain. None of the philosophical statements of the parties indicates a departure from liberalism and its construct of asymmetrical gender roles. However, there are substantial differences in the ways in which both parties constructed and interpreted relations of gender in the powers and policies of the state.[3]

The DLP was the first government administration to deploy the full powers of the state. It was determined to depart from the minimalist, 'poor relief' orientation of British colonial policy. The party, and hence state policy, was heavily influenced by Fabian socialism between 1961 and 1976. This influence created a blend of political liberalism and social democracy. The economic policy was shaped by the Keynesian view of an extensive state involvement in the economy.

This hybrid of ideological influences stressed non-socialist, welfare collectivism. It represented attempts by the DLP government to reform the inequities of capitalism through social policy (Williams 1989: 21). This approach stressed the values of 'individual liberty with an efficient, compassionate capitalism' (Williams 1989: 21). The DLP believed that the provision of state welfare was necessary for national efficiency. Between 1961 and 1976 the DLP believed social policy should compensate for and support economic policy (Hannif 1987; Barbados 1965–68; Barbados 1969–72; Barbados 1973–77).[4] In the first post-colonial plan, the government observes that the separation of economic and social development is arbitrary and is done for clarity of analysis. The two main concepts guiding social planning are:

> (i) the need to improve the quality of human capital that is essentially and simultaneously required to utilize the economic and physical resources;
> (ii) the need to enable every citizen to participate in the economic and social life of the community on an equal footing.
>
> (Barbados 1969–72)

Despite its expanded state sector and its benevolent approach to capitalism, the state institutions created by the DLP articulated no official policy on women. The development plans and manifestoes created by the DLP between 1961 and 1976 reveal no deliberate

planning for women. However, although the institutions of the state enunciated no official policy, a deconstruction of these plans exposes the opposite. A construct of differentiated economic roles was created around women's reproductive functions. Traditional gender roles were deliberately inscribed into this phase of development planning. Unlike the post-1976 plans, the initial development programs mentioned the word 'women' whenever an issue was defined as involving women. These policy statements mentioned women in relation to issues of population, fertility, unemployment, health, and labor force participation.

The development plans designed by the BLP between 1976 and 1983 show this party to be more committed to economic liberalization and a reduced state sector. The party relied more on the conventional tradition of economic liberalism and began dismantling the welfare state created by the DLP over a fifteen-year period. The BLP state stressed economic policy over social policy between 1976 and 1986 (Barbados 1979–83; 1983–88).

The 1979–83 and 1983–88 Plans expose a radical reorientation of state policy. The discussions of the development strategies, objectives, and policies emphasize economic factors. The 1979–83 plan lists the objectives of the state's development strategy as:

> Maximising GDP growth and productive employment opportunities consistent with budgetary and balance of payments constraints; …
>
> Greater economic diversification through continued structural transformation of the economy and the development of a more diversified pattern of production of goods and services.
>
> (Barbados 1979–83)

The BLP continued to shape state policy in very economistic terms in its second plan. The main thrust of its economic strategy was to sustain an annual average growth rate of 3.5 per cent over the five-year period and to keep the economy on its export-oriented path (Barbados 1983–88: 37). The BLP also altered state policy to give the private sector greater responsibility in economic development. 'Within the context of this strategy the lead will have to be assumed by the private sector, working in close collaboration with the trade union movement' (Barbados 1983–88: 37).

The new social development strategy focuses on expanding the scope for employment, improving the facilities and amenities for the delivery of basic services, maintaining or enlarging the facilities through which welfare support is provided, and creating an environment in which cultural expression can flourish. Under social welfare, the specifics of the BLP state's program disclose plans to streamline services, revise the disbursement of funds from the unemployment levy and amalgamate welfare agencies (Barbados 1983–88: 41–2). These measures are designed to reduce the size and cost of the welfare infrastructure. It is not accidental that when the BLP state recognizes women it couches this recognition as part of a community development program.

This situation creates hierarchies of subordination for women. First, both administrations conceive of the state's policies on women as social policy. Social policy describes and demarcates governments' intentions that are assumed to be non-economic. Both political parties planned for women primarily through social policy. Insofar as the BLP minimizes the state sector and reduces the significance of social policy, women are further marginalized. Second, both parties conceive of economic policy as external to women's interests. When economic policies predominate in the pursuit of development goals, women's economic relations are neglected. This does not have to be so. However, the economic policies arising from neoclassical theories of development are premised on marginal productive roles for women.

The 1976 BLP administration is the first Barbadian government to overtly formulate a state policy on women. It is also the first political party to make women's issues part of a general election campaign. As such its construct of gender ideologies are more obvious. 'The BLP has long recognized that in the area of women's rights strong policy initiatives are required to end discrimination against women' (BLP 1976). In 1975 as the main opposition the BLP introduced a resolution in parliament:

> calling on government to set up a National Commission on the Status of Women with wide-ranging powers to inquire into, and report on, all areas of life in which women are discriminated against.
>
> (BLP 1976: 17)

The party promised, if elected, to:

> Establish on a permanent basis a National Commission on the Status of Women with powers to investigate all complaints of discrimination against women, and to keep under constant review and supervise and enforce all legislation and administrative decisions affecting women.
>
> Enact an equal pay act so that women will receive equal pay for equal work. This legislation will end discrimination against women at work and confer on the National Commission on the Status of Women powers of an equal opportunities commission.
>
> (Barbados 1978: vi)

The BLP won the 1976 elections and kept its campaign promise. It established the national commission on women in November 1976. The commission was empowered to inquire into and report upon:

(a) the citizenship and immigration laws, policies and practices so far as they affect women;
(b) the position of women in the civil and criminal laws especially the laws governing matrimonial property, marriage and divorce;
(c) income tax and estate succession duty legislation insofar as the same affects women;
(d) laws in their application to women and the role of women in the labour force of the Island;
(e) the employment, placing and promotion of women in the public service and in the private sector;
(f) the cultural and historical attitudes which lead to discrimination and prejudice against women making it difficult for them to realise their full potential;
(g) the mental and physical health of women, including all aspects of family planning and its application to women;
(h) education, including the availability of education for girls and women at all levels of the educational system;
(i) the one parent family with special reference to women's roles therein;
(j) laws and practices concerning the political rights of women;
(k) and such other matters in relation to the status of women in Barbados as may appear to the Commissioners to be relevant.

(Barbados 1978: vi–vii)

The BLP, like the DLP, displays no particular gender sensitivity.[5] The inclusion of Women's Affairs in the 1976 manifesto is a culmination of many factors. A main reason is the changes in the global political economy and the impact of the global women's movement that raised the level of consciousness among women and men locally. This is further fed by the pressure created by the United Nations Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975 (Alleyne 1992).

Henry Forde was instrumental in getting the party to support this measure. As Attorney General, he became the first minister to hold the Women's Affairs portfolio. Forde's endorsement of basic rights for women was critical in reforming the law in areas in which it was blatantly discriminatory. Under his supervision, the Ministry of legal affairs introduced reform in: the Marriage Act, the Property Act, the Domicile Reform Act, the Status of Children Reform Act, the Succession (Amendment) Act, the Married Women (Amendment) Act, the Vital Statistics Act, the Accident Compensation (Reform) Act, the Change of Names Act, the Maintenance Act and the Maintenance Rules, the Family Law Rules, and the Community Legal Services Act (Bureau of Women's Affairs 1985).[6]

These legislative reforms underscore the commitment of the government to implement the legal recommendations of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCOW). More important, the need for these legislative reforms illuminates the vast area of the law prejudicial to women and children within the state. These reforms constitute a critical move in the gender system of the Barbadian state. By themselves they will not end gender-based relations of domination. However, they capture an instance of the state's willingness to examine and alter its gender system. These reforms should be understood against changes in the national and regional political economy. They advance the state's intent of having women participate in the labor force. They also remove some of the more archaic legal restrictions on women that recreate their economic and psychological dependency on individual men.

Constructing gender roles in economic development

Despite the establishment of the NCOW and its election promises, the new BLP government did not refer to women in its first development plan. Instead, it became preoccupied with redefining gender

relations. Under the BLP administration, the state reorganized its relations with women. In some areas, these changes represented noticeable differences to earlier approaches. These policies also constitute the cornerstone of the state's construct of women's role in economic development.

This shift in policy achieves two things. It recognizes different concerns for women and it contains their subjective interests by subsuming these to the more general cause of community development. This is a significant admission for the state to make publicly. In the 1983–88 Plan the state outlines its policy on women under a subhead, Women's Affairs:

> The government considers that Women's affairs should be seen within the broad context of community development. It is government's intention to assist women in organizing themselves at the community level so that they can participate more fully in community matters many of which directly affect their welfare and to ensure that as many women as possible participate in the productive sector of the economy.
>
> (Barbados 1983–88: 153)

The state's recognition of gender-differentiated interests is simultaneously significant and contradictory. The state acknowledges the need to have an institutional mechanism on women, but it subordinates this to the division of community development. More disturbing than the inferior bureaucratic ranking of the Bureau of Women's Affairs is the state's redefinition of women's interest as being synonymous with, and best represented by, community interests. The conflation is so complete that the state does not see the need for the Bureau to have its own research staff:

> Community development officers who already have direct contact with the community will investigate and feedback the felt needs, aspirations and plans of women whilst also disseminating information from the department to the community.
>
> (Barbados 1983–88: 153)

These statements reflect the low priority given to institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equity in the Caribbean. The

plan creates the processes and relations by which the state will interact with women:

> It is also proposed to establish close links with the agencies of Government especially concerned with women so that ongoing concerns of women as they relate to those agencies, can be discussed, and an input from women's affairs can be made when decisions have to be made on matters pertaining to women.
>
> It is also proposed to establish a body made up of persons drawn from a cross section of the community to advise the minister on the interests of women generally.
>
> The Government will continue to grant assistance to women's organizations which are engaged in socially desirable programmes.
>
> The Government is aware of the high unemployment among women and it is committed to insuring that as many women as possible participate in the productive sectors of the economy. *It will be endeavouring to identify projects which have an income generating potential and will act as a channel for funding if a project is feasible and if a funding agency is willing to provide funds for its implementation*. (My italics.)
>
> (Barbados 1983–88: 153)

The state's first articulation of its policy on women is very problematic but also very revealing of the gender system operating in Barbados. It betrays many hidden assumptions about the perception of women's productive work and the reluctance of the state to promote it. This narrative also exposes the state's continuing quest for economic efficiency and rationality. The many qualifiers attached to its commitment to assist women make that commitment useless. The state is only interested in income-generating projects – that is, those that are economically efficient, and only those that are feasible – that is, those that can be rationalized. The statement admits to high unemployment among women but adopts a voluntaristic approach to curbing it. Ironically, the state harbors some skepticism about its own solutions to women's unemployment. These projects must prove their feasibility and then attract a funding agency. The state has no intention of committing its own financial resources to creating employment for women. Of course, governments recognize

that 'the annual budgets and estimates are the most influential tools of development policy while the development plans have been essentially indicative of government intentions' (Barbados 1988–93: 4).

Why should a funding agency be responsible for initiating programs to deal with this problem? It is clear that government assumes that women's employment is not a matter for economic policy. Resolving it can therefore be left to a non-governmental funding agency whose proposal first has to meet governmental approval. This policy also suggests that the state categorizes all issues relating to women, whether economic, political, or cultural, as social issues. Community development occupies a prominent position in the social policy of the Barbadian state. The location of women's affairs under community development indicates a determination by governments to consider all women's issues as non-economic, that is, not related to economic policy and not requiring the allocation of financial resources.

The 1988–93 Plan continues to subsume and conflate women's interests with community development:

> Community development programmes also enable government and other national organizations to assist more effectively with the problems of children, youth, women and the aged by locating them within a more clearly defined context.
>
> (Barbados 1988–93: 93)

The state intends to fulfill this by:

> Encouraging and facilitating the further development of youth and women's organizations and by placing greater emphasis on the development of programmes to assist women and youth in the improvement of the quality of their lives and the conditions of their communities.
>
> (Barbados 1988–93: 90)

The specific programs to effect this restate the promises of the 1983–88 Plan, with minor revisions. The language of the policies remain vague, indicating government's unwillingness to commit the state's financial resources to economic activities intended to

benefit women. Instead it intends to implement programs geared towards:

> Promoting in collaboration with respective governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations, projects geared towards the fuller integration of women in national development, with special focus on employment generation for women.
> (Barbados 1988–93: 92)

The state intends to foster entrepreneurship and expose potential young entrepreneurs to the strategies of business development. However, the plan does not mention entrepreneurship for women. Neither does it allocate any capital to promote jobs for women.

The first noticeable change between the two phases of policy formulation is in the language of planning. The language changed dramatically between 1979 and 1988. As the plans become more sophisticated the terminology becomes more mechanistic, technical and economistic. References to women and the term 'women' disappear altogether.

This seems paradoxical given that the plans are now created by the government that politicized women's affairs by incorporating it into its manifesto. This is the government administration which admitted that asymmetric gender relations exist in the state. However, there are changes in the national political economy that suggest that the term 'women' might disappear from the language used to describe the ideas and reasoning now informing economic planning. Reflecting the 1979–83 Plan, the state is now more committed to economic liberalization and there is greater reliance on the private sector in guiding development. Finally, the state is beginning to shed the Fabian, social democratic policies of the previous government.

In the two plans published between 1979 and 1988, the planners went out of their way to use sex-neutral language, but the cumulative effect is a very gendered discussion. In both plans, the BLP government manages to analyse population, employment, and the labor force without referring to women or men. This analysis is now done with ratios, rates and percentage changes. The 1979–83 Plan outlines the assumptions on population projections in the following manner:

> the pattern of mortality observed will continue at the same level; the level of fertility declines marginally; and a continuation of

> the level of emigration experienced in the post-censal period with some increase in the level of immigration of foreign born persons and Barbados-born persons living overseas.
>
> (Barbados 1979–83: 48)

The 1983–88 Plan reviews 'population, labour force and employment' in terms of the resident population, the rate of population growth, the birth rate, the death rate and the infant mortality rate. In this plan the state elaborates on its goal of a social development strategy by 'improving the quality of life of the inhabitants at large' (Barbados 1983–88: 40). The following measures do not read as if they are intended for women, children and men:

> (i) Measures to expand the scope for, and the security of gainful employment …
> (ii) Programmes to improve the facilities and amenities for the delivery of basic services …
> (iii) Maintenance and enlargement of facilities through which social welfare support is provided.
> (iv) The creation of an environment within which cultural expression can flourish … .
>
> (Barbados 1983–88: 41)

This abstract, mechanistic, style contrasts distinctly with the language in the plans of the 1961–76 period. Highlights of the discussion of population in the 1965–68 Plan include:

> 5. Another noteworthy feature of the present population is its comparative youth. … This is a direct consequence of the increased survival rate of children born since 1946, and the increasing proportion of women of childbearing age, especially those of high fertility.
> 6. Emigration since 1946, and especially to the United Kingdom since 1955, has reduced the number of potential mothers. It is estimated that two thirds of the females who emigrated since 1946 were from the age groups of high fertility, i.e., between the ages of 15 and 30.
> 7. Barbados is still an area of high fertility, especially among young women. In the census year 1960 fertility rates for the 15–19 age group were higher than in most countries, and the

> fertility rate of the next age group 20–24 were exceeded only by countries in Africa and Latin America.
>
> (Barbados 1965–68: 14ff)

The 1969–72 Plan provides a rich source of data on the state's perception of women and their effects on labor force participation:

> It is estimated that the total addition to the labour force from new recruits only in the eleven years between 1955–66 was in the vicinity of 31 000 persons. *Obviously, for the labour force to have grown by only 4,000 in the same period, there must have been an equivalent withdrawal either through emigration or a decrease in the number of women seeking work*. (My italics.)
>
> (Barbados 1969–72: 13)

The 1973–77 Plan outlines the government's concerns with changes in the labor force:

> The most important variable accounting for changes in the size of the labour force over short periods is changes in female labour force participation rates. Women tend to move more rapidly in and out of the labour force than men, reflecting such phenomena as competing pulls between home duties and employment by married women as well as the more general desire of women to obtain paid employment and perform important roles in progressive societies.
>
> (Barbados 1973–77)

Examining the language of planning exposes how this jargon is used to inscribe gender asymmetries into the critical issues of development and to erase women's presence. It also underscores the central contribution which the Barbadian state demands of women.

Women's fertility and reproducing the labor force

The primary economic role the post-colonial state constructs for women is reproduction. The Barbadian state incorporates women into development through population control, reproduction of the labor force and the maintenance of the family. Governments locate women's economic contributions to development in their reproductive functions. Barbadian women therefore enter the discourse of development through their bodies. In Foucault's analysis they are

subjected to a process of 'hysterization' and made into nothing but wombs (Weedon 1987: 107). Foucault correctly identifies the process through which the state prefers to interact with women. It is in placing their physical bodies in organic communication with the social body (Foucault 1978: 104).

The independent state's interest in women and economic development planning is in regulating women's capacity to reproduce the labor force. The state wants to ensure women's fertility serves its national objective of maintaining adequate population levels. Barbadian governments view population control and the labor force as pivotal economic issues. The 1960–65 development planners worried that, 'Further population increase in the face of static national income poses the threat of a decline in living standards, attended by more widespread poverty and even greater unemployment in the island' (Barbados 1960–65: 1).

Concerns with population growth reflect interest in the control and manipulation of women's fertility to serve the objectives of the state. The first development plan of the independent state identifies women's high fertility rate as a major problem for the country (Barbados 1965–68: 15). The 1962–65 Plan also analyses this 'problem'. It identifies the main challenge facing the colony as population growth and stagnant production (Barbados 1962–65: 1). Throughout the decade of the 1960s, the state worried about population growth:

> The familiar problem of rapid population growth that faces many low-income countries is aggravated in the case of Barbados by the paucity of natural resources and the limited land space available. Declining emigration is expected to raise the birth rate, and with the death rate at 9 per 1000, the rate of population growth will be pushed up and this will increase further the pressure on land.
>
> Rapid population expansion makes economic growth at once more imperative and more difficult. The net output of the community must grow at least at a rate sufficient to absorb the rise in population, and the higher the rate of population increase the greater the magnitude of the task involved.
>
> (Barbados 1965–68: 9)

The 1965–68 Plan declares that two-thirds of the females who migrated since 1946 were in the high-fertility age group of 15 to 30

years; therefore there was an accompanying decline in the birth rate. Still, the planners feared that if emigration of mothers declined, but mortality and fertility rates remain unchanged, the crude birth rate would rise again and population growth accelerate. Another plan repeats an extensive analysis of women's fertility and what changes in that rate signify for a developing country. The plan undertakes a comprehensive analysis of population control and family planning (Barbados 1969–72: 9).

The 1961–79 plans disclose Malthusian concerns with population growth. The planners subscribe to a simple Malthusian equation that fewer people equal greater resources *per capita*, which equals higher standards of living. The governments fear 'the adverse effects on savings and investment of a population age-structure in which the very young predominate' (Barbados 1969–72: 11). In 1965 38.7 per cent of the population was under 15 years of age. To the Barbadian state a young population means:

> That a large percentage of the population is unproductive and that a great strain is placed on the productive sector to provide for all the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing as well as such other needs as health, education and recreation.
>
> (Barbados 1969–72: 149)

States in the immediate post-colonial period believed they had to contain women's fertility. If they did not they would place undue burdens on the capacity of the state to maintain adequate levels of domestic capital formation. Too great an accumulation of people reduces the potential for the accumulation of capital. According to these plans large populations create greater demands on the state for social services. They also create conditions for higher levels of unemployment. Uncontrolled growth also produces higher percentages of younger Barbadians who are unable to pay taxes or save and invest.

Not surprisingly, the plans of the 1960s and the 1970s tied all development objectives to policing women's wombs. Population control defined as family planning receives exhaustive treatment in the 1965–68 Plan, and this only increases in the 1969–72 Plan. The planners declare that, while the solutions of the problems must be found in the whole approach to economic and social development, a direct attack on the problems in the form of a family planning

drive is also necessary (Barbados 1969–72: 150). The new objective was to reduce the birth rate to 22 per 1 000. The state allocated $30 000 over the three-year period of the plan (Barbados 1969–72: 150, 176).

Identifying women's bodies as the link between development and population control is not unique to Barbados, nor the Caribbean political economy. Dubois analyses the evolution of population control in developing countries and its explicit connection with the process of development (Dubois 1991: 11). He traces this connection to the 1960s when foreign aid from the US to developing countries was tied to the establishment of population control programs. Local resistance to population control dissipated when the debate on it was shifted to 'family planning' and integrated with a concern for the health of women and children (Dubois 1991: 11). Dubois comprehends the centrality of population policy to development objectives. In the 1961 to 1979 Plans governments worried that women's fecundity seemed to threaten the development objectives of the state.

By 1989 the birth rate had declined to 15.7 per 1 000 from 28.9 per 1 000 in 1961 (Barbados 1989). This is a 54 per cent decrease in the birth rate. The post-1979 plans reflect this change. With women's fertility ably managed, the state now views reproductive and maternal functions more favorably. The state now stresses producing healthy children 'with emphasis on complete care of the mother during pregnancy and after childbirth' (Barbados 1983–88: 159). Governments believe that an able, healthy, labor force is the best investment and insurance for future economic uncertainty.

By constructing women's economic roles through biological and reproductive functions the state establishes a hierarchy of its interests in women. Other relations affecting women and modernization are subordinated to the state's interests in reproduction. These secondary interests are obscured in the plans. The state continues to maintain very traditional gender roles for women. These are not overtly linked to its obsession with women's bodies, yet these roles are integral to this preoccupation with women's fertility.

The development of entrepreneurship and efforts to stimulate the private sector are not perceived as including women generally or

female entrepreneurs in particular. When the state does think of economic (that is, productive) activities for women these are conceived as income-generating, micro-enterprise projects, the activities advocated by the WID approach. The modal entrepreneur, like the modal citizen, is male. The state is committed to entrepreneurial development for all citizens. However, its construct of woman as mother and nurturer excludes female entrepreneurs from primary consideration as dynamic, economic agents.

The state exploits the traditional gender roles it assigns to women. It uses these to underpin its construct of their economic roles as *producers* of labor. The state perceives women primarily as mothers and dependent wives (Williams 1989: 6). The state subsumes the subjective interests of women by attempting to objectify and define these interests within the family. Roles for women as economic agents are secondary and their labor is seen as supplementary and auxiliary to the labor of men. The evidence that there has always been a high incidence of female-headed households in Barbados[7] does not displace the patriarchal notion that women are dependent on a male breadwinner.

The 1962–65 Plan uncovers evidence of these hidden, gendered roles. The plan outlines a scheme to promote small-scale agriculture by acquiring arable land through purchase or lease organized on a cooperative basis. The scheme would be for small-holders on the allotment system and would be 'organized around the family unit' (Barbados 1965–68: 9). Whether the planners intended to target women directly or not, by addressing the family unit they were isolating and complicating women's activities within households. If the assumption is that small-holders are male household heads then the policy places females in an adverse position. If the project is indifferent to who heads the house it may still place women who are small-holders at a disadvantage. They are expected to participate in a scheme that does not recognize the high rate of family responsibilities which Caribbean women undertake (Durant-Gonzalez 1982: 3).

Odie-Ali (1986: 202) found that women in agriculture in Guyana were powerful in running their families and enjoyed a corresponding degree of prestige in running their farms. She concluded that planners needed to consider the facts of farm life when formulating and implementing policy in agriculture (Odie-Ali 1986: 282;

Cummins 1994). Similarly, the 1962–65 Plan promises to continue the development of the handicraft industry by training workers in the handicraft method. This provides 'part time employment … for a considerable number of families in rural districts' (Barbados 1962–65: 19). What the plan does not mention is that the majority of cottage workers are women engaged in the production of hand smocking. The 1969–72 Plan states more boldly that the handicraft development scheme:

> has made great strides in the training of workers and the upgrading of workmanship and artistic techniques, at the same time providing employment for a significant number of young women who form the bulk of the unemployed.
>
> (Barbados 1969–72: 148)

The plan locates the development of handicrafts as part of its policies on community development, again subordinating women's economic activities to social and rehabilitative goals.

When the state encourages micro-enterprise, income-generating projects for women it continues to assume that women's work is auxiliary and supplementary to the main activities of production. Governments suggest through these projects that women can be integrated into development. Women already occupy a central position in development. Their reproductive activities are pivotal to the economic functioning and maintenance of society. Handicraft development and 'piece work', (that is, the use of the putting-out system of manufacture) are characterized as activities of the informal sector. The state situates its policies on women's economic activities in the private sphere of the public/private dichotomy reified by liberal theory. Postmodernists and other feminists criticize this dichotomy to unmask the ideological character of liberal claims about the private and the public. They expose 'the belief that women's nature is as such that they are properly subject to men and their proper place is in the private, domestic sphere', (Pateman 1989: 131) or that this sphere is 'outside' the political economy of society.

The plans disclose how the state traverses this dichotomy to fabricate economic roles for women. It starts with locating women in the private sphere. The state then uses the roles of mother and nurturer

in the public sphere to underwrite and build the foundation of economic development, a healthy labor force. What is commonly regarded as women's natural characteristics of procreation are incorporated as integral aspects of public policy on the economy. This centralizes rather than marginalizes women in the discourse of development. This situation creates a paradox. Women are, at once, central and marginal. The state simultaneously pretends women are marginal – and since they are to some degree objects of policy and do not participate in making it, this centrality does not increase their power.

Liberal feminists and WID specialists want the state to focus on the public aspects of women's work, on their productive contributions as waged workers. The Barbadian state has grave problems in doing so because it displays difficulty or reluctance in understanding the different ways women and men are incorporated as citizens (Pateman 1989: 131), and the unequal, differential experience of citizenship for women. This inability or unwillingness to grasp the fundamental, unequal location of women in the public sphere leads the state to formulate quixotic, gendered policies. For example, in the 1983–88 Plan it devises projects to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth while, for women, it is only prepared to screen and select feasible projects if a non-governmental agency guarantees funding. It privatizes attempts to reduce women's unemployment and absolves itself from any particular responsibility to alleviate this. Alternatively, it perceives women's paid work as isolated, micro-enterprise projects. The state is interested in supplementary, economic activities that would not dislocate what is perceived as women's cardinal responsibility, that is, maintaining the family. The state's projects for social development include population control, education, health, community development and social welfare, public assistance and handicraft centers for women (Barbados 1969–72: 17).

The state even considers women's desire to work as problematic and contributing to the unemployment problem:

> One other supply factor worthy of mention is that unemployment is highest among young females. *Indeed many of those persons who would have been content to remain unpaid household workers until marriage are now active job seekers*. Thus rising participation rates among females in the younger age groups is a major

> contributor to the continued unemployment of human resource in the economy. (My italics.)
>
> (Barbados 1973–77: chap. 2, 3ff)

The sustained emphasis on marriage as a factor affecting women's labor force participation is more ideological than a reflection of Barbadian or Caribbean women's multiple realities. There is no analysis of why larger numbers of women find it necessary to seek work. Neither is any evidence provided for the problematic belief that women do not wish to work before marriage. The more questionable assumptions are that marriages occur in large enough percentages to make a difference to women's employment and that married women do not work.

The statistics do not support any of these positions. In 1970, of the women who headed households, 54.3 per cent had never been married, 2.0 per cent were divorced or separated, 19.4 per cent had been widowed and 19.3 per cent were married (Massiah 1982: 105). The illegitimacy ratio, calculated as total births out of wedlock, as a percentage of total live births, climbed steadily from 62.0 per cent in 1961 to 74.2 per cent in 1974. These percentage increases may appear marginal. The key statistic is that in 1974 nearly 75 per cent of all children were born out of wedlock. The marriage ratio – calculated as total marriages per 1 000 population as a percentage of total population – declined from 4.2 per cent to 3.8 per cent for the same period (Barbados 1978: 272). Perhaps the more significant statistic is that the marriage ratio has never exceeded 8.0 per cent between 1945 and 1974 (Barbados 1978: 272). There is no statistical or historical evidence to suggest that marriage represents a viable option for women to postpone employment either before or after. Sidney Mintz (1981) and Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow (1981) offer considerable evidence that Barbadian and Caribbean women have a long and sturdy tradition of economic independence. The state's intent in sanctioning economic dependency for women, even as many seek to support themselves, is another example of the gendered power relations existing in the Barbadian state.

Conclusion

Women exposed to the gendered power relations of the Barbadian state occupy an anomalous, unstable, contradictory position. The

post-colonial Barbadian state incorporates women into development planning through their bodies. It manipulates their fertility to ensure population control and the adequate growth of a productive, healthy, labor force.

A few fundamental features remain consistent throughout the shifts in state policy on development planning in the post-colonial period. All the plans underscore a commitment to neoclassical, modernization strategies. The intent of planning has been to control population, produce economic growth, improve living conditions, develop human resources, create higher levels of industrialization and enhance technological development. Successive governments hinged the attainment of these objectives on regulating the fertility of Barbadian women. The discourse on development was constructed so that what women did with their bodies becomes a means of understanding what happened to the social body. Since governments could not trust women to determine how many children they would have, population control and economic development became inseparable.

Between 1961 and 1976 the main development objectives were actively pursued in the context of an expanded state sector shaping aggregate demand and influencing private sector programs. In the second phase, 1977 to the present, the state entered an active partnership with the private sector. It yielded increasingly to the leverage of economic liberalization and drastically reduced the state's ownership of resources. It allowed the private sector unprecedented authority over the character of development strategy. At the regional and global levels these underscored the ascendancy of neoliberal ideologies.

In the first phase of planning, the Fabian socialist orientation of state policy created a Caribbean welfare state that offered some benefits to women. In 1964, the principle of equal pay for female teachers was accepted. It was implemented in 1966 (DLP n.d. [1966]). In 1967 a national insurance and social security system was introduced which provided maternity, disability, unemployment, old age, funeral, and other benefits. These were tremendously important to women (Barbados 1969–72: 19).

In 1962, free public secondary education was introduced for all students eleven years and older (Barbados 1962–65: 9). This constituted a major achievement and is still the primary mechanism for

increasing socioeconomic mobility for women. Historically, the educational system has discriminated against girls (Barbados 1978: 142). Up to 1978 more places were available for boys than girls in government-controlled secondary schools. Furthermore, governments have traditionally spent more money on male students (Barbados 1978: 142). These discriminatory policies are compounded by the fact that, in the past, if parents had to choose between paying to educate a son or a daughter they would pay to educate the former. Although the state's interest in women was in regulating their fertility, women benefited to some degree from the existence of a welfare state.

The second phase of development planning signals a shift in the reconstruction of gender roles. This phase is marked by three key features: the state's official recognition of women, retrenchment of the welfare state, and the expansion of private sector influence over economic policy and entrepreneurial development. These features create and, at the same time, obscure new and complex economic and social relations for women. The official recognition of women was mirrored by the official designation of women's affairs as an aspect of community development. Women were simultaneously made more visible and submitted to new relations of domination. As the impact of population control measures reduced the state's need to focus on women's fertility, their importance to economic development diminished. A strengthened policy to return women to the confines of family and community replaced fertility management.

Retrenchment of the welfare state introduced in the 1970s and the implementation of the IMF sponsored structural adjustment policies (SAPs), in 1991, have had dire consequences for Barbadian women (Safa and Antrobus 1992; Barriteau 1996). The effects of structural adjustment policies on women are particularly severe. The disruptions these programs introduce include:

- shrinking of the government sector in cuts to education, health, transportation and food subsidies;
- increases in taxation and levels of unemployment;
- heavy emphasis on the benefits of privatization in turning the economy around supported by legislative, administrative and moral measures;
- searing of the social fabric by higher levels of drug addiction and associated violence and crime;

- a rise in the general level of crime especially larceny, shoplifting, and burglary;
- increased violence against women and girls including rising levels of sexual assaults, battery and rape; and;
- rising rates of suicides, including increased rates for women.

(Barriteau 1996)

The state wants to confine women to the private sphere at a time when the private sphere is the most violent and most taxing psychologically and physically for women. The reduction of the state sector means women must replace services once provided by the state. As Diane Elson argues:

> In the context of economic crises and structural adjustment, women are prized for their ability to devise and implement survival strategies for their families using their unpaid labor to absorb the adverse effects of structural adjustment policies.
>
> (Elson 1991: 1)

Throughout the post-colonial/independent era, the Barbadian state has revealed no interest in women's economic agency. It has carefully selected and maintained the gender roles which it wants women to fill. These gender roles in turn constructed the economic functions it wants women to serve. It has shown no concern for the economic activities that women decide for themselves, and through its gendered policies may even frustrate them. This is the economic and social environment in which women entrepreneurs operate. The next chapter examines the experiences of female entrepreneurs within this gendered environment.

6
Women, the Economy and the State

> I am mother, father and daughter of this business. Being black and being a woman is a disadvantage. Some men and some narrow-minded women feel that women should be housekeepers. Because of that we have to strive three times as hard and could never relax.[1]

In this chapter I use the experiences of women entrepreneurs to show that, despite the existence of state machinery on women, very little is done by states to promote women's economic activities. The existence of these mechanisms enable the state to publicize its attempts to deal with institutionalized inequities for women. As Chapter 4 proves, these mechanisms are weak and do not have the capacity to create programs to benefit women or monitor existing facilities to ensure that their benefits reach women. At this juncture in the social relations of gender, states are unwilling to provide the institutional strengths necessary to give women's machineries decision-making and veto powers. In the meantime, an understanding of women's economic activities exists in a vacuum from what is perceived as women's economic activities. The cumulative effect is that the state is unaware and unappreciative of women's contributions to the formal economy.

I focus on women in the formal economy for two reasons. There is a widespread perception that Caribbean women operate only in the informal economy and therefore escape the attention of policy-makers since this sector is much more challenging for governments either to assist or regulate. It is generally left to the NGOs. Second,

because inequalities arising in the social relations of gender are unacknowledged in the formal economy, there is an implicit assumption that women who operate there experience a gender neutral zone. This chapter proves they do not.

The state and entrepreneurial development

I offer empirical evidence to substantiate the claim of dissimilar access and experiences by women with access to and distributions of state and private sector resources. The findings indicate that women are adept at doing business and have devised a number of means to remain viable. However, I do not glorify the sacrifices that women make to succeed. These strategies at times involve great personal, social and material costs, and may not be the most optimal economic decision-making.

I am particularly wary of glorifying survival strategies because I am opposed to popular myths that glorify the struggles of Caribbean women and posit us as superwomen or miracle workers. These myths portray Caribbean women as 'strong, assertive, independent, self-reliant matriarchs' (Massiah 1991: xi). As Massiah contends, these arguments ignore the 'growing evidence of the structural and ideological factors which hinder Caribbean women's achievement of social and political advancement' (Massiah 1991: xi). This myth of the miracle worker obscures how gender relations are constructed to exploit the capacity of women to cope. These ideas posit that Caribbean women have some inherent, natural capacity for survival. By doing so, they conceal how the state counts on women to fill the gaps when changes in macroeconomic policy, whether introduced by structural adjustment programs or the effects of globalization, produce a severely reduced public sector and further rationing of economic resources (Elson 1991).

In Chapter 5, I examined how successive Barbadian governments defined development planning as a rationalized means of allocating scarce resources. In allocating scarce resources there is competition. Interest groups who are better placed to exploit the resources created, managed, or distributed by the state in its bureaucratic and capitalist dimensions are better able to compete. They constrain some of the powers of the state. Unequal gender relations constrain women's access to power within the state. A consequence of this

restraint is that women have unequal access to economic and political resources and differing experiences of economic activities.

Analysing development plans from the perspective of entrepreneurial development reveals several gender biases. There is an absence of thinking about how women might benefit or how such planning might alter gender roles. Unless the state confronts gender relations, development policies which ignore these will replicate gender biases. The notion of gender neutrality remains a fantasy if the foundations of development policy are skewed.

The development policies that governments implemented in the thirty-eight years of indigenous planning generate the political and economic environment in which women entrepreneurs manoeuver. The strategic moves they deploy, their understandings of economic activity, and their perceptions of their place in economic development reveal and reflect their responses to this gendered political and economic environment.

Profile of women entrepreneurs

A 1993 survey of 32 women entrepreneurs reveals the following about women who operate in the formal economy of a modernizing Caribbean state. They represent 4.4 per cent of the population of women in business (Barbados 1992). Of the 32, 12 were between the ages of 25 and 34 and ten were between the ages of 45 and 54. Five were older than 54 years and five were between 35 and 44. Young women constituted 37.5 per cent of the entrepreneurs. More interestingly, these women have a higher percentage of marriages and an extremely high level of divorces compared with the general female population. These statistics indicate that gender relations experienced in households will differ significantly for women entrepreneurs compared with all women. Seventy-five per cent of the sample are married. This is an unusually high rate of marriage for Barbados or any other Caribbean country.

The majority of the women, 56.3 per cent, have households with three or fewer members. Three women have households with five or more members, while 18 have three or fewer. The percentages of female entrepreneurs with no children or with one child are significantly lower when compared with the percentages for women in the population. The highest frequency is for two children with ten

women, 31.3 per cent, reporting this. Eight women, 25 per cent, have children under five years. Very young children make greater demands on parents' time. If the women work full time they must arrange support care. The majority of the sample, that is 75 per cent, do not face the special needs posed by pre-school children. Twenty-eight women, 87.5 per cent, have no children between the ages of 6 and 10, while twenty-five, 78.1 per cent, have none between the ages of 11 and 17. Seven women, 21.9 per cent, have children over 17 years who are living at home. Nearly all the women contribute financially to the management of their households. Seventy-five per cent of those sampled do not have to rely only on their earnings to manage their households.

The data indicate that female entrepreneurs are financially self-sufficient and unencumbered.[2] They are middle class in regard to occupation, family size and financial obligations. They do not rely on external transfers of money to their households. They are also not required or feel obligated to satisfy monetary or material commitments to other households.

Twenty-nine women, 90.6 per cent of the sample, receive no financial assistance from outside their households. Three women, 9.4 per cent, did. Twenty-seven women have no dependent children outside their households. Two women assist in supporting one child and three assist in supporting two children, all of whom reside elsewhere. The data suggest that female entrepreneurs are economically self-sufficient and have small families. Their dependants are primarily their children who also live within their households. Besides being financially sufficient, these women are generally unencumbered by obligations to supply money and other means of support to relatives. However, three women (9.4 per cent) give financial assistance to one adult while another woman assists two persons.

Race/Racism and Ethnicity

Social and economic stratification in the pre-independent Caribbean constituted a three-tier, skewed pyramid of class with minimal upward mobility. Lewis described the Barbadian class system as so rigid as almost to constitute a caste structure (Lewis 1968: 229). Access to, and expressions of, political and economic power by black and white Barbadians bore an inverse relationship to their numbers

in the population. At the apex was a powerful, white economic and political elite historically comprising about 4 per cent of the population (Beckles 1993: 528–39; Thomas 1988: 268–79; Lewis 1968: 226–56). The middle stratum constituted a professional class, and the majority of the population formed the broad working-class base. Women were at the very bottom of that pyramid. In that system the economic rights of working-class women were abused.

The growth of the trade union movement helped to provide a new socioeconomic status for these women. It fought against 'scandalously low wages of the town shop girls' who in 1957 were receiving only seven dollars a week (Lewis 1968: 242). Successive governments used education and legislation to redistribute resources and attack this rigidity and absence of social mobility. This marked the beginning of an indigenous welfare state.

Do women perceive race or racism to be a factor in the problems they meet within business operations? Have there been attempts by the state and civil society to define women's work in terms of race? I expected that race/racism would be a decisive factor. Caribbean history reflects the enslavement of indigenous and African peoples by Europeans, and the importation of Asian indentured labor. Race has been a primary relation of domination for over three hundred years. In the past fifteen years, discussions of entrepreneurship, economic enfranchisement, and the growth of the small business sector were conducted against a background of a divisive polarization of race. Racism and the exclusionary practices of the white corporate elite have dominated political discussions on the need for states to institutionalize mechanisms to expand the base of economic ownership. The businesses owned by these women do not constitute a threat to the economic activities of the white corporate elite. The latter operate at the apex of the economy while the women interviewed are located in the small business sector and are largely invisible even to state institutions.

Twenty-six women, 81.3 per cent of the sample, describe themselves as black. Two women, 6.3 per cent, state they are mixed, while four women, 12.5 per cent, state they are white. The percentage of white women entrepreneurs may appear disproportionately high compared with the percentage of white women in the general population. Historical and contemporary evidence reveals that white Barbadians are disproportionately represented in business ownerships

(Karch 1982; Beckles 1989; Barrow and Greene 1979). Local corporations are predominantly owned or controlled by white Barbadians through interlocking directorates. Many smaller businesses are then set up as subsidiaries and associated companies (Beckles 1989: 44–55). As with black women entrepreneurs, very little is known about the contemporary white Caribbean woman in business. While black Barbadian women expressed vague notions of how race intervened in their economic activities, a white woman felt her race was an enabling factor in doing business. While complaining about the high consumption taxes government imposes on inputs, she said she did not have to pay it on a key component. The company she buys it from (a white commission agent she named), waives it (that is, absorbs it) for her.[3] She also mentioned that one of the larger commercial banks lent her all the money she needed to start the business 'on the basis of my signature alone. I did not have to offer any collateral'.

The problems the women mentioned prioritized other concerns. Some made general statements that being black, like being a woman, can be a handicap. One woman suggested that being white may have given her special privileges in doing business. When the women articulated their specific problems, race or racism does not appear. I cannot conclude that the women believed race to be a decisive factor in their personal or professional lives.

The business environment and women's economic agency

Of the 26 black women interviewed, seven declared their major difficulty in operating is obtaining credit. Labor problems of recruitment, staff relations and work attitudes are the main issues confronting nine of them. Labor relations, not credit, are therefore the main problems for black women. Although obtaining credit is a challenge for everyone, for black women labor relations are slightly more of a problem than obtaining credit. Of the four white women surveyed, two report obtaining credit as their main difficulty followed by labor problems for one, and management problems for the other.

A minority of black women perceive race relations to be decisive in their difficulties in obtaining credit and in operating generally.

A few made comments such as, 'Credit facilities are limited for black women'; 'Being black and a woman you have to work three times as hard'.

Industrial sectors

Table 6.1 reveals the women are concentrated in sectors described as traditional businesses for women (McClean 1993: 17). Basil Lavine, Manager of Research and Planning, Barbados Development Bank[4] (BDB) concludes:

> Women are mostly involved in hairdressing, mobile canteens, day-care centres, the garment industry, a few are in trucking, and one has a boat. They are concentrated in feminine trade. It is part of our culture.
>
> (Lavine 1991)

The industrial classification 'social and personal services' includes beauty salons, childcare centres, nursery schools, catering services and bridal salons. The manufacturing businesses the women own include manufacture of seasonings, jams and jellies; clothing; baskets and small household furnishings; and cakes, pastries and other food items. Manufacturing and social and personal services made up 65 per cent of all the businesses. This profile of business ventures for Barbadian women entrepreneurs corresponds with businesses owned by women in the US (Pellegrino and Reece 1982).

Table 6.1 Type of Business Ventures

Industrial sector	*Number of women*	*Percentage*
Manufacturing	8	25.0
Agricultural/ livestock production	2	6.3
Social and personal services	13	40.6
Wholesale and retail trade	5	15.6
Business services	3	9.4
Other	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

Source: Survey of Women Entrepreneurs.

The women interviewed are experienced entrepreneurs. Twenty-nine of them, 90.6 per cent, have operated their businesses for four or more years. Eight of them, 25.0 per cent, have been running these ventures for four years. The next highest frequency for 'length of time' in business is four women (12.5 per cent) for two years, two women for seven years, and three for five years. Nine women, 28.1 per cent of the sample, held professional and technical jobs before establishing their ventures. Another nine worked as administrators or managers, giving a total of 56.2 per cent who had managerial and professional experience before becoming entrepreneurs.

Ownership patterns

Twenty-two of the women, 68.8 per cent, own single proprietorships in which they make all the investment and managerial decisions. Seven women, 21 per cent, are involved in partnerships, and two women, 6.3 per cent, own the businesses with other family members. One woman and her husband are the controlling directors of a limited liability company. Of the seven women who have partnerships, four have only one other partner and three have two partners. These ventures have small work forces. Although the majority (twenty-three businesses) have four or fewer workers, one concern has 22 employees, another has 14, and two employ 13 each. These 32 businesses generate employment for 192 workers.

Control over economic resources and a desire for independence are important to these women. They also have great confidence in their own abilities to make their ventures succeed. The most common reason they gave for starting their businesses is unemployment. Nineteen women always wanted to own a business or to be independent. The unemployment situation merely served as a catalyst. Most of these businesses are four years or older. Between 1991 and 1993, the Barbados economy became depressed and the government introduced a structural adjustment program (SAP) to satisfy the requirements of stabilization support by the IMF. This brought increased unemployment, but the majority of these businesses were established before the impact of these adverse economic conditions.

Most of the women do not interpret their decisions to establish a venture as a desire to exert control over their economic prospects. They took risks and introduced a significant change in their economic

behavior. Yet they report the opportunity presented itself, the timing was right, or they couldn't find a job. They are reluctant to recognize or validate their entrepreneurial spirit. They are perhaps unaware of what constitutes entrepreneurship, or are perhaps unaccustomed to the language of organizational power. Their actions display initiative, determination and use of formal sources of power; yet their description of the process minimizes their decision-taking.

Sources of investment capital

The women entrepreneurs raised the capital they needed to start their enterprises – an unorthodox way for businesses, but traditional for women.[5] They used their own savings, and borrowed from family and friends. Table 6.2 indicates their sources of investment capital. Fourteen women, 43.8 per cent, used their savings to establish their ventures. In all 21 women, 65.6 per cent, started these businesses without the assistance of commercial banks or non-governmental development institutions.

The notion that women do not take risks and are afraid to do so permeates the literature on women in entrepreneurship. Reporting on the studies of several researchers, Downing offers one of the reasons why it is believed women are afraid of risk. She states it is argued that the goal of women is to feed and educate their children, while men free of the burden of family responsibilities 'are able to

Table 6.2 Main Source of Investment Capital

	Number of women	*Percentage*
Family	5	15.6
Friends	2	6.3
Own savings	14	43.8
Commercial bank	6	18.8
Non-gov. development institution	4	12.5
Other	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

Note: Percentage figures are rounded.

Source: Survey of Women Entrepreneurs.

pursue individual interests and to take business risks in search of profits' (Downing 1991: 5). I was asked by an official to investigate why women do not like to take risks. He states, 'They pay their loans well but they are afraid to expand and they are afraid of risks' (Edwards 1991). Another official adds, 'Two characteristics of the female client are reluctance to borrow money and an aversion to risk. They are reluctant to expand. They need to be more receptive to training and they need to think big' (Farley 1991).

Twenty-one women speculated with their own savings and that invested in them by family and friends rather than being dissuaded by lack of commercial credit. The fact they are willing to risk their own assets does not mean they are reluctant to borrow. Some women complained about the unwillingness of banks to lend them money. Some said this was frustrating after they had prepared proposals or feasibility studies:

> The financial side is the most problem. The lending facilities for small businesses are limited. Faith in small business people, especially females is very cloudy.

> Always finance, to get money to get going, at 21 you cannot have much security, but I have never been refused a loan. My first application was to the BDB, four years operating and I never had a reply from them yet. I went through a feasibility study, a prospectus and I never got a reply.

The willingness of the women to use their own money is a measure of their determination to venture into business. It shows their entrepreneurial spirit rather than indicates their fear of risk. It was only after most of the women had been refused loans that they resorted to using their own savings.

Major problems experienced

The major problems the women face include obtaining credit, problems with staff, and general management. The category 'other' catches a disparate set of problems. Some responses include: race and nationality; stress of trying to keep up with orders; people's lack of appreciation of qualifications. The list of problems identified match those reported in a survey of the small business sector by the

Small Business Development Committee. In reply to the question, 'What are the main problems you encounter in producing goods and services?' the Committee report and rank the major responses as:

1 Financial problems
2 Low labor productivity
3 Inadequately trained staff
4 Not enough advertising
5 Variable quality of material
6 Frequent unavailability of commodities and material.

(Barbados 1989: 7)[6]

The labor problems they experience centre on staff relations and recruiting well-trained workers. Most complained about the attitude of their workers. Personnel management is an area generally overlooked by small businesses. Most prefer to invest in acquiring product management and quality control skills. None of the women felt it necessary to pursue training in personnel management.

Obtaining credit is a recurring problem for women entrepreneurs (Hisrich 1989; Pellegrino and Reece 1989; Clark and James 1992). The women in Barbados experience the difficulties of limited access to capital. Many of them believe this to be credit discrimination. Of the 11 reporting inadequate access to capital as a problem of operating their businesses, six (54.5 per cent) state it is due to their possession of insufficient collateral, or conversely, the banks requiring too much collateral. Three women believe this difficulty stems from a bias against young and inexperienced business persons, and one believes it is due to discrimination against black people. One of the responses in the category of 'other' is a woman who has a recurring cash flow and management challenge that compounds her undercapitalization. She has a day nursery and pre-school venture. Many of her clients are late in settling their accounts, yet she does not turn the children away. She also does not like to borrow, although to begin the business she had a loan from a commercial bank.

There are no significant relationships between type of business and the problems encountered. Single proprietorships are 68.8 per cent of the sample. Since obtaining credit is the most common problem (31.3 per cent of the women face this, closely followed by labor problems, 28.1 per cent), it is not surprising the 36.6 per cent

(8/22) of the single proprietors list credit as their main problem followed by 31.8 per cent (7/22) who experience labor problems.

Age seems to be a factor in problems experienced. Of the ten women who face financial difficulties with credit 50 per cent are between the ages of 25 and 35. The younger women meet more problems with credit and employee relations. Seven of the 17 women between the ages of 25 and 34 years experience obtaining credit as a major problem. Only three of the 15 between 45 and 58 years worry about financial constraints. Seven of the group of younger women also cite labor as a major constraint compared with only four of those 45 years and older. Given that the majority of women use their own resources to begin businesses, younger women generally would have a shorter period to accumulate assets and other collateral. They would not have the reserve of personal assets which older women might acquire. Older women in business may seem to be more of a creditworthy risk. They would have already established a financial record and their creditworthiness would be easier to prove.

There seems to be a significant relationship between the type of business and the problems faced. Wholesale and retail concerns are 15.6 per cent of the survey but face 40 per cent of the credit-related problems. Social and personal services, at 40.6 per cent of the sample, experience 30 per cent of credit constraints. Manufacturing ventures, while 25 per cent of the sample, are 20 per cent of the businesses restricted by credit. The businesses grouped under wholesale and retail trades include: boutiques selling clothing, accessories and shoes; a bridal service; caterers; and beauty supplies. Government has a stated bias towards encouraging and supporting manufacturing by offering more concessions on inputs used in it. It is likely that credit restrictions are greater for retail traders.

Perceptions on size of operations

Officials of government, non-governmental development institutions and commercial banks all maintain that women are reluctant to expand the size of their operations (Lavine 1991; Farley 1991; Alkins 1991; Tudor 1993; Allison 1991; Edwards 1991). Yet 28 women (87.5 per cent) are willing to expand the size and volume of their operations. This does not support the assumption that women are reluctant to expand. Two are not interested in expansion and

the remaining two did not know. Of the 28 wanting to expand, 14.2 per cent want to do so to increase their profits. Another 21.4 per cent want to satisfy the existing unsatisfied demands for their goods and services. They believe they could cater to a larger clientele and realize the potential of their businesses. Another 14.2 per cent want to gain recognition and be the biggest enterprise within that industrial sector.

Of the 22 women who are the sole owners of their ventures, six (27.2 per cent) would enter a partnership to double their operations while 14 (63.3 per cent) would not. Two of them are uncertain. Twenty-eight women, 87.5 per cent of the sample, want to expand but they do not wish to do so by entering into partnerships. The main reason they give for not wanting to grow through partnerships is the ability to maintain control as single owners. Maintaining control over these businesses is of central importance. Many of them state this is the reason they started the business. They want some aspect of their lives to be under their control. Officials and the literature assume that an unwillingness to expand through partnerships represents a fear of growing larger rather than a reluctance to grow by that means. Twenty-eight of them want to expand through an injection of capital. They view partnerships as fraught with difficulties:

> Partnerships are problematic. It would have to be a sleeping partner, someone who invests money but not involved in the day to day operations like me.
>
> I just don't like partnerships. I like my own decisions, I don't like reporting to anyone. My philosophy is to sink or swim on my own.
>
> It is a personal thing because on a personal level I like to be in control of my own business. One of the reasons I am here is to be in control and I do not want to share that control.

The goals the women set themselves on starting the venture include survival and offering a good service or product. Ten women (31.3 per cent) wanted to cover all expenses and produce additional income. Six (18.8 per cent) wanted to develop a successful business and a solid reputation for a good product or service. Three wanted to be the best in their particular sectors, while one wanted to leave an inheritance or legacy for her children.

Assessment of performance

The majority of the women (87.5 per cent) are satisfied with their achievements, 12.5 per cent are not. The women's satisfaction hinges on offering a good product or service and a general feeling of being successful. Many are also pleased with the reputation they have earned. Of the four who are dissatisfied, three are displeased with slow growth and one gave an unspecified response.

In assessing their performance 31.3 per cent rate their concerns as very successful, 28.1 per cent state their businesses are successful while 34.4 per cent state they are performing satisfactorily, giving a total of 93.8 per cent who assess their businesses as viable. Two women state their concerns are not performing as well as they could. While the women measure successful performance by sales and profits, they also believe good customer relations, hard work, and offering a good product or service are necessary for successful businesses.

Characteristics for success

The women believe a capacity for hard work, followed by determination, persistence or perseverance, and self-confidence are the most critical characteristics necessary to succeed in business:

> You have to know product and service very well, be well trained and qualified and have faith in yourself and your ability. You must have perseverance when things are rough. Ask is it worth going on? Have to be able to tide over bad times.
>
> Confidence in yourself, you got to know it can work. One needs to be a strong personality, be able to bounce back, be resilient.

The responses in the category 'other' are diverse. Some of these are religious or spiritual. For example, 'Widely speaking, I honestly think I wouldn't make it without God'. Others mention it was important to have a pleasant personality. Others insist that sacrifice of self is essential, 'Sacrifice, I sleep a total of five hours every day. I will sacrifice anything except my husband.' In keeping with their opinion that a capacity for hard work and perseverance are critical to

business survival, they state these are the characteristics they possess very strongly. However, there is a high degree of 'no response' to the question that asked the women if they display any of the characteristics necessary to succeed in business. Are the women reluctant to identify these traits in themselves or think they do not possess those traits?

The majority believe that the education they received did not help prepare them for entrepreneurship. 52.9 per cent state the education they acquired was too academic and not sufficiently practical. They claim it was not oriented towards developing an entrepreneurial spirit and contained no business training:

> Not at all. In those days sticking slavishly to books, French, Geography, I don't use it. It was a waste of time.

> We are not gearing children to be business minded, they are geared to be academic not entrepreneurs. They are being educated to work for someone else. We are building a group of managers to manage other people's businesses, working to make other people rich – still a form of slavery.

The women suggest the educational system can better prepare individuals for entrepreneurship by designing and offering business programs in schools, creating projects for students to manage, and ensuring there is skill training for the non-academic student.

Twenty-eight women, 87.5 per cent of the sample, state their previous work experiences assist them in operating their current business. The main benefits they obtained from their previous jobs are acquiring management experience and developing better relations with staff and clients. This is followed by learning practical skills and developing the product or service now sold.

Government assistance

The assistance the state provides to women in establishing businesses is critical. It could indicate their knowledge of the available programs, the extent to which they benefit from these, and whether what is available meets their needs.

Nineteen women (59.4 per cent) report they received no government assistance, while six (18.8 per cent) state they were able to

obtain inputs and equipment at duty-free prices as the main form of assistance. Five women (15.6 per cent) obtained loans; another five, technical advice; five more benefited from training provided by government. Twelve women state they received one form of government assistance in establishing the ventures, five report receiving two forms and two report three forms of assistance. Factory shell leasing is an important aspect of government's program to assist small businesses. These are not used by any of the women surveyed.[7]

Tax concessions are another aspect of governments' programs the women seem unable to exploit. This may be due to the nature of their businesses. The majority of these concessions are offered to manufacturing, especially furniture. As Table 6.1 indicates the women are concentrated in the service sector. One young woman with a beauty salon complains that the duty and taxes are too high on the products she needs for her clients and the government makes no allowances for these.

In keeping with the relatively low number who received help from government, only 12 women answered the question on the importance of government assistance to the survival of their businesses (Table 6.3). For 11 women the programs offered by governments make a difference to the performance of their businesses.

Table 6.3 Importance of Government Assistance to Survival

	Number of women	*Percentage*
No response	20	62.5
Extremely important	3	9.4
Very important	5	15.6
Important	3	9.4
Minor importance	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

Source: Survey of Women Entrepreneurs.

Macroeconomic linkages

I asked several questions to determine the extent to which women grasp the macroeconomic climate in which they operate. These questions probed how changes in the level of taxation, the availability of

credit, and the rate of unemployment could affect business performance. The linkages these questions attempted to reveal are not always straightforward and several interpretations are possible. I was not interested in a complex understanding of the economy. Instead, I wanted to discover whether the women could discuss the issues. Twenty women (62.5 per cent) said a lowering of the personal income tax rate would have a positive effect; seven (21.9 per cent) maintain it would have no effect; and five women state they don't know whether it would or would not. All other things being equal, the majority is aware that lower levels of taxation could enhance sales or business activity. They were able to relate macroeconomic changes to microeconomic business performance. They understood how fiscal policy impacts on entrepreneurial performance:

> The general public have more cash to use; it would increase sales. It would increase our sales; people have more money at their disposal to invest in insurance. Real good, I think I would get more business. They would have more money to spend. You see I get all the money people save up.

Eighteen women (56.3 per cent) think if government restricts the level of credit this would produce an adverse effect on the performance of their business. Twelve (37.5 per cent) believe that this action has no effect on their operations. One woman added she did not know the impact it would have, while another senses it would produce a positive effect. She states tighter credit would produce better business conditions.

Twenty women, 72 per cent of the sample, think that higher levels of employment would be a positive development for them. Six (18.6 per cent) said this would make no difference to them, and two women did not know what difference this would make. Sixty-five per cent of the women think that higher levels of employment would increase sales or demand for goods and services. Three women state more people working would not change the volume of sales because demand for their products is inelastic to changes in the level of employment. The majority made the connection between more people working and a higher volume of sales. Their comments include:

> More money in people's pockets. People would have more money to spend. We should do better because our business is a luxury

> business. Because that much more money flowing. People do call with questions of getting jobs done, but they hesitate because people have no money.

The women display a sophisticated understanding of macroeconomic behavior and its effect at the level of the firm. One woman who runs a day-care center and pre-school states:

> I can measure that by looking at what happened two years ago when the government imposed an 8 per cent salary cut. I was hit very hard. I had a roll of forty-five that dropped to thirty. I am hardly over that now. People who normally pay for day care they either take the child to relatives. Parents are laid off so they keep the children at home. If it [unemployment] reverse I would do better.[8]

Assistance with obtaining credit emerges as the main area in which these women want the government to assist small businesses. Making funds more easily available and offering better terms of credit were selected seventeen times. The women also believe that government should provide easier access to training programs. They select this form of assistance nine times. Free or low-cost business services such as advertising, advice, and monitoring of product development is another area in which these entrepreneurs think that government should help.[9]

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offering assistance to women entrepreneurs at the time included the National Development Foundation, Women-in-Development, Inc., and credit unions. Twenty-three women, 71.9 per cent of the sample, received loans from NGOs as the principal form of support while seven have been trained by these organizations. For the 24 receiving help from NGOs, 11 (34.4 per cent) consider this aid to be necessary for their survival. Twenty-one women believe this aid makes a significant difference to their operations.

Sources of support

When women in Barbados face challenges in running their operations they turn to unconventional sources for technical support. Sources listed under the category 'other' are selected eleven times, NGOs

nine times, and commercial banks seven times. Of the 11 women who use other sources of support, six rely on the advice of friends. In most cases, the friends have some business experience, but the women emphasize the personal friendship before their knowledge of business. Interestingly the women mention professional services (that is, lawyers, accountants, and financial analysts) and family members as sources of support only six times each. The women do not regard or use government institutions and professional associations as primary sources of support.

Networking

The women are not plugged into professional networks. The majority of them are not members of professional (53.1 per cent) or other (68.8 per cent) clubs and associations. Of the eight women who are members of non-business associations, seven belong to social clubs and one to an educational association. Fourteen women maintain infrequent to no business contacts, while only five women admit sustaining very frequent business contacts. The telephone is the most popular means of maintaining contact with other business women and men. Association meetings and visits rank very low as sources of information about professional developments.

None of the women is a member of a political party. This is not odd or unusual: political participation in the Caribbean is not dependent on party affiliation or membership. The absence of party membership is not a reliable indicator of political activism in the context of party politics. Voters are never registered as supporters of a particular political party as is the case in the United States. To vote one needs to be eighteen years or older and possess valid identification. Party membership or its absence cannot therefore be interpreted as political activity or apathy.

That more than half of the women interviewed are not members of professional organizations did not prevent them from maintaining contacts with other business associates. The forms of contact these women sustain enable them to bypass professional organizations and still participate in a network. Membership of professional organizations is unlikely to be a good indicator of degree of networking. Some women state they are too busy to attend meetings of professional organizations but they still maintain links with others

in their field. When contacts are used, it is most frequently for problem solving and sharing trade information. They understand the benefits of using business connections. Only two women use business links for emotional support. They do not rely on these networks for emotional support. Their partners and children provide this for the ones who get it.

Having young children also does not make a difference to women's ability to stay in touch with business associates. The one woman in the sample who has four children under five maintains very frequent contacts. She also has a clothing manufacturing and retailing business for children. The majority of women (24) have no preschool children. Of that 24, six sustain infrequent contact and four make no attempt to interact with other associates.

The six women who have loans from commercial banks maintain the highest frequency of communications, as opposed to the four women who are assisted by NGOs. Three women who receive help from NGOs do not keep in touch with anyone. For women, networking does not depend on membership of professional associations. The 14 women who allocate 75 per cent of their time to their business support the highest levels of communications with colleagues. Ten of those 14 stay in touch with others. The women mention assistance in problem solving and sharing information about product development as the major benefits they gain from sustaining contacts. This is followed by access to products; that is, the borrowing of inventory when they have orders and not enough stock.

According to these responses, the women separate their emotional needs from their operating concerns. When asked why they were not in touch with other business colleagues, seven women (28.9 per cent) state they are too busy with their ventures and other commitments or they are not interested in networks.

Work/home role conflict

Development practitioners are preoccupied with sources of emotional support for business women (Stoner *et al*. 1990; Sexton and Kent 1981). Officials requested repeatedly that I investigate the level of support women receive in establishing and running their ventures and the extent to which this creates or mitigated work/home role conflict (Lavine 1991; Farley 1991; Edwards 1991).

Twelve women (37.5 per cent) mention their husbands or common law partners as providing the most encouragement on starting their businesses. However, ten women, 31.3 per cent, state they received no encouragement from anyone. Of these ten women, three are single, one is married, five are divorced and one is separated.

I probed for the reaction of their partners to the start of the businesses. Nineteen women report that their husbands or partners were supportive at the start; one said her husband was indifferent, and five state their partners disapproved. Of the 19, nine are married, six are single, and four are divorced. A cross tabulation of sources of support with marital status reveals that for seven of the eleven married women, their husbands provided the strongest encouragement at the start.

Generally the women state they have the support of their partners and children. Unfortunately, I did not probe the form which this support takes. Caribbean women have a tradition of self-reliance and self-sacrifice (Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1981; Barrow 1986) that is often romanticized. Many would accept verbal assurances of support even though there is no change in the behavior of spouses and children to indicate the latter appreciate the demands of the business and are willing to assist in some areas.

Underlying the theory that women have this greater need for support is a related argument that some women suffer work/home role conflicts introduced by the multiple demands that business and family responsibilities make on their time (Williams 1982). Researchers assume that the degree of support women receive alleviates the strains of this conflict. Alternatively its absence can compound it:

> Family support for women entrepreneurs maybe limited, husbands are often non-supportive and may be obstructive to the careers of their entrepreneurial wives.
>
> (Stoner *et al*. 1990: 31)

> Investigate the extent to which having a man or not having a man around motivates them to get into business.
>
> (Lavine 1991)

The preoccupation with sources of support for women stems from investigating how women meet the conflicting demands of home,

family, and the business. If women need this support they are not seeking it in business networks.

Future of women in entrepreneurship

All but one of the women intend to continue. Eight are continuing because they 'love or enjoy' what they are doing. Five are not willing to give up economic independence to become employees. Five more are continuing because their operations satisfy their needs and provide their incomes. One woman wants to continue because her goal is to become the biggest operator in her industrial sector. Five want to realize the potential of the businesses, and three are enjoying the high profits they generate. All declare that women have a future in business:

> Women know better how to keep businesses going.
>
> Women are going to take over from men, men are too carefree.
>
> Women have more stamina than men. There is a future for women everywhere.
>
> Women might be better since they might be accustomed to stretching money.
>
> Women have been the best managers in the world since time immemorial.

These respondents place full confidence in women's entrepreneurial skills. They suggest that women are more determined than men to succeed or have more stamina and endurance. Nine women advise that anyone with initiative can succeed.

They advise that the best forms of institutional support which government and NGOs can provide are: more easily available credit, basic business training, training centres, provision of financial and technical advice. None of them asked that government remove or reduce taxes or import duties on inputs they use in their operations. In a survey of small businesses conducted by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) the respondents identify the ways in which governments should assist as: financial assistance, providing grants, duty-free concessions, technical assistance, and deregulation of price controls (Barbados 1989: 7). The assistance these women desire compare favorably with those identified in the IDC survey.

Twenty women, 62.5 per cent, of the sample think small businesses are very important to economic development. Five of these 20 claim they are extremely important. Only three women suggest they are unimportant. The most significant contribution which they believe small businesses make to the economy is that they generate employment. This is followed by producing much needed goods and services.

Rethinking women's economic behavior

The persistent claims that the economic ventures women engage in are 'traditionally female' and the suggestion that they are implicitly inferior reflects a gendered evaluation of women's economic behavior. It is an effect of the resilient biases revealed by analysis of the social relations of gender. This perspective sets up a dichotomy between what is acceptable, rational, economic decision-making and what is irrational and viewed as traditionally female. This assessment approaches a female entrepreneur as if she were an undeveloped male one. Their economic activities are compared with men's and determined to be inadequate. This approach reinforces the notion that economic decision-making is the responsibility of men. At the core of this assessment is an epistemological frame in which man is the specific, dominant and, at times, sole actor in the economy. It re-echoes the deeply embedded, recurring ideology of liberalism from which women are excluded and which treats them as insignificant in the public sphere of production. This epistemological frame insists on perceiving and interpreting women's entrepreneurial activities through an androcentric, patriarchal lens. These approaches maintain that women's economic behavior should be understood in relation to that of men. They are unwilling to examine the factors, goals, and values women decide are meaningful to informing their economic activity.

This persistence on explaining women's economic behavior in relation to that of men maintains and masks economic relations of subordination. Ultimately it contrives to rob women of the power of choice. Their business ventures are dismissed as traditionally female, irrational, and implicitly inferior. Their concerns, projects and ventures once they do not fit male entrepreneurial patterns, are marginalized. The recurring dichotomies of male/female, inferior/superior

are reinforced to the material and psychological disadvantage of women. Clark and James dismiss the need to support women-owned businesses in the US concluding there is little economic rationale for doing so (Clark and James 1992: 25).

No researcher asks what is inherently wrong about providing services primarily used by women or for which women are the main suppliers. Neither are they concerned with who would provide these services should all women entrepreneurs move out of these areas *en masse* into non-typical female ventures. The businesses women operate are compared with that of men and the differing entrepreneurial profiles of the latter are held up as the norm. Although the research indicates that motivational factors, departure points, sources of funds, occupational background, and support groups differ for women and men (Hisrich 1989; Pellegrino and Reece 1982; Clark and James 1992), the different types of ventures women create are questioned or dismissed.

Lavine (1991) states that, 'Women tend to go into areas where they can control the show, where they are certain of the skills involved'. Farley interprets the concentration of women in traditional female areas as laziness. 'Hairdressing is the most popular. They want the easy way out. They do not want the headaches of big business. They look for areas traditional to women' (Farley 1991). Hisrich (1989: 11) insists that the high number of service-oriented businesses reflects the educational and occupational background of many women entrepreneurs and, in many cases, the advice of guidance counselors and friends who discouraged women from entering male-dominated fields. Hisrich blamed the liberal arts college education of the women entrepreneurs in the US. The residual suggestion of this particular analysis is that women succeed as entrepreneurs when they operate in male-dominated fields.

We need to rethink the concept of risk-taking to include the ways in which women risk all their assets and personal savings to finance a venture. It may be financially unwise and poor economic judgment; however, it is ultimately much more risky and challenging to finance a business with one's own savings than investment capital obtained commercially. If a business financed from personal savings fails, then the woman loses her venture *and* all her assets. In some cases it is everything she owns. These women are wiped out personally and professionally.

By contrast, a failed business started with a loan from a commercial bank immediately becomes a liability to that financial institution. Whether the bank is finally able to collect on that debt, it must first recognize it as a claim against its assets. The gendered economic environment in which women operate produces a widespread dismissal and misunderstanding of women's economic activities. So embedded is the gendered assessment of women's economic agency that glaring examples of risk-taking behavior is reconstructed as a fear of risks:

> Women as borrowers will pay far better than men. On average they are slightly more conservative, not quite as aggressive, but I am telling you when a woman cannot pay, very often she cannot feed her kids.
>
> Women generally are more thorough as well. They will stick to it. They will work harder and make a greater effort to make the business a success. They are willing to put in longer hours. Women will put in all the security required. They have faith in the project. They will agree to a salary reduction. Men are not as willing. They [women] are willing to risk their personal possessions to secure a loan.
>
> (Tudor 1993)

'Willingness to expand' is another issue that is frequently examined but misunderstood in interpreting women's entrepreneurial behavior. A decision not to pursue expansion is frequently interpreted as a fear of risk. It hardly ever leads to an examination of the conditions under which women are willing to expand their operations. Neither does it value or legitimize the differing goals women set themselves.

> Many women apparently manage their business to yield a profit, but not to grow substantially. Small enterprises offer income, independence, autonomy, and control by their owners, yet can be consistent with other career responsibilities. Rapid growth, in particular, is seen by some women to be disruptive and to jeopardize family and other commitments.
>
> (Clark and James: 1992: 34)

Women are criticized for not wanting to expand and there is a lack of respect for the objectives which women determine are important to them.

The problems these women experience indicate personnel management is an area generally overlooked by small businesses. It is perhaps an area to which they need to pay attention especially since it affects the quality of the service they offer.

Women entrepreneurs do not regard or use government institutions and professional associations as primary sources of support. The state should note the implications of this for the development of national policy. If governments assume the services they provide meet the needs of small businesses but female entrepreneurs are not using them, then the resources used in offering these services are under-utilized.

Conclusion

The autonomy and independence of Caribbean women is an area that requires re-investigating. This can be so extreme that it creates total dependence by the woman on her own resourcefulness when others depend on and exist on her survival mechanisms. Existing gender relations underwrite her exploitation within the household and by the state to guarantee the survival of others. The state and family members save resources. In return the woman receives the empty accolades in the myth of the miracle worker.

I maintain that the real source of 'work/home role conflict' is the oppressive character of existing gender relations. This informs women that any new responsibilities which they acquire in the public sphere of the economy (production) cannot be at the expense of their assigned responsibilities in the private sphere of the household (reproduction). Contemporary gender relations demand that if women insist on entering the public domain of work, they cannot relinquish the concerns of the family. Hence it becomes unimportant for studies of entrepreneurs to ask whether male entrepreneurs receive emotional support or whether work/home role conflicts exist for them. Similarly senior state officials would not be concerned with whether having a woman around motivates a man to enter into entrepreneurship. Our gender ideologies assume emotional support for men is natural, available, and merit discussion only in its absence. Not questioning the gender and power dynamics inherent in the gender systems in which they operate, most women believe that they are supposed to cope with these conflicting and stressful demands.

The experiences of women entrepreneurs demonstrate a need to re-evaluate the conventional interpretations of women's economic behavior. Contrary to the views of state officials, women understand the constraints they face and make decisions to reflect this. Women are risk-takers and they are not reluctant to expand the size of their operations. They are generally unwilling to do so through partnerships. Control of their work environment and their capacity to act in their best interests as they define these are paramount for these women. This is misunderstood because existing relations of gender set out to deny women agency and recourse to power. The particular and differing factors that influence women's economic behavior should be examined before policy is designed to assist them. Before gender-sensitive economic policy can be developed, the state needs to understand how gender relations complicate women's economic and political agency.

Women as entrepreneurs contribute to economic development and generate employment. They can perform better in business if their needs are understood and their ways of operating in business are recognized. Concepts of what constitutes entrepreneurial behavior have to be reworked. They should be inclusive of women's economic agency, and should validate the ways women do business.

The approaches used to generate information and formulate policies about women in business start with a cognitive map polluted with notions of the perfect entrepreneur. The study of Barbadian women and entrepreneurship discloses that the approaches are not informed by seeking to discover what women are doing and why. Instead they are guided by trying to match women's activities to a pre-determined concept of desirable entrepreneurial behavior. To the extent women fit or do not fit this entrepreneurial grid, the analyses turn to why these gaps exist and what policies are necessary to make women good entrepreneurs:

> There are some women who have as much drive and skill as men, some of them are even willing to take on the challenge of growing. (Lavine 1991)

Good entrepreneurs display 'male' entrepreneurial traits.

Part of the difficulty in conceptualizing the economic agency of women entrepreneurs originates in economic theories defining

development and entrepreneurial behavior. Neoclassical economic theory informs development policy in the Commonwealth Caribbean. This theory is embedded with the notion that the central economic actor is a rational autonomous agent who operates in a polity envisioned 'as a public, rational community of heads of households' (Nelson 1993: 1). Feminist political theorists and economists are dissatisfied with this reading of economic agency and the public sphere. Through research on household economies and decision-making, feminist economists are rethinking how economic decisions are made. They reject the assumed rationality and autonomy of economic actors. Instead they identify androcentric biases in the theoretical structure and core assumptions of neo-classical economics (England 1993; Strassmann 1993). Feminist economists challenge three assumptions central to neo-classical economic theory:

1 Interpersonal utility comparisons are impossible.
2 Tastes are exogenous to economic models and unchanging.
3 Actors are selfish (that is, they have independent utilities in markets).

(England 1993: 37)

England argues these assumptions arise from a separative model of human nature. It is grounded in the Cartesian model of objectivity that detached the creation of knowledge from subjectivity. It sanctioned and promoted rationality, objectivity and detachment over human connection and interdependence. The latter are regarded as inferior, emotional, and feminine (Nelson 1993: 24ff). The androcentric biases of the Cartesian assumptions advance men's interests:

> Analyses proceeding from these assumptions direct our attention away from the ways in which typical arrangements between men and women perpetuate women's disadvantage both in families and labor markets.
>
> (England 1993: 37)

The experiences of women entrepreneurs and the perceptions of their activities illustrate the androcentric biases of neoclassical economic theory. The partialities of these assumptions matter because

their effects do not remain at the level of theory. These biases have material, lived consequences. It is therefore necessary to expose them and suggest alternatives.

Accepting the view of women as risk averse denies opportunities for enriching an understanding of the business culture in developing countries. Ignoring or devaluing the ways in which women take risks produce an inadequate understanding of the complexity of this culture. If women continually offer personal assets as collateral for business ventures and succeed, then the policies for allocating loans should be re-examined. These practices should be investigated to determine whether there is a deliberate policy to shift to women the responsibility for financing their ventures. Does the private/public dichotomy follow women into entrepreneurship? Is their thrust into entrepreneurship also privatized? If women who use personal financing for start-up costs fail, do governments appreciate the social and economic consequences of having both a business investment and personal assets wiped out? These can create additional demands on the resources of the state and deplete the resources of the family. Financial and economic losses for women have material and psychological consequences for entire families.

Women's entrepreneurial ventures contribute to the economic well-being of their countries. Their location in the formal economy means their economic activities are measurable. They generate employment, pay taxes, and provide needed goods and services. Development planners should be aware that women add to the savings and investment functions that growth-oriented development models stress. Women's business ventures contribute directly to macroeconomic activity. These should not be treated as insignificant to development policy.

Yet it is precisely the location of women entrepreneurs in the formal economy that leads to the marginalization of their experiences and concerns. Ironically, these women who appear privileged face a double-bind. First they are ignored by WID experts and researchers and, second, their experiences are disregarded by development planners. The literature on economic activity of women in developing countries is dominated by the perception that these activities are only performed by low-income women operating in the informal economy or in micro-enterprise projects at the entry level of the formal economy (Rao *et al*. 1991).

Gender analysis reveals the inegalitarian conditions for women entrepreneurs behind the myth of equal opportunity for all. The modal entrepreneur like the modal citizen, is male. The state insists it is committed to entrepreneurial development for all, its construct of woman as mother and nurturer excludes female entrepreneurs from primary consideration as dynamic, economic agents. Gender analysis exposes the cultural stereotyping of women by public and private officials who present women as afraid of risk-taking, unwilling to enter partnerships, or to expand their business operations.

7

Rethinking Gender and Development for the Twenty-First Century

Development policy in the twentieth-century Caribbean is gendered and proscribes the concerns of women in ways that satisfy the interests of the state. Government and other officials do not understand the factors that influence women's economic agency. At this juncture in Caribbean political economy the state appears uninterested in genuinely understanding this. Caribbean women enter the twenty-first century in a precarious position *vis-à-vis* the state. The state is focused on trying to negotiate the turbulent currents introduced by globalization and the WTO in particular. It is not interested in centering women as primary economic and political citizens in its policies and practices. The lack of relevant knowledge about women's economic activities is compounded. Not only are government and non-government officials unaware of this but their assumptions of why women make economic decisions contradict the experiences of women entrepreneurs. During the past three decades these blind spots contributed to producing development policy uninformed by the particular experiences and needs of women. Now it is felt that women's experiences should not influence national policy.

As the twenty-first century begins, many Caribbean states are not committed to promoting women's interests. They inherit a deep-rooted misunderstanding of how to do so. Given the prominence and persuasive power of 'The Male Marginality Thesis', also promulgated by many government members, they are not interested in developing programs which they believe promote women's well-being in isolation from programs that target men.

Those calling for an end of policies that pay attention to women miss two cardinal, organizing principles marking the differences in men and women's experiences of gender relations. Like women, men face problems of economic survival, health, and especially violence. Unlike women, they are not assigned responsibilities for creating public goods out of private activities through the rearing of children. It is only to women that societies assign responsibilities for reproductive work. Only women faced state institutionalized discrimination encoded in legislation and bureaucratic practices. These statements do not deny that more men share reproductive work. However, Caribbean states and society do not regard this as men's responsibility and produce no policy with this in mind. These inputs are the discretionary responses of individual men.

Caribbean states have made commendable efforts to remove discriminations embedded in laws. Yet women often experience biases in the applications of these instruments in addition to the resilience of institutionalized practices. The need to discontinue policies that target women becomes relevant only when these two conditions no longer exist. Until then, shifting resources from women reduces resources to children and men. Women link reproduction with production, the household with the economy. The challenge to states is to create policies for women that transcend an understanding of their roles as only reproductive, even as they begin to rethink men's roles as having a significant, necessary, reproductive component.

Add to that scenario the endemic confusion and misunderstandings about the social relations of gender and we have a regional climate fed by the enduring legacy of patriarchal practices combined with policy confusion. The social relations of gender are not understood as providing powerful insights into the societal and personal conditions women experience. Instead, it is deployed to mean paying simultaneous attention to women and men. This is irrespective of the historical and contemporary evidence that proves skewed access to, or biases in, the distribution of the state's resources and the hierarchies embedded in gender identities. The divergent policy approaches of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados underscore this dilemma, as indicated below.

Trinidad and Tobago: from WID to GAD

Developments in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago provide a classic case of the shift away from programming that targets women and it is assumed only benefits them. The following highlights and illustrates the change in activities and program focus of the Bureau of Women's Affairs and the Division of Gender Affairs for the 1990s.

The Bureau became a clearly-defined Women's Affairs Division in 1991, and one of its first activities was to prepare a short-term plan of action in collaboration with women NGOs in 1992. In 1994 the Division hosted public consultations in 11 rural and urban areas throughout the twin island state to elicit the views of the population and women in general on the critical issues facing women in the country (Trinidad and Tobago 1996). From August 1995 to January 1996, the Division ran training programs for women in business. In September 1995, a 17-member government delegation represented the country at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. In October 1995, the Division hosted the Organization of American States/Inter-American Commission on Women (OAS/CIM) sub-regional conference on violence and human rights, and the UNIFEM regional follow-up meeting to the Beijing conference. From November 1995 to March 1996, and again in July 1996 to October 1996, the Division offered training for women in construction. By November 1995, it had developed its first draft gender policy, and between January to July 1996 it conducted six pre-consultative workshops on the theme of 'Women Helping to Build Strong Communities' (Trinidad and Tobago 1996).

The changes in programming and the reorientation of the Division's focus coincided with its renaming. The move to change the name and orientation of the Division of Women Affairs to the Division of Gender Affairs began in 1996. It was fed by requests from the public, political factors within the United National Congress (UNC) government, and the recommendation of the Commonwealth Secretariat (Smart-Findlay 1999). In November 1996, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago hosted the fifth meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs which discussed Gender Integration into Politics, Integration of Gender Concerns into Macroeconomic Policies and Women's Human Rights (Trinidad and Tobago 1997).

According to one official, male NGOs wanted to represent male issues to the division and have the latter's work reflect these. These concerns were defined in terms of issues of male marginality, women 'doing better' than men, men and fatherhood, men and reproductive responsibilities, and men and domestic violence (Smart-Findlay 1999). Mrs Smart-Findlay identified as another major contributing factor to the reorientation those views expressed by leading Caribbean intellectuals at a 1997 UN ECLAC conference that men were being marginalized by the educational system. The view was also expressed that for the Minister with responsibility for Women's Affairs to gain influence in Cabinet it was necessary to move away from women's issues to gender issues. Some observers believe that because the Cabinet is dominated by East Indian Trinidadian males, whose cultural values stress a more secondary role for women (Seapaul 1988; Mohammed 1988, 1998; Baksh-Sooden 1991), they would have also exerted pressure on the Division to shift to a focus on men.

By 1997, the Division circulated a proposal to effect a name change of both the Ministry and the Division. The proposal presented a statement of intent, background and new strategies before concluding that 'the term gender affairs is more holistic in its implications and would indicate the ongoing thrust of the Ministry in addressing matters which impact differentially on men and on women' (Trinidad and Tobago 1997). The drafters reassured women that their interests were not being abandoned by the state. They insisted that the new thrust does not negate the continuing efforts of the Division for gender equity and empowerment of women and, in fact, saw the proposed changes as facilitating a greater realization of these efforts.

In particular the proposal argues that 'there has been a global paradigm shift in development approaches from Women and Development, to "Gender and Development" which moves beyond promoting gender equality, and identifies those structural barriers some of which are social, cultural and economic' (Trinidad and Tobago 1997).

By 1998, 15 per cent of programs focused on men exclusively and all other programs insisted on a gender focus, which means looking at men and women and trying to improve gender awareness (Smart-Findlay 1999). The future plans for the Division of Gender Affairs

contrast sharply with the earlier programming of the 1990s. Set out for the period 1997 to 2003, these plans identify gender main-streaming as its main strategy and establish goals and targets for these. They include:

1 *Gender training* Design and conduct of gender training programs for the national community (with a special focus on cultural and artistic groups), and government training, policy and planning officers.

   Main-streaming gender into the policies, programs and projects of all relevant groups and organizations primarily through collaboration with the Inter-ministerial Committee and the National Council on Women.
2 *Policy advocacy* Formulation of the National Gender Policy and Promotion of such policy to the national community through public relations/awareness programs. The Division will seek to encourage the active support and participation of a broad and diverse range of other institutional actors.
3 *Monitoring and evaluation* Coordinating and monitoring the progress of agencies in compliance with the gender policy, primarily through the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system throughout government and non-government agencies, and the encouragement of the implementation of international commitments made by government.
4 *Networking* Developing linkages with government and NGOs to ensure equal access to resources and gender equality, by establishing contacts with and lobbying international, regional and national organizations devoted to gender and development to provide financial and technical support to the national machinery.
5 *Outreach* Conducting public awareness campaigns within the communities to encourage men and women toward their changing roles in society and to urge them to use non-violent methods to resolve conflicts. This will be done primarily by way of the organization of several national conferences, and an intensive ongoing electronic media campaign (Trinidad and Tobago 1996).

None of the five areas comprising the forward-looking gender main-streaming strategy isolates these social, economic and cultural barriers to gender equality that the GAD approach makes visible.

Furthermore, it offers no programs to tackle these barriers. Instead, programming on women has disappeared.

As one of its new outputs, the Division has designed a training manual and facilitator's guide on training and sensitization in Gender and Development. It is a well-produced, carefully thought out, user-friendly manual. Unfortunately, it is riddled with conceptual problems that will create further confusion whenever it is used. It offers a theoretically unsound analysis of the difference between the concepts of sex and gender. It reveals no understanding of the social relations of gender and makes no mention of the power dynamics inherent in the concept. It provides no discussion on the hierarchical structuring of masculine and feminine gender identities, nor how gender ideologies can be manipulated over time to maintain inequities. The manual is unaware of the connections between the ideological and material relations of gender and how changes in one dimension complicate the other. The residual message is that gender equals socialization and therefore stresses education (training) as the remedy (Trinidad and Tobago 1999: 16–32).

Jamaica: using gender analysis to improve women's condition

The Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica states its mandate is to improve the condition and raise the status of women in Jamaican society (Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 1). The two priority areas it identified in 1992 reflect this commitment. They are:

(i) To meet the strategic long-term needs of women through policy initiatives.
(ii) To facilitate young women to meet their more immediate needs through training and employment.

(Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 44)

During the 1990s, the Bureau focused on a range of broad program areas that included:

- sensitizing public sector personnel, and parish advisory and community members on issues of gender relations and how these are related to personal and national development.
- Gender training of public sector policy-makers towards gender main-streaming.

- Sensitization programs targeting young women and men on gender, health and nutrition, employment opportunities, and responsible male behavior.
- Training to reduce female unemployment focusing on non-traditional areas such as bee-keeping, construction and small appliance repairs.
- Production of a range of manuals, videos, and other educational materials and training instruments.
- Workshop for senior public sector personnel on the integration of gender issues into national development planning (Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 1, 44–6).[1]

What it is critical to note in this case is the use of the social relations of gender as a mode of analysis rather than as a synonym for women and men. To date, the work of the Jamaican Bureau reveals it understands that gender analysis could be used to focus on men, on women and men, or on women only. The Bureau has prioritized the latter because:

> The pattern of inequity determines women's and men's relationship with development and therefore speaks of the structural and power relations between them. Further, development is not only about economic indicators, but about the quality of life of people. As such, it is undeniable that in looking at the economic, sociocultural, and political reality of Jamaica as in the world, we see where the choices of women *vis-à-vis* the choices of men are constrained, and that women are disadvantaged relative to men in most areas of life.
>
> (Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 64)

Through its programming focus, the Bureau recognizes the pivotal roles and responsibilities of women in Jamaican and Caribbean society. Vassell and Hamilton (1996: 64) maintain that the reality that women have different and special needs from men and are not accorded equality with men in society legitimizes the focus on women and on the agenda for women's empowerment. I endorse their use of Anne Marie Goetz's statement that:

> the Bureau must be seen as a special component of national machinery which will continue to establish a 'strategic presence for women's gender interest in policy-making, where there is

> legitimacy for the expression of the interests of women as a gendered social category endowed unequally with values and resources and with potentially different ambitions for the way policy is pursued'.
>
> (quoted in Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 64)

The Jamaican Bureau understands the importance of the state producing programs and developing policy to address women's ongoing experiences of varying conditions of inequality.

Barbados: the invisibility of programming on women

In Barbados, what is at stake in relations between women and the state is much greater than a disjuncture between governments' stated intent of broadening resource ownership and stimulating entrepreneurship (Barbados 1988–1993 [n.d.]: 44), and their ignorance of women as economic actors in the formal economy. The economic marginalization of women underscores the need to rethink gender relations in the context of development policy in a post-independent Caribbean state. The differences between the experiences of women entrepreneurs and the views held by government and other officials dealing with entrepreneurship expose the masculinist interests of the state. The state can be masculinist without intentionally or overtly promoting the interests of men (Brown 1992: 14). The state can foster a social environment where masculinist interests dominate. Despite the formal, legal equality of women and men, this is the situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

State bureaucracies create and implement policies and commit resources according to the demands made by citizens and other developments in the political economy. The policy formulation process is assumed to be gender neutral. The evidence from Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados indicates it is not. In Jamaica, the first workshop on gender issues for senior public sector planners was recorded as a major accomplishment, given the historic difficulties 'to get policy-makers to listen to any discussion on gender issues' (Vassell and Hamilton 1996: 64). Unequal gender relations influence the process of policy design and implementation and its impact on differing constituents. Because of asymmetrical gender

relations working-class women experience comparatively greater economic deprivation and exploitation than working-class men. Women who own and employ productive capital confront a more adverse business climate than male entrepreneurs. In the analysis of gender systems in the Caribbean there is no gender neutral sphere. The absence of gender neutrality in the state's relations with citizens is compounded by a social climate hostile to improved economic and social conditions for women.

The case studies of women's entrepreneurship in Barbados, the name and policy change in Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica's use of gender analysis to maintain a continuing focus on women's condition provide empirical and analytical criteria to argue for rethinking development policy that professes to benefit women and men equally. They suggest the need to rework some of the concepts used in the field of gender and development. The concepts as they exist are anachronistic and androcentric. They serve gender systems in which women fill different economic and social roles.

While this is not the case for all women, Caribbean women have acquired a greater degree of economic independence in the post-colonial, post-independence era. Massive increases in women's participation in the educational system have contributed to their relatively greater degree of economic independence. The increase in educational opportunity was introduced by the early post-colonial, post-independence welfare state. The changing character of the Caribbean state, specifically women's formal access to the public domain, exposes the outdated concepts of entrepreneurship and citizenship.

The limitations of existing research

A more overt patriarchal state structure reinforced by legislation, racism, and Victorian social *mores* limited women's economic agency and political participation in the colonial Caribbean. These combined to construct a public sphere highly circumscribed if not entirely closed to women. When slavery was abolished in 1834 the majority of women did not participate in entrepreneurship, or in the civic life of their societies. Lucille Mair (1975) and Barbara Bush (1990) found that slave women made an indispensable contribution to the external economies of 'the sugar islands' and participated in the development of the internal marketing system. The indigenous

white planters who controlled the Barbadian house of assembly until universal adult suffrage continuously legislated against wayside vending and Sunday markets by slaves. In 1826 they banned the Sunday market with the 'Sunday and Marriage Act' (Beckles 1989: 87). By 1951 the state had expanded women's access to the public domain by granting them formal political and economic rights. Yet, at the end of the twentieth century, traditional gender systems remain largely intact especially in relation to the view of women's relevance and rights outside traditionally defined areas.

The use of gender as an analytical framework enables several significant insights to emerge. Gender analysis exposes the flaws in the conventional methodologies used to comprehend women's economic and civic behavior. It reveals gender biases in the conceptualizations of entrepreneurship and development. It destabilizes the coherency of existing feminist discourses on women and development and on relations between the state and its citizens. Finally, it underscores the urgency of redefining the multiple realities of women in Caribbean and other countries in the South. This redefinition is necessary to displace the construct of the modal Caribbean woman as an objectified working-class, downtrodden victim. It is also necessary for developing alternative feminist theorizing for women in developing countries. This theorizing recognizes that all women experience asymmetric gender relations without negating how other relations of domination (for example, class or race or sexual preferences) can compound or mitigate gender relations.

Using gender to rethink development strategies forces consideration of several questions. How do measures intended to break down the psychological barriers impeding the development of entrepreneurship benefit women when psychological barriers *to* women and entrepreneurship exist? What is lost in understanding women's entrepreneurial activities by clinging to concepts that make their agency marginal? What is maintained by perpetuating a view of women in business as uncertain of their business environment? What is gained by reworking these concepts to include the ways in which women do business? A prevailing perception that women are inadequate at doing business weakens arguments for channeling resources to them.

Asymmetric gender relations are advanced when development policy screens out women's particular experiences. For example, in

Trinidad and Tobago an ongoing focus on women's issues is diminishing. In several other countries there is daily pressure to eliminate this focus. The effects of this exclusion goes beyond maintaining stereotypes about women. There are material consequences. Gender relations obscure power relations and access to scarce resources.

Some publications on gender planning and development issues continue to pose the typical woman in developing countries as a low-income earner. The low-income, informal economic status of all women in developing countries is assumed. It is discussed almost as a 'natural' phenomenon. Women in developing countries are continually constructed as an homogenous category. Moser (1993) focuses on low-income women in the 'Third World' without justifying this approach.

The homogeneity constructed into the WID literature does not originate in a desire to pauperize women in non-industrialized countries. Instead, it stems from an understanding of women's subordination as originating in class relations rather than gender. This is so prevalent a conceptual practice that when cogent theoretical arguments are offered from the penetrating insights gender analysis enables, these analyses are immediately followed by using gender to study low-income women. Moser therefore states, 'The goal of gender planning is the emancipation of women from their subordination and their achievement of equality, equity and empowerment' (Moser 1993: 1). However, she offers no explanation why only low-income women are subordinated.

Development experts perceive women's subordination as an expression of an inferior class position. Therefore, they make marginal the experiences of women who are not wage workers. The insistence on focusing on working-class women in developing countries is not a problem. What is problematic is that their class position, rather than their experiences of relations of gender, is responsible for this attention. The analysis of conditions affecting low-income women yield prescriptions on how to make it easier for these women to access established state and private sector institutions. Researchers produce 'how-to' guides and recommendations on microenterprise and entrepreneurial practice rather than exposing the gender biases inherent in these institutions and practices. McDonnell *et al.*'s work (1993) is a step-by-step approach to expand

women's access to microenterprise programs in developing countries. These measures are useful and benefit many women but, for many others, they are useless. How can governments understand the economic experiences of women entrepreneurs in developing countries if research ignores them?

The studies of women's entrepreneurship in industrialized countries is extensive, but the basic problems of marginalization and androcentric biases remain. These studies reflect the fact that women's economic agency makes sense if it conforms to men's economic behavior. In developing countries, women's entrepreneurial activities are not recognized; in developed countries their entrepreneurial activities are filtered through an androcentric lens.

The problem of validating how women take risks is compounded because risk-taking is defined as an integral element of entrepreneurial behavior. Brockhaus (1987) notes that J.S. Mill was one of the first political economists to use the term entrepreneur. Mills regarded direction, supervision, control and risk-taking as the primary functions of the entrepreneur. He singled out risk-taking as the main distinguishing feature between the manager and the entrepreneur (Brockhaus 1987: 1). Risk-taking has come to symbolize mastery of entrepreneurship. The reluctance to grant this quality to women supports the gendered notion that women cannot do business (as well as men).

Rethinking development policy

Although the survey examined conditions affecting a particular group of women, the findings point to the complexities of gender relations between all women and the state. Policy-makers should make explicit the assumptions behind the policies which they formulate. A gender analysis of these policies reveals hidden relations of domination and exclusion. These experiences underscore the inequalities that still exist for women as full economic and political citizens. These inequalities arise partly from the gendered nature of the practices of state institutions. Deere *et al*. (1990) recognize that the role of the state has to be reconsidered in the context of re-orienting economic life in the Caribbean. They make significant recommendations for the Caribbean state to protect the environment, provide adequate social services and physical infrastructure,

and ensure gender equity in the work place (Deere *et al*. 1990: 198–200). These are necessary recommendations to shape the activities of the state. Yet they do not point to a focus on the economic activities of women as valid in rethinking relations between the state and women.

Development planners perceive women as a special clientele group within the state but count on involving them in all aspects of society in highly specific ways. Caribbean constitutions and supporting legislation guarantee equality of citizenship and political participation. Nevertheless development policy does not recognize women as equal economic citizens. This is not because it is felt that women are disadvantaged and therefore need special measures to bring them to equal participation. The approaches followed are not compensatory measures to redress earlier oversights. The policies in the development plans targeted at women are not intended to make them equal economic citizens. They are meant to enhance their income-generating potential in areas that supplement their state-defined primary roles as nurturers. Insofar as the state is concerned with economic activity for women it is to facilitate their access to additional resources necessary for the work involved in maintaining a home and family. Yet the major thrust now is to discontinue programs on women, even though it wants to maintain highly specified roles for them.

Economic needs of women are defined by the state as 'special' interests. They are subsumed under and separated from general economic policies. In the development plans, the state discusses in broad terms population policies and their fundamental importance in attaining all the goals of development. Simultaneously, the state firmly couples population policies to regulating women's fertility. General development objectives are to be met by targeting women specifically. On the other hand, women's general quest for economic agency are accommodated only as interests of sectoral policy concerns. The state plans for women as targets of policy in areas where it counts on women to fulfill its goals. The policies and programs women want and need as citizens making demands on their political and economic system are unequally weighted.

The survey exposes these contradictions and points to the need for rethinking development policy. How should development policy be formulated from the perspective of recognizing power and

gender relations in development? Women should not be regarded as the means by which particular goals are achieved or as the target of specific programs not designed for their own benefit. Rather, policies need to begin with a recognition that women and men represent differing constituencies of interests within the state. Planners should understand how women work, live, and aspire and how these vary from how men satisfy these dimensions of their lives. An understanding of the varying but often complementary dimensions of women's lives should be basic information in planning. Now it is not.

If governments want to 'broaden the base of resource ownership', 'to introduce measures designed to break down existing psychological barriers which inhibit the release and development of entrepreneurship', at the very least they should understand the ways in which women do business or, in some cases, are forced to do business. If governments want women to succeed in business there must be a re-evaluation of the economic experiences of women. Governments must find out who these women are, what businesses they operate, what motivates them, what contributes to their success and failures, why particular industrial sectors appeal to them, what are their specific needs, and how they contribute to economic activity. The experiences of men in business cannot be generalized to apply to women. Women enter the business arena with different constraints. Insofar as these constraints interfere with some neutral idea of participation, women are handicapped.

Development planners must shift from planning for women in terms of procreation, reproduction, population control, and maintaining the family and community. They must rethink the issues of reproduction and families to include policies aimed equally at men. Governments must conceptualize economic agency and economic policy for women and men.

Revising theoretical claims

Women entrepreneurs do not operate in a gender neutral sphere. They meet with gendered relations as do women of other socioeconomic classes. They occupy an inferior position in relation to powerful institutions. The few who are able to circumvent institutional or other power relations do so, not as women entrepreneurs, but by other factors such as race, kinship, or related social networks.

This study proves the explanatory and descriptive advantages of using gender as an analytical framework. Paying attention to gender relations in development planning contributes insights frequently absent in analyses of development policy. Using gender to examine the experiences of women reveals the way post-colonial, developing states affect women.

Postmodernist feminist openings[2]

Postmodernist feminist understandings of relations of gender expose how women's bodies have been, and are, an integral aspect of development policies in the post-independent Caribbean. Contrary to the arguments made for integrating women into development programs, these insights expose how women have always been central to development policy. Postmodernist feminists reject the artificial dichotomy between the public and private spheres of society. Instead they examine how these conceptualizations of the organization of society overlap and reconstitute each other. This theorizing identifies the public exploitation of women in the so-called domestic domain and shows how this underpins productive activity in the public sphere. It is aware of the continuous attempts to privatize and contain women's economic, political and social contributions. Postmodernist feminist theorizing knows that the public/private dichotomy is a construct of liberal political ideology. This theorizing traverses these spheres to show how adverse gender relations differ in each, yet are complementary in the ways they subordinate women.

This theorizing reveals the androcentric biases in the concepts of development and entrepreneurship. The postmodernist feminist development of the concept of gender does not explain women in relation to men. It makes no attempt to understand women's behavior by asking what men will do in similar circumstances. By making women the central focus of gender analysis, the diversity and multiplicity of women's actions are examined. Neither does this theorizing rank women's economic behavior. The industrial sectors in which women choose to operate are not viewed as traditional female sectors or pink-collar ghettoes (Keeley 1989: 9) that women should be encouraged to abandon to be good entrepreneurs. Women should abandon these sectors for the economic reasons for

abandoning operations in any industrial sector: declining sales, saturated markets, unprofitability or low growth potential.

Any of these factors may apply to some of the sectors in which women operate. However, it may also be that women need better business-management skills. A gender analysis of women entrepreneurs does not make an *a priori* assumption that industrial sectors regarded as traditionally female are inferior or not economically viable. Postmodernist feminist theorizing enables women to politicize differing manifestations of gender subordination without imprisoning us in an essentialist, fixed frame. Caribbean women can pursue coalition politics and undertake political action informed by a recognition that several factors impinge on our experiences.

Policy recommendations from WID studies are not targeted at these women. Even if liberal feminists did focus on the experiences of female entrepreneurs in developing countries, they would not achieve the insights of postmodernist feminist theorizing. The internal limitations of liberal feminist analysis prevent it from adequately examining the economic activities of these women. Liberal feminism emphasizes access to the public domain through legislation and public policies.

The conviction that an expanded public sphere would correct inequalities for women is qualified by three factors. First, it pays insufficient attention to how gender relations in the private sphere constrain women's capacity to participate equally in the public despite formal guarantees. For example, women entrepreneurs may have the right to participate equally in professional networks. However, if women bear the primary responsibility for the care of their children, the running of their homes and the management of their businesses, they will be unable to exploit the benefits of networks as men do.

Second, liberal feminist theory assumes the public institutions of the state and the economy are gender neutral. It emphasizes that women need the right of access. This is important, must be introduced where it does not exist, but it is insufficient. The theory does not examine the gendered processes in these institutions, nor would it suggest the need to analyse and deconstruct the concepts, assumptions and practices of development policy. A liberal feminist analysis would not disaggregate state power to show it as gendered, fluid, shifting and continuously renegotiated.

Third, Caribbean women have legal access to the state and the economy. The UNDP's GDI and GEM indicators verify this. What is clear is that equality of access does not guarantee equality of participation. Removing barriers to access does not remove biases in distribution.

Postmodernist feminist insights can change how development policy is formulated and implemented in the Caribbean. Opening up the concept of Caribbean women to include constituents other than working-class women does not mean abandoning the legitimate and pressing problems of low-income women. Instead it enables development planners to recognize that it is not class relations in isolation that create conditions of exploitation. Rather, gender relations can be mediated or compounded by women's relations to the means of production.

Deconstructing the view of the Caribbean woman as a working class victim requires that we do not 'make a virtue of oppression' (George 1994: 429). Postmodernist feminist theorizing does not deny oppression or reify it in an essentialist construct based on the lives of a particular class of women. It opens up the multiple, contested locations of domination for Caribbean women. It demonstrates how women who own and control their means of production are made marginal in developing countries. It also illustrates the knowledge gained by using a different approach to researching the lives of women.

Postmodernist feminist theorizing connects the adverse conditions affecting women entrepreneurs, young women, and all women, with the inherent biases of growth-oriented models stressed by Caribbean states. It detects the difficulties created for women by making the values of consumerism, and of mass consumption, a priority. It exposes how these values promote the increasing subordination of women. The WID approaches as practiced in the Caribbean do not address relations of gender and their consequences for women. They continue to define their goal as the integration of women into development. Postmodernist feminist theorizing produces different development policies and practices with differing outcomes for Caribbean women. It links what might seem as disparate issues on women to the social constructs of gender. It exposes how gender ideologies are manipulated to maintain subordination of Caribbean women. It enables a political agency that strives to transform our lives.

A postmodernist feminist conceptual framework is equipped to analyse the gender-specific ways economic development policies produce differing outcomes for women. Once new feminist theorizing reveals gender relations in development policy, the latter can be redesigned to recognize women as central actors in development. Postmodernist feminist theory has revealed how an image of Caribbean woman has been constructed to create a modal Caribbean woman whose agency is suspect. The dominant discourses on WID and WAD sustain this notion of victimhood and homogeneity. This quest for a homogenous Caribbean woman obscures the effects of gendered power relations on differing constituents of women in the development process.

Future directions in research on gender

Before gender analysis can be applied to reveal the differential experiences of women and men there is an urgent need for conceptual clarity on what gender analysis brings to understanding women's lives in this region. The common understanding is that it is wrong to use gender analysis to examine women's lives since 'gender' means men and women.

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies (CGDS, UWI) must take the lead in scholarship in this area. It is currently engaged in research on 'Gender Differentials in Educational Performance at the Secondary and Tertiary Level in the Region'. The findings are eagerly awaited since explanations now include feminist conspiracies to establish 'feminocracies', and coeducation and female teachers damaging boys educationally. CGDS must also maintain its program of training in gender analysis in the region since many government agencies, women's organizations and other NGOs have benefited from this program. Planners and other practitioners should be made aware that women and men are subjects whereas gender analysis offers both an analytical framework and methodology to reveal conditions affecting our lives. Therefore, gender analysis could focus exclusively on men, on women, or it could be undertaken comparatively. Some of those who are unhappy when gender analysis focuses on women assume that if men are included the information would change.[3]

Research on men and masculinities

There is an urgent need to continue the research on issues of men and masculinities in Caribbean societies. As problematic as some of the conclusions of the early work has been, it is a welcome development because it has forced Caribbean men to engage with issues of gender justice and inequities in our societies. More importantly, this work forms a benchmark to evaluate claims of subsequent research. The work of Errol Miller, Linden Lewis and Barry Chevannes, and the symposium on Caribbean masculinity mounted by the St Augustine unit of CGDS, is commendable. The hysterical statements made by some within the men's movement do underscore the need for sustained research on the construct of Caribbean masculinities and the gender identities informed by these. For example, because masculinity has been defined traditionally as the possessions of qualities and virtues that women do not share, femininity and women have been defined as a default category, a void. Except one of the phenomena of the twentieth century is world-wide evidence of women demonstrating possession of attributes once thought to be masculine. It is therefore important that men understand and examine many of their misconceptions about the lives of women, and pay attention to research on women.

Women and the economy

Women entrepreneurs represent an economic sub-group within the state. Despite the assumptions of economic privilege, all Caribbean women are subject to unequal relations of gender. The state undertakes development planning in a political, social and economic culture that creates notions of what is appropriate for men but unacceptable for women. These are formed to the detriment of women. Future work on women in Caribbean countries must start with a recognition of how gender ideologies shape the content of development planning.

Caribbean women can appear as anomalies when basic indicators of our lives are read into 'conditions affecting women in developing countries'. Our societies meet many of the basic indicators specified by the UN in assessing women's well-being in developing countries. We have equal access to education at all levels. In the Caribbean

literacy rates, infant mortality and life expectancy are all above the average[4] for most countries classified as developing, yet basic conditions of gender inequities remain. These conditions persist because the gender systems that structure gender inequalities are not challenged. Postmodernist feminist theorizing interrogates the practices and ideologies that reproduce these gender systems. The specific issues that are addressed by the WID discourse can be contained. Attempts to subordinate women will continue until the complicity of the state and institutions are exposed.

For example, women entrepreneurs employ women and men and produce needed goods and services. Yet their particular needs are misunderstood or ignored by government planners. Should feminist analysis also ignore these women because they appear privileged? Or should the approach be that, irrespective of class relations, women experience gender subordination? Journalists claim that women are closing the gap between male and female labor force participation rates and that women are gaining more new jobs than men. Should development planners treat this as an achievement? Or do researchers use gender analysis to expose these jobs as employment in the service sectors and garment factories, with lower wages and vulnerable conditions of work?

Traditional approaches to women in development in the Caribbean have failed to connect widespread social, cultural and economic disruptions in women's lives to the shortcomings of existing development policy and practice and the nature of gender relations within Caribbean states. This occurs partly because gender analysis is not used to question the assumed, egalitarian promise of development policy. Another reason is that a focus on class produces an almost exclusive emphasis on economic conditions. It ignores or disregards the prevailing gender ideologies that shape the context in which women experience economic and other relations.

Development planning must confront many issues if women and women's contributions are to be recognized as central to Caribbean societies. The first is recognizing that relations of gender are relations of power. In the context of national policy, these affect the distribution of resources. Gender must inform examinations of women's economic, political and social experiences. Early Caribbean indigenous planning drew extensively on the theorizing of the economist, Arthur Lewis. Lewis relied heavily on foreign investment

to spur economic growth (Lewis 1978). He advocated export-oriented industrialization which became the prescription for creating export enclaves requiring cheap labor, a euphemism in developing countries for women's labor.

In Barbados, women's employment in manufacturing rose sharply from 1966 to 1979, even as overall female labor force participation rates remained relatively constant. In Dominica, St Lucia and St Vincent, women experienced greater occupational diversification and increasing labor force participation between 1971 and 1991 (Albuquerque and Ruark 1998). Albuquerque and Ruark conclude that increasing female labor force participation ratios narrowed income gaps between men and women in St Lucia and Barbados so that women moved from 62 per cent of men's earnings in 1970 to 75 per cent in 1991 (7).

The modernization paradigm suggests that women's economic contributions in developing countries occur in the informal sector of the economy. This study argues that women's economic, political and cultural subordination occurs because of the socially constructed relations of gender. Both the formal and informal economies of Caribbean countries constitute concrete locations to study and expose gender relations as they interact with other social relations of class and race.

Conclusion

This book provides a feminist examination of gender relations in the post-independent Caribbean. I use postmodernist feminist theorizing to deconstruct the gender systems influencing social and economic relations for women. The Caribbean state maintains the inherited political and economic philosophy of Western liberalism. This legacy of the British colonial experience constructs distinctions within civil society. These distinctions create two separate spheres, the public and the private. This dichotomy maintains that the family, the household and kinship networks constitute a private, separate sphere from a public sphere of politics, governance, administration and economic production. In liberalism, the economy and economic activity span this divide. The economy and economic activity are privately controlled or owned but they function in collaboration with the legislative, administrative and regulatory instruments of the state.

The differences created centre on the assumption that authority in the public sphere of the state is rational, conventional and created by a community of equal individuals. Liberal ideology assumes that in the private sphere authority is natural and resides with the head of household, traditionally defined as male. The dichotomies and contradictions created by these divisions are foundational to the organization of Western society. They also structure the manifestation of gender relations in ways that prove inimical to the material and psychological well-being of women.

Contemporary gender relations are very problematic for women in the post-independent Caribbean. The structuring of the public/private dichotomy enables the state and interest groups to manipulate gender ideologies to the disadvantage of women. The state situates its policies on women's economic activities in the private sphere. Examining the location and operations of state machineries unmasks the gendered ideological character of liberal claims about the exclusivity of the private and the public. The analysis also shows that liberalism applies different rules to its public and private. I have tried to show that these rules operate to the detriment of women.

National machineries are fragile and some are in danger of fragmenting. Some continue to focus on women only as clients of welfare states, despite the virtual disappearance of the Caribbean welfare state. This situation introduces a new set of gender inequalities while compounding existing ones. Some declare they have changed from WID to GAD but are not sure exactly what this entails (St Lucia and Antigua-Barbuda). For others, like Trinidad and Tobago, the change is supposed to be structural. I disagree. The professed change in methodology by calling new programming gender mainstreaming is superficial. The state mechanisms do not understand what they mean by this, have not introduced new structures or practices, and ironically have ended up with strategies that are even more regressive than the WID approaches.

The SAPs introduced by Caribbean governments have targeted the welfare state as a source of bloated expenditure and a drain on the economies of the respective countries. Reducing the size and scope of the welfare state has reduced many of the services women need in their roles as care givers. (However, states need to understand that women are more than mothers.) These reduced or aborted services

included closing government-subsidized day-care centers, reducing services provided at health clinics or attaching fees to some services, removing government subsidies for school meals and public transportation for children. It has also included the retrenchment of many public sector workers, many of whom are women.

The reduction in state services used primarily by women has taken place without confronting the fact that women occupy multiple locations in society. That is, they are not only clients of the state; for example, they are also workers, employers, farmers, university students, taxpayers, and importantly voters. The state perceives women primarily in their reproductive roles and as consumers of the services it provides. One of the reasons this situation exists is because we have not investigated the gender ideologies shaping our ideas of what it means to be a man or woman in our society. The result is that although social services have been reduced or withdrawn, the view persists that social policies apply only to women and benefit them mainly. Similarly, the notion persists that economic policy does not affect women. State plans separate economic policy from social policy and plan for women under the latter. We must challenge the dichotomies that shut out gender issues from areas of planning and create hierarchies between social and economic policies.

The state chooses gender roles for women that reinforce their unequal access to power, resources and status. These roles assist the state in achieving some of its development objectives. They reflect and maintain liberalism's narrow construct of masculinity and femininity and support gender ideologies that promote relations of domination for women. On the other hand, Caribbean women are seizing every opportunity to reject this limited notion of what it means to be a woman and insist on challenging these narrow representations of their right to be.

I conclude that gender biases in economic development maintain conditions of economic subordination. I do not conclude that women's subordination is due solely to economic development policies. The biases in these policies contribute to women's economic subordination but other factors, such as contemporary gender systems, prevailing gender ideologies and states' construct of gender roles, create conditions for marginalizing women's economic contributions. Also, while it is evident that women experience adverse

economic conditions in operating their businesses, I do not hold that women are economically subordinated. The women interviewed believe they are successful and intend to continue in business. They actively resist and attempt to subvert the adverse social and economic conditions they encounter. Caribbean women are not victims but often experience very adverse conditions. The challenge becomes how to plan for women as agents rather than passive recipients of development policy while recognizing that women experience unequal social relations of gender.

Caribbean states need to shift from incorporating women in planning primarily through reproductive roles, yet be aware that women do fill these roles. In the immediate post-colonial period, the state planned for women as mothers and as guarantors of the future labor force. The state's concern with over-population in the face of declining migration outlets produced an emphasis on fertility control as women's responsibility. When birth rates declined considerably the state seemed at a loss when considering how to plan for women. This occurred because planning has never been informed by an awareness of gender. Ironically, this occurred at the same time as the WID approach gained popularity in developing countries. Caribbean states set up bureaucratic structures for recognizing women but planners did not understand gender, and many still do not. The policies introduced subsumed women under policies related to the youth, the family and community development, and continue to do so into the twenty-first century.

Transforming the state's perceptions of and relations with women is exceedingly difficult and we must accept this complexity and deal with it. Ingrained beliefs, customs and myths about women's roles, contributions and position in society are internalized and institutionalized. They also serve regimes of power. They do not exist accidentally. It is beyond my scope to produce a blueprint for altering asymmetric gender relations. There is no definitive bundle of prescriptions that would magically remove gender inequities. However, I believe we have no choice but to work towards gender equity and justice for all Caribbean women and men irrespective of race/ethnicity, national identity and sexual preference. I believe we can transform gender ideologies and hence gender identities and roles, but it will be a glacial process. They have been changing very gradually in response to changes in the political economy. We need to facilitate

an understanding of these changes by not attempting to reinvent the past, which is never available.

With these cautions I offer some recommendations towards a vision of a just Caribbean society. I advise very cautionary, incremental, carefully thought out action on the part of the state and international development agencies. In a rush to undo centuries of patriarchal practices in one budget and planning cycle, a lot of money has been wasted. WID approaches have serious limitations; I have criticized them heavily; and yet, these are often a necessary first step in bringing visibility and programs on women in situations where they do/did not exist. We have to be aware of what can and cannot be achieved with this approach, but it is not irrelevant.

Governments, development planners, NGOs, international development institutions, researchers and reluctant feminists must accept that what we are doing in this discourse is attempting to alter relations that historically have placed one sex group at a disadvantage to another. There is no way around the fact that, as a discourse, as a discipline, as a set of policies and practices, this field is confrontational and riddled with tensions. There is a major difference between using confrontational strategies to promote an agenda of change, and recognizing that the subject-matter of gender provokes very strong feelings by supporters and detractors.

This is critical because a lot of harm has been done by denying or repressing knowledge so as not to offend.[5] We cannot escape the fact that the way we think, do not think or avoid thinking about gender (Flax 1990a) has to be the starting point before any sophisticated strategies can be put in place. We have approached WID programs and later gender main-streaming strategies as if they are an objective bundle of value-free methodologies that can be applied with the right mix of funding, personnel and training. We have bent over backwards to apply neutral language and repeat, like a mantra, that we are addressing relations between women and men as if the sole objective of gender is to produce better heterosexual coupling. We know, and those committed to maintaining patriarchal practices understand, that what we are addressing or sidestepping is power relations that feminist and other investigations have revealed. We should never undertake any work on gender unless we are willing to address this.

We should accept that there can be no single or simple approach to alter asymmetric gender relations. I recommend that we acknowledge

that these inequities exist and should be examined. State planners need to disaggregate the assumptions and content of development plans from the perspective of gender. For example, Chapter 5 examined false assumptions about women, marriage and work in development planning. Caribbean women have always worked; and work, whether paid or unpaid, has always been a factor in our lives. Any employment policies combined with assumptions that marriage significantly affects women's desire to work defies the statistical evidence on marriage rates and women's participation in economic activity. More damaging, they can contribute to producing policies that are dysfunctional for women and the society.

I recommend more research on the economic agency of women across class, income and racial structures. There is a need for new knowledge about Caribbean women especially as it relates to macroeconomic changes in Caribbean economies. For too long 'development experts' have forced our experiences to fit into existing theoretical frames whose assumptions do not mirror the conditions of our lives. These multiple experiences have been cut and pasted to exclude complexities and contradictions.

I recommend exposure to feminist or gender studies and then training in gender analysis for the men and women who formulate state policies. Unfortunately, a lot of inadequate training has been offered as gender training by persons not equipped to do so. As a prerequisite, persons conducting training workshops should be equipped with more than a knowledge of participatory research techniques and goodwill. Those who conduct training or engage in research should have been exposed to and understand the philosophies, theories, ideologies and practices shaping and maintaining gender systems and relations. In the Caribbean, as elsewhere, several consultants have reinvented themselves as gender experts, acquired a proficient knowledge, if not critique, of several gender-training models; but despite good intentions they have added to the confusion. Training in gender analysis should involve paying attention to the concrete circumstances of women's lives from their perspective (Parpart 1993). By recognizing that women are located everywhere in society, all aspects of state plans should be subjected to gender analysis and not only the aspects dealing with social policy.

For example, in the area of agriculture, Diane Cummins discloses that government's assumptions and statistics about women farmers

do not match their particular reality (Cummins 1994). Agricultural policy needs to be exposed to gender analysis. Who are the farmers? What kind of farming is undertaken by women? by men? why? What are the land-ownership patterns? Are agricultural extension officers reaching all farmers equally? If women are engaged in full-time farming, who is responsible for household work? If they are engaged in part-time farming do they hold a full-time paid job, the part-time farming job and maintain household work? What are the consequences to the women, their families and the state of any of these scenarios? These are some of the questions which gender analysis poses to sectoral plans feeding into a national plan.

Training in gender analysis should include exposure to feminist analyses of economic theories, development models and feminist critiques of development policies. Planners should be exposed to the insights of feminist economists who show the theories and models of development to be problematic for women. Feminist economists are not surprised that SAPs seem excessively punitive to women. These policies represent attempts by neoclassical economic models to correct their failures. The adjustments necessary to bring economies in line with stipulations of the market will be harsh. But women's labor was already made marginal in the meta-theories.

Planners and economists need to understand that feminist economists offer two different types of critiques of the neoclassical economic paradigm, even though I have focused on the first. This argues that neo-classical economics does not account for women's economic behavior and so pathologizes and marginalizes women. The second, which is a much more general critique, argues that the 'rational man' is a fiction and does not explain male economic behavior either.[6]

As the bureaucracy that is often the state's sole mechanism for dealing with women or gender issues, women's bureaux in Caribbean countries should be strengthened with the preceding discussion in mind. The headship should be a career position to minimize the political turmoil and suspicions that attend a change in government. Where this is not so, units should be upgraded to full departments and the directors and staffs should be equipped with professional training as specified. The analytical and research capacity should be upgraded so that all policies, and not only those pertaining to women, should be routed through these departments for review, analysis and revision.

Feminists in Caribbean societies should continue to expose and challenge gender relations in all aspects of public policy and private practices. The ultimate goal of transforming relations of domination should be grounded in reflective practices and a commitment to multiple and differing levels of struggle.

Notes

1 Introduction: Mapping the Terrain

1 For example, a recent sampling of newspaper headlines in Barbados include, 'Men Fear Female Strides', *Barbados Advocate* (30 June 1998): 2; 'Men In Danger: Two Politicians Have Say on Gender Roles', *Barbados Advocate* (25 September, 1998): 8; 'Caribbean Boys In Crisis', *Sunday Sun* (20 September, 1998): 14A; 'Female Edge: Men Wasting Crucial Time', *Barbados Advocate* (1 January, 1999): 8; 'Concern For Boys: Single Sex Schools May Be Better, Says [Prime Minister] Arthur', *Daily Nation* (24 June, 1999): 2; 'PM: Schools Need Proper Male Figures', *Barbados Advocate* (24 June, 1999): 4; 'Women Taking Over', *Sunday Sun* (17 August, 1997): 7A; 'Males Crippled By Slavery', *Barbados Advocate* (24 February, 1998): 7; 'Men Say Law Courts Favour Women', *Barbados Advocate* (17 February, 1998): 7.

2 Until recently, these were the only countries of the Caribbean Common Market, forming CARICOM. In 1998 Suriname was admitted to membership and Haiti in July 1999. They do not form part of this analysis.

3 With brief experiments with alternatives or modifications of the standard approach by Jamaica in the 1970s, Grenada 1979–83, and corrupted state intrusions by Guyana throughout the 1970s to 1985 when President Forbes Burnham died (Griffith 1997a; Emmanuel *et al*. 1986; Manley 1982).

4 With one woman of the ten a nineteenth-century religious leader.

5 Horatio Nelson is the nineteenth-century British naval hero whom the nineteenth-century, white, Barbadian Plantocracy regarded as saving them from French conquest. Some black Barbadians say he is not a hero and since their ancestors were enslaved at the time it did not matter whether Barbados was conquered by the French or remained a British colony.

6 The arguments of the 'male marginalization thesis' are now an article of faith in the Caribbean. In several Caribbean countries public commentators are recommending the closure of women's bureaux and the end of programs that focus on women.

7 Linda Carty's study of women in senior administrative and academic positions in the University of the West Indies is a rare exception to this trend. It is the first study to examine unequal gender relations in higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean (Carty 1988).

8 This is an area that requires further attention. Many Caribbean women continue to provide reproductive and nurturing services for their adult, single children *as a responsibility*. This then becomes part of the myth of the wonderful mother, while the exploitative and dependency aspects of this are ignored.

2 Theorizing the State and Gender Systems in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

1 '*Fourth Boy*: My father don't live in the same house. … My father couldn't hit me cause he don't support me. An' that's why I alright. … *First Boy*: Mothers stupid, that's why most of us without fathers. P'raps it's because mothers stupid that fathers don't turn up sometimes to see what's happening. … I don't see much of my father, but my second brother father is good. … How many fathers you got in yuh family?' (Lamming 1986: 38–9).
2 The first line of the novel reads '… my mother put her head through the window to let the neighbour know I was nine' (Lamming 1986: 1).
3 These are Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago 1962; Guyana and Barbados 1966; Grenada 1973; St Lucia and Dominica 1978; St Vincent and the Grenadines 1979; Antigua and Barbuda and Belize 1981; Bahamas 1973; St Christopher (St Kitts)-Nevis 1983. Suriname became a member of CARICOM in 1998 and Haiti was admitted to membership in July 1999. The analysis focuses on the Anglophone Caribbean.
4 These territories are Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos Islands.
5 Actually the words of the Barbados Constitution, *Constitution of Barbados, schedule to the Barbados Independence Act* (Bridgetown: Government Printing Office, 1966).
6 Most of the ideas and arguments presented in this section are condensed from my article, 'Theorizing Gender Systems and the Project of Modernity in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean, *Feminist Review*, 59 (Summer 1998): 186–210.
7 See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of this.
8 Hawkesworth identifies the authors and texts that contribute to the different types of gender analysis, see Hawkesworth 1997: 650.
9 The arguments presented here are summarized from pp. 443–5 of my article, 'Liberal Ideology and Contradictions in Caribbean Gender Systems', see Barriteau 1998a.
10 The Caribbean has one of the highest ratios in the world of female headed households. In 1992, Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada and St Kitts-Nevis had 40 per cent or greater of female headed households. Of the remaining countries, six had female headship of 30 per cent or greater (Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 47). This is a phenomenon dating back to the post-emancipation, nineteenth-century Caribbean and exacerbated in the early twentieth century by broad waves of migration as Caribbean men sought jobs in Panama, the United States, Great Britain and Canada to support themselves and their families.
11 Liberalism's construct of women as non-rational beings, the postmodernist feminist deconstruction of the concept of rationality, and its recurring theme in the Caribbean's social, economic and political landscape, prove problematic for Caribbean women.

3 Women and Gender Relations in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean

1 I do not suggest that men do not suffer economic disadvantages. We need research to expose how developments in the national and the global political economy, coupled with men's gender identities and their roles in divisions of labor, can also create vulnerabilities for specific groups of men (see Razavi 1999: 415).
2 The research project was proposed as Male Under-Achievement in the Regional Educational System. CGDS changed the title of the proposed research to reflect the fact that we do not yet know if boys and men are under-achieving or, indeed, all the issues and variables to be uncovered by this research.
3 Jamaican women had a limited franchise based on property qualifications in 1919. Women had the right to vote and to stand for elections in St Lucia in 1924, in Jamaica in 1944 and Trinidad and Tobago in 1946. Women gained universal adult suffrage in the majority of British Caribbean colonies in the 1950s starting with Barbados in 1950. The Bahamas was last in 1961 with all restrictions to political participation removed in 1964. (See Inter-parliamentary Union 1997: 28; Henry-Wilson 1989).
4 This is borne out in Table 1.1, Chapter 1.

4 Constructing Gender Containing Women: Promoting Gender Equity in Caribbean States

1 Information obtained during a field visit to Tortola, British Virgin Islands, March 8–13th, 1999.
2 In Chapter 5 I explore how women have always been incorporated in development planning by outlining the strategies pursued by successive Barbadian governments in doing so.
3 At the famous 1976 Women in Development Conference at Wellesley University, Massachusetts, scholars, senior university and government officials from the South were horrified to find out they had been invited to hear misinformed research presentations on women in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean with no opportunity for them to counter what was offered. According to Joycelin Massiah this experience gave birth to the WICP project, at the UWI, to prevent the ongoing distortions of the lives of Caribbean women (Massiah 7 September 1999).
4 No case is being made for academic altruism. If it exists at all it is a by-product. Careers have been built and scholastic dynasties founded in the WID field by both Northern Atlantic experts and southern scholars, primarily but not exclusively located in northern countries (see Barriteau 1986).
5 Gender as an analytical framework was not established at the beginning of the WID field. However, the criticisms should be noted since the

programs and policies linger in the South long after they have been abandoned in the North.

5 Gender Systems in an Independent Caribbean State: the Barbadian Case

1 I do not deny the contributions of this school. However, I maintain that government planners focus on specific contributions which they want from women.
2 The plans examined were produced between 1960 and 1993. They covered the periods: 1960–65; 1962–65; 1965–68; 1968–72; 1973–77; 1979–83; 1983–88; 1989–93 and 1993–2000.
3 There is an ironic shift that occurs when the BLP succeeds the DLP in forming the government. The DLP paid no specific attention to women in their development plans. However, this government introduced and maintained the post-colonial welfare state over a fifteen-year period. The welfare state has provided many benefits for women but in narrowly defined roles as mothers and dependent clients. The BLP was the first government to plan systematically for women, but it also began the process of dismantling the welfare state. None of these two governments recognized asymmetric relations of gender.
4 For a fuller treatment of this see Hanniff 1987; Errol Barrow was the founder and leader of the DLP. He was Premier and Prime Minister of Barbados from 1961 to 1976, and from 1986 to 1987.
5 However, the Barbados Progressive League, the forerunner of the BLP, advocated egalitarian measures in its 1944 manifesto. It advocated the appointment of women to the colonial hospital board, and the provision of special university scholarships for girls. (see the Barbados Progressive League 1944).
6 These reforms were introduced over a nine-year period.
7 In 1970 47.5 per cent of all households were headed by women, in 1990 it was 45 per cent. See Massiah 1982: 73; Barbados 1992.

6 Women, the Economy and the State

1 Interviewee, survey of women entrepreneurs in Barbados 1993.
2 Although 75 per cent have other contributors, the women do not depend on this for survival. These are middle-income households in which others contribute because it is accepted as a responsibility. They all state they are financially independent.
3 Interviewee, this is a woman who is very successful. Her products have won several awards. She was relaxed throughout and was eager to share her experiences. She would preface comments like these with, 'I shouldn't tell you this but …'.
4 Now obsolete.

5 Hisrich notes, for instance, that 'start-up financing is another area where male and female entrepreneurs differ. Males often list investors, bank loans, or personal loans along with personal funds as sources of start-up capital; women usually rely solely on personal assets or savings'. (Hisrich 1989: 24).
6 The committee did not state the size of the sample nor the sex composition of the respondents. It was drawn from 9 300 businesses on the register of the Department of Corporate Affairs. This figure represents the population of all businesses and not that of the small business sector. However, they noted the 'high mortality rate' of small businesses and admit many on the register are no longer operating, while some are operating that are not on the register (Barbados 1989: 25).
7 However, one woman who was subsequently omitted from the sample because she wanted to reply to all questions with a pre-recorded set of answers, leased a factory shell for her garment manufacturing firm.
8 She refers to the SAP package imposed by the government in 1991 to qualify for assistance from the IMF. This included laying off many public sector workers, increased mortgage interest rates, bus fares and fees at hospitals and polyclinics; and an 8 per cent cut in the salaries of all government employees. The measures continued the dismantling of the welfare state created in the immediate post-independence period.
9 In September 1993, the government established the Small Business Development Centre offering some of these services. I had completed the survey by then.

7 Rethinking Gender and Development for the Twenty-First Century

1 These activities are representative. See Vassell and Hamilton, 1996 for a full discussion and evaluation of the Bureau's work. I am not at all suggesting the Jamaican situation is perfect. Vassell and Hamilton document many problems in the Bureau's operation. My point is that they use gender to focus on women.
2 There are two important dimensions to postmodern theory. The one that I employ and find particularly useful requires analysis of social and political issues, not only as a critique of a dichotomized view of sex/gender, but also simultaneously from the perspective of race, class and sexual orientation. The second dimension decentres the self and is critical of the privileged perspective of the individual as an arbiter and reporter of her own motivations and meanings. Detractors of postmodernist feminist analysis pretend that only the latter dimension exists and declare that postmodernist theory cannot advance feminist analysis and agency. I do not declare social phenomena postmodern; the world is not postmodern. Economic, political and social relations are intensely grounded in patriarchal, capitalist, and other hegemonic practices. However, I find a

postmodernist feminist perspective particularly useful in generating different analyses of the state and the economy.

3 I was challenged by a man to invite a lecturer to do a gender analysis of men and ageing since the current lecture looked at women and ageing and made men 'look bad'. The following year the lecturer did this. The lecture revealed that generally many Caribbean men have negative experiences on ageing. For example, some tend not to maintain connections with children and church-based networks as frequently as women do, so that many do not receive visits or financial support on growing old.

4 The Republic of Haiti is the exception in this regard.

5 While producing a background paper on 'Gender Analysis and Development Planning' for a regional workshop, I was advised by a staff member of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) that, even though it was correct, I should not use the words 'feminists' or 'feminism' in discussing the origins of the concept of the social relations of gender, because the men on the course would not like it. The workshop was sponsored by IFAD and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). I refused and offered to withdraw rather than distort the discussion.

6 I thank Cynthia Burack for helping me clarify this distinction.

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