RACE AND POLITICS IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES THE CASES OF GUYANA AND TRINIDAD

by

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Introduction

The coincidence of racial, cultural, and socio-economic boundaries within a firmly rooted pattern of class stratification poses peculiar problems in Guyana and Trinidad, especially as they relate to political behaviour. The inter-twining of race, class and socio-economic interests renders it difficult to decipher what ultimate goals are being served by policy, or what forms the basis of political demands. Political concerns expressed in racial terms hide under underlying class interests; class mobilisation has hidden racial motives; and racially polarized politics have explanations in competition among political leaders representing conflicting interests within the middle and upper classes.

Efforts by analysts of Caribbean social structure to untangle and explain the roles of race, colour and class in these societies acquire added significance for Guyana and Trinidad given the racial diversity of these two countries (see Table 1). In this paper, I will attempt to discuss these efforts against the experience of these two countries and arrive at a framework for the analysis of race, class and politics in societies such as these.

TABLE 1

Population of Trinidad and Guyana by Race 1960, 1970.

Trinidad	1960	%	1970	%
Black	358,588	43.4	398,465	42.8
East Indian	301,946	36.5	373,538	40.1
Mixed	134,749	16.3	131,904	14.2
White	15,718*	1.9	11,383	1.2
Chinese	8,361	1.0	7,962	0.9
Other	8,595	1.0	6,134	0.7
Not Stated	—	—	1,385	0.1
Total	827,957	100	931,071	100

*This includes Portuguese.

Guyana	1960		%	1970		%
Black	183,950		32.9	227,091		30.7
East Indian	267,797		47.9	377,256		51.0
White	3,217	0.5	1.9	4,056	0.5	1.9
Portuguese	8,346	1.4		9,668	1.3	
Mixed	67,191		12.0	84,077		11.4
Chinese	2,231		1.0	4,678		0.4
Amerindian	10,299		1.8	32,794		4.4
Other	69		—	576		0.1
Not Stated	233		—	—		—
Total	536,330		100	740,196		100

Sources: Trinidad and Tobago Population Census, 1960, 1970. Guyana Population Census, 1960, 1970.

The Reticulated Model

At one end of the scale there are those theorists who explain the role of race and colour in Caribbean society as part of what is labelled by anthropologist, L. A. Despres as a "reticulated" colour-class pattern of stratification.[1] These theorists see status configurations to be undergirded by normative evaluations of race and colour, held by consensus, which more or less determine where an individual is located in the stratification order. This is mollified by factors such as education and wealth which give persons access to class and status positions not usually identified with his or her racial group or colour category.

On the surface, the pattern of stratification that was typical throughout the colonial Caribbean certainly lends weight to the argument for a reticulated model. The issue and debate, however, focus around the role of force vs. consensus in maintaining the racial order, and around the extent to which the different racial groups share in a generalised value system. I will return to these issues later.

Nonetheless, modifications in the role of race and colour as bases for stratification began to appear in the 1950's in Guyana and Trinidad. Considerable opportunities for upward mobility became available to the Black and mixed populations as employees of the state sector where they predominated, and eventually controlled. East Indians in both countries made considerable strides in business and in the professions. Thus, while Whites and the light-skinned population continue to be disproportionately over-represented among the upper and middle classes, these two sectors of society are today predominantly Black and East Indian.

The change, of course, was linked directly to political gains made by the two racial groups.[2] Nationalist political agitation reached its peak in both countries during the fifties at a time when universal adult suffrage was introduced and when both countries were granted internal self government. This gave local elected politicians wide-ranging legislative and executive powers which were used to ensure and increase the pace of upward mobility of the Black and East Indian populations. These powers were expended considerably when Trinidad and Guyana received political independence from Britain in 1962 and 1966 respectively. Hence, when political power was transferred to locals, they were able to use it to ensure increased access of non whites, largely excluded under colonial rule, to resources that guaranteed them entrance into middle and upper class status groups.[3] In a sense, they used political power to change the consensus regarding the role of race and colour in stratification.

The reticulated model poses problems for political analysis. Given centrality of generalised consensus in its formulation, it does not offer adequate explanation for the deep racial and class divisions which have assumed political dimensions in the post-World War II era of the politics of Trinidad and Guyana. For this reason, it has come under considerable attack. Foremost among its critics are the "plantation theorist" who view political domination as much more central to the explanation for the pattern of stratification in Caribbean society.

Plantation Theory

Closely akin in its most recent formulations to dependency theory,[4] the plantation model focuses upon societies where plantation production is, or has been, the primary economic activity. Plantation theorists see a much more rigid parallel than those who propose a reticulated model between class and status differentiations in the society and distinctions of race and colour. Status distinctions take a unitary relationship with colour which, in turn, becomes identified with prestige, power, privilege and wealth.[5]

Plantation theorists correctly see a necessary intertwining of race and lower class political mobilisation during the pre-independence phase of politics in plantation society. Given European domination of the colonial political economy, there has to be a challenge to the existing status quo if government is to have any chance of being genuinely representative of mass interests.[6] Because of the racial rigidity of the system, lower class mobilisation takes on the character of racial politics.[7] In both Guyana and Trinidad, anti-White sentiments pervaded the nationalist political movements which were rooted exclusively within the non-White populations.[8]

The problem for post-independence government in both countries is that the majority of the predominantly Black and East Indian lower class population have not experienced economic betterment, in fact their conditions have worsened.[9] The policies of the post-independence governments have not been beneficial to the preponderantly non-white lower classes.[10] Why is this so, given

the fact that representatives of the two major racial groups now control the politics of the two countries? Plantation theorists point, in their explanation, to the absence of structural change in post-colonial society, in terms of class privilege and prerogatives firmly linked to economic exploitation, in a system which has as its overriding motif the efficient production of primary resources at the cheapest possible cost for markets in the industrialised countries. As intermediaries between the local and international economy, the local middle and upper classes have become the new beneficiaries of the system.[11]

The powerful influence of the middle and upper classes upon state policy has resulted in a political system which is geared to their needs at the expense of the lower classes. This is a legacy of colonialism where co-optation and rewards ensured a strong alliance between the former and the colonial authorities. There was a reluctance to support calls for socio-economic reform among them and many typically shunned, and even opposed, the nationalist independence movements.[12] For the interests of the lower classes to be served what is required is not merely the replacement of Europeans by locals in positions of political power, but "a fundamental change in social organisation and new political leaders emerging from the rank and file of the dispossessed groups."[13]

Without a doubt, the plantation model is a highly appropriate heuristic tool when used to explain the racial roots of nationalist politics in the English-speaking Caribbean after the advent of universal adult suffrage during the fifties. It also explains the failure of mass politics to effectively transform the society into one which caters to the economic and social interests of the lower classes. However, it leaves a lot to be explained when one looks at the specifics of racial politics in the two countries.

Political democratisation was accompanied, in both countries, by intense inter-communal conflict among the local non-White population. In Guyana, nationalist politics started out as a mass movement in which both East Indians and Blacks participated.[14] However, that unity quickly collapsed under the pressure of racial politics which was made more severe by the conflicting socio-economic interests of the two groups.[15] Racial conflict became so intense that by the early sixties Black political leaders opposed even discussion of independence for the colony as long as an East Indian government was in power.[16] In Trinidad the nationalist movement was confined, primarily, to the Black population. East Indians opposed independence for fear that the country would enter into a political union with the predominantly Black islands of the Anglophone Caribbean and, thereby, relegate them to an insignificant minority.[17]

It would appear, then, that the need to ensure control of the state by one's own racial group takes precedence over the political and socio-economic interests of the society in the politics of the two societies. In Trinidad, the East Indian population opposed independence for the country out of fear of racial domination.[18] In Guyana, the Black population was willing to forego independence until its leaders were assured of political power.

This fact of politics can hardly be explained by plantation theory. Even where a commitment to fundamental structural change is generalised, the issue of paramount importance is racial control of the state. In Guyana, the leaders of both the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) and the Peoples National Congress (PNC), identified respectively with the East Indian and Black populations, have committed themselves to socialist transformation of the state. Nonetheless, the centrality of the issue of racial control has prevented either party from achieving that goal. There is need, therefore, to integrate the fact of racial plurality into any analysis of politics.

The Theory of Cultural Pluralism

The theory of cultural pluralism poses as problematic the integration of a society in which is contained parallel "cultural sections" that are distinctive in their patterns of institutional behaviour.[19] Since racial divisions are marked and reinforced in both Guyana and Trinidad by differences in culture and socio-economic behaviour, this model has attracted considerable attention. In the early formulations of the model, plural society was considered to be characterised, structurally, by the presence of "distinct racial sections with an elaborate western super-structure over native life."[20] Without this super-structure the society "must collapse and the whole system crumble into dust ."[21]

Later, West Indian anthropologist, M. G. Smith, modified and reformulated cultural pluralist theory to take account of the conditions which inhere in Caribbean society.[22] He paid particular attention to the development of a rigorous theoretical and operational definition of plural society. Smith considers plural sections to be corporate units which he delineates by the distinctive patterns of institutional behaviour of their members. He considers such behaviour to have a unitary relationship with the culture of the group.[23] Another anthropologist studying Guyana chose to identify plural sections in a society by associational rather than institutional criteria.[24]

The analytic importance of plural theory for the politics of Guyana and Trinidad is that it takes specific account of the reality of racial motivation. It emphasises the role of political domination in ensuring socio-political stability and order.[25] It thus poses as problematic the conditions of order and stability when political power is transferred from colonial authorities to local politicians.

According to Furnivall, a post-colonial society can escape socio-political turmoil if it is able to "organise a common social will"[6] which would also overcome "the conflict between rival economic interests."[27] Nationalism, with its capacity to transcend narrow communal sentiments, can thus provide the prerequisite for social order. Unfortunately, there are very few instances, if any at all, where communal diversity has been successfully transcended in the politics of a less developed country by nationalist fervour. In Guyana, the nationalist movement which took off in 1950 did, for a time, manage to mollify racial divisiveness by forging a political union between Blacks and East Indians. By 1955, however, the racial unity of the movement crumbled under the pressure

of conflicting socio-economic demands, which translated into ideological differences between leaders representing the Black and East Indian populations of the country.[28] In Trinidad, the nationalist movement was not supported by the East Indians and took on an exclusively Black identity.

We must therefore turn to the question: What are the conditions for order and stability in the absence of an overriding mass commitment to nationalism? Specifically, since plural society depends for its order and stability upon colonial domination, what happens when the colonial authorities relinquish political control of the colony? Plural theory predicts a period of intense communal conflict. This was certainly true for Guyana. The politically mobilized racial groups in the country became embroiled in intense internecine conflict between 1957 and 1964, and especially after 1962, over the issue of racial control of the state.[29] By the time independence was granted in 1966, the foundation for Black political domination was firmly in place and socio-political order was restored. But intense conflict and socio-political breakdown is not inevitable. In Trinidad, even though political parties were racially organised, no breakdown of socio-political order accompanied the transfer of political power to nationals.

Plural theory predicts that, in a fragmented society which has inherited a colonial structure of power, if one group is able to effectively capture and hold on to political power and establish a system of political control, socio-political order and stability will be maintained.[30] Thus, political democratisation may be followed by a period of political instability until one group manages to gain exclusive control of the state machinery and manages to incorporate elements of the colonial power structure into the post-colonial political framework. If, from the outset, that group is able to clearly dominate the politics of the country, then, socio-political breakdown can be avoided.

I now turn to the question as to the conditions under which party domination of the state might be achieved. It is certainly true for Trinidad that mobilisation of the racial group comprising the voting majority was critical.[31] Support from the Black and coloured (mixed) population has assured the ruling Peoples National Movement (PNM) victory in every election since 1956, the first year of universal adult suffrage. With full control of national politics, the party has been able to blunt the effect of any challenge to its power mounted by the East Indian opposition. Inter-racial political violence has been almost non-existent in the country.

As it turns out, however, support from an electoral majority is not the critical ingredient in political power. Rather, it is the degree of access that the political representatives of an ethnic group has to strategic resource prerequisites of power. The most important of these prerequisites are control of formidable coercive arsenal, control of the civil administration and control of the economy.[32] In both Guyana and Trinidad, Black domination of the civil, corporate and coercive arms of the state has been the most important element of party power. Both parties were able to obtain the strong allegiance of these branches on the weight of sheer racial appeal. Each was able to call upon these sectors during times of crisis in order to retain political power.

The Guyanese experience highlights the centrality of support from state sector workers for political domination. When the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) was again elected to power in 1961 after first winning elections in 1957, purely on the voting strength of the rural-based East Indian population, the Black controlled and dominated public sector called a general strike to protest a budget which its members perceived as highly damaging to their interests. There were also underlying fears among Black government workers that the PPP intended to "Indianise" the public service. The strike was supported by Black lower class workers and was accompanied by rioting and arson. The predominantly Black security forces did little to maintain law and order and the PPP authorities were forced to call upon Britain which dispatched a contingent of troops to the colony. In 1963, opposition to a Labour Relations Bill introduced by the PPP again precipitated a general strike. This time it was supported by the White and Portuguese dominated business sector, mainly because of ideological opposition to the Marxism of the PPP government.

The complete breakdown of socio-political order forced the PPP to accept British proposals for a change in the electoral system from constituency voting and representation in the legislature to proportional representation. The change virtually assured the opposition parties collectively opposing the PPP of electoral victory since the strength of the East Indian popular vote was not enough to allow the PPP to continue in power.

Instead, a coalition of the PNC and the United Force (UF), the party identified with the Portuguese, Chinese and White populations, came to power after elections, held in 1964.[33]

In effect, the new PNC/UF government represented an anti-East Indian urban coalition. By 1968, however, the PNC was able to break out of the coalition and assume absolute and sole control of government. It did so purely on the strength of support from the state sector. First, the party used control of the strategic agency responsible for administering and overseeing elections to change the electoral procedures. With these changes the party guaranteed its own political victory in what would be incontrovertibly established as rigged national elections held in 1968.[34]

The key to PNC power, however, rested, not only in its capacity to rig the elections, but more in its strategic support base. After independence in 1966, the party was able to increase the strength of Black domination in the armed, security and intelligence branches of the state. Thus, political order was effectively maintained despite political opposition from the majority of the population which now included supporters of the United Force. In other words, after 1968 there was **de facto** Black political domination of the state, undergirded by Black control and domination of the armed and civil branches of government.

Race and Political Control

Closer examination of the politics of Guyana and Trinidad suggests the need for some modification of the plural thesis. It would appear that political

control in both countries had more to do with the solid support provided the two regimes by politically strategic groups than it has to do with racial support. However, because of the coincidence of racial and occupational boundaries, both ruling parties have been able to make racial appeals to guarantee the loyalty of these strategic groups. At the same time, all the major parties in both countries have been willing to make alliances across racial boundaries when the prerequisites of power deemed it necessary. In other words, emphasis on support from strategic sectors of society seems to be as important as an emphasis on racial support in the political strategies of the parties of both countries.

Despite a prevailing racial identity, most political parties in Trinidad have relied upon, or have attempted to appeal to, multi-racial support. In 1956, after elections that were characterised by open appeals to race, the two parties representing the White and East Indian populations respectively joined in a political coalition which lasted until 1961.[35] When the coalition collapsed, the White population of the country began a gradual shift towards support for the ruling PNM, identified almost exclusively with the Black population. Today, the ruling party enjoys the overwhelming support of the White dominated private sector as well as the middle and upper class sections of the East Indian populations.[36] Likewise, in an attempt to exploit Black dissatisfaction with the PNM, the East Indian opposition party entered into a political alliance with radical Black trade unions in 1976 in a union which lasted until 1978.

While racial support for the PNC and the PPP in Guyana is much more solid, the PNC has been able to secure the political alliances of the leaders of important and powerful East Indian organisations including the Maha Sabha, considered as "the most important cultural and religious organisation for Hindus" in the country,[37] and its youth arm, the Ghandi Youth Organisation, as well as the United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman, one of the major Muslim organisations in the country. Most important, in August 1975 Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the PPP, announced his "critical support" for the ruling PNC and began talks, which were later aborted, for the sharing of power between the two parties.[38] This came immediately after the PNC had nationalised the sugar industry and when the support and co-operation of the predominantly East Indian and PPP-controlled sugar workers were critical for economic stability. The PNC regime also hoped the union would increase chances for economic assistance and for strengthened political ties with Eastern bloc countries with which the PPP had long-established ties.[39]

Other political events have exposed weaknesses in the thesis of racial control. The most serious political challenges to the Black ruling parties in both countries have come from the Black populations. During a period of economic crisis in 1970, urban and predominantly working class Blacks mounted massive demonstrations against the PNM government of Trinidad, demanding radical changes in the regime's economic and political policies. They were joined by members of the predominantly Black army who mutinied and attempted an abortive march on the capital city.[40] Political unrest continued to simmer up

to 1973, highlighted by activities of Black guerilla groups which abated only after dramatic economic recovery at the end of that year.[41]

In Guyana, a rapidly deteriorating economy fuelled the fires of political unrest, especially during 1978 and 1979. The moving force behind the unrest was a Black dominated radical party, the Working People's Alliance (WPA). This group organised strikes and demonstrations against the regime in which Black state sector and mining workers played a pivotal role. Its calls for a change in government was supported by the PPP, by an East Indian midddle class right wing party, and, for a brief period, by leading bureaucrats in the state sector.[42]

Two related conclusions emerge from the above. First, while race has been the symbolic basis for political mobilisation of the communal segments of Guyanese and Trinidad society, the efficacy of a racial appeal can become seriously eroded in the face of relative deprivation, perceived or actual.[43] In other words, support for a party identified with a particular racial group is given with the expectation of material betterment should that party capture political power. This, of course, is not inconsistent with plural theory which sees the effectiveness of communal domination to depend upon the capacity of those in power to sustain the commitment of members of the dominant group by providing them with visible and tangible socio-economic benefits. These benefits must leave them decidedly better off than the rest of the population.[44] In other words, plural theory can explain the erosion of Black support for the ruling parties of both countries by pointing to the failure of their economic policies to secure a better standard of living for their racial supporters.

Plural theory, however, cannot explain the pattern of multi-racial alliances in the two countries. It would appear from the experiences of Guyana and Trinidad that the middle and upper class respond to racial appeal than to considerations of the effect upon their socio-economic interests of the policies advocated by a political party. Because of the positive effects of the PNM's pro-capitalist policies upon middle and upper level business and occupational groups, the party enjoys their overwhelming support irrespective of race and despite its Black identity.[45] In Guyana, quite a large number of East Indian political and cultural leaders, professionals and businessmen have become members of the PNC and are among the party's most visible and vocal supporters. Given the absolute nature of PNC political control and the fact that 80 percent of the country's economy is owned and controlled by the state, there are considerable benefits, in the form of patronage and prequisites, to be derived from party membership. Opposition to the party also comes at considerable costs. Furthermore, when Black middle class socio-economic gains began to erode as a result of severe economic crisis, members were willing to support calls from a coalition of opposition groups, including the two East Indian parties, for a change in regime. They engaged in politically inspired strikes, work stoppages and demonstrations.[46]

In view of what has been said above, an observation by political scientist Nelson Kasfir takes on added significance. He argues that ethnic identity is only

one of many possible bases for motivating political action.[47] Particularly, that the same individual might, at one time, respond to ethnic appeals and, at another, to class appeals as the situation warrants[48] and that "political situations that evoke participation along class lines may appear and disappear just as they do for participation along ethnic lines."[49] What might appear to be politically inconsistent behaviour can be explained because "class motives may either conflict with or reinforce enthnic motives."[50] Kasfir therefore criticizes plural theory because of its tendency to reify ethnicity, thus robbing the analyst of the opportunity for dealing with the fluid and intermittent character of ethno-political behaviour.[51]

What then, are we to conclude from discussions of these various theories? The reticulated model of "colour-class stratification," while analytically important in discussions of colonial social structure, has begun to lose empirical validity because of the rapid upward mobility of those previously confined to the lower echelons of society. Plantation theory, while capturing the reality of the unity of interests of the upper and middle classes and the need to maintain an oppressive and exploitative **status quo** for those interests to be served, can deal with the reality of racial politics only as a strategy to maintain class domination. Plural theory, on the other hand, does not allow enough flexibility for dealing with the fluidity and intermittent nature of racial politics and, thus, predicts socio-political disorder in the absence of an overarching nationalist commitment unless one racial group clearly dominates the politics of the country.

Class, Race and Political Behaviour

Attempts to integrate class and race in political analysis seem to have proven quite problematic. Efforts to resolve the difficulties which emerge must, it seems, take into account a number of factors:

1. **The conditions under which communal groups are available for political mobilisation:**

Anthropologist, Gananath Obeyesekere proposes racial and ethnic "self-consciouness, (and) a sense of belongingness"[52] as a minimum condition for the existence of communal identity. This identity, however, may be held by "categorically identified population aggregates" that are not "corporately organised."[53] Since mobilisation cannot occur without some form of prior corporate organisation, a communally-based political movement would require, as a prerequisite, some form of exclusive institutional or associational activity. In other words, if persons consider themselves to be members of, and are identified as belonging to a racial or ethnic category which engages in no corporate activity, then such persons are not available for political mobilisation on the exclusive basis of communal appeal.[54] One might speculate, then, that the wider and more inclusive the range of communal group activities, the more the chance that politics will take on a racial or ethnic character.

At the same time, the nature of the activity will also determine the likelihood of communal politics. De Vos and Romanucci-Ross make a distinction between "expressive" and "instrumental" behaviour.[55] The former has to do with

Durkheimian reaffirmation of the existence of the group and, as such, has ritualistic and symbolic manifestations. The latter, on the other hand, has to do with group behaviour which is manifestly directed towards the achievement of a specific set of concrete goals.

Political behaviour is, by definition, instrumental in the sense that it is designed to ensure that the policies of the political authorities are formulated, and that the resources which they control are distributed in ways which favour the actual or perceived interests of the political actors. It follows, therefore, that when a communal group's corporate activity is confined solely to expressive behaviour that political mobilisation will not occur.

2. The conditions that would motivate communal political activity : We can expect that, when a communal group's corporate activity contains instrumental components, the group is highly likely to engage in political activity. Thus, if the group has economic interests identified exclusively, or almost exclusively, with its members, the likelihood of communal politics is high. One might expect communal political organisation where a group seeks to maintain its position of socio-economic advantage **vis-a-vis** other groups. Political activity might thus be aimed at preventing access of the latter into its exclusive domain. When there is generalised consensus as to the nature of participation of each of the communal groups in the society, then the system becomes less conflictful. Members of the low-status groups, by virtue of their "accommodation to minority status"[56] would be unlikely to mobilise politically. When consensus breaks down, however, one might expect these low-status groups to become politically organised to further the socio-economic interests of their members. This is highly characteristic of the late colonial period when demands for political independence are being made, or when the issue of independence is being discussed.

A great proportion of the communal political movements occur when members of aggregate communal categories or expressive corporate groups organise for instrumental political activity.[57] One precipitant of such organisation is when contact with other groups begins to threaten the integrity of the group or threaten its "sense of belongingness."[58] Members fear that political power placed in the hands of another group can bring with it a threat to their perceived communal interests.

In sum, it is unlikely that a display of communal politics will become manifest if (i) the communal group exists only as a categorical aggregate, (ii) communal behaviour is confined to purely expressive activity, and (iii) if there is generalised consensus as to the nature of communal participation in society. Communal groups will become politically mobilised when their members seek to maintain positions of privilege against counter claims by other groups, or when their members are demanding social and economic reform in the face of opposition by other groups.

3. Class related differences in motivation for communal politics : The following class-related differences in intra-communal political behaviour stand out in

Guyana and Trinidad : (i) the tendency of the middle and upper classes to reject a communal appeal when it conflicts with their socio-economic interests. Ethnic politics is strong among these groups only when it is consistent with such interests; (ii) the willingness of the urbanised lower class Black population to mobilise against the party identified with its communal interests when its economic interests are severely threatened. However, this mobilisation usually takes on a racial character. Opposition to the regime is justified on the basis of it being considered to have "sold out," the interests of its followers; and (iii) the persistence of the rural-based East Indian lower-class population in their support for communal parties.

In other words, whereas the protection of socio-economic interests seems paramount in the political behaviour of the middle and upper classes, the protection of communal integrity seems just as important, or even more so, among the lower classes. What can explain such differences in intra-communal class behaviour and what are their implications?

Olson suggests that the short term socio-economic interests of members of the upper and middle classes are tied directly to political decisions made both at the national and international level.[59] The resaon, of course, is that such decisions affect, positively or negatively, middle and upper class sectors of the economy much more so than they do the lower class sectors. The economic effects of political decision-making might be relatively less severe upon (or less beneficial to) urban and non-agricultural (mining) lower class workers. Their different patterns of consumption and their ability to call for material support upon an extended kinship network with ties to the rural sector serve to insulate them from economic crisis. It is only when poor economic performance begins to affect members of the most urbanised, and highly unionised, upper echelons of the lower classes that socio-economic interests become paramount in lower class political behaviour. These upper segments of the working class typically have fewer ties to the countryside. The rural lower classes are impervious to economic fluctuations because they produce much more of what they consume, because little or none of what they consume is imported, and because of their extremely poor standard of living to begin with.

It is more likely, therefore, that socio-economic interests will be paramount in efforts of the middle and upper classes to control and influence state decision-making. This is true, but to a much lesser extent, for urban and non-agricultural lower class workers. Otherwise, it is the fear of communal domination, the distaste for political control of the state by another group, and a concern for its own "expressive" interests that motivate lower class political behaviour in fragmented societies. This is why communal politics is particularly strong among rural-based groups or recently urbanised groups with strong kinship ties to the rural areas. Conversely, it is strong among middle and upper class groups when the socio-economic interests of members are consistent with domination of the state by their own communal party.

What is said above have considerable implications for communal politics in less developed countries. First, leaders can mobilise the lower classes solely

by raising the spectre of political domination by another racial or ethnic group. However, to get the allegiance of politically strategic middle and upper class groups, political leaders have to be prepared to adopt policies and programmes that are directly beneficial to their socio-economic interests. This means that political decision-making has to be responsive to the demands of the middle and upper classes and that communal politics can hardly assure for members of the lower classes that their socio-economic interests will be furthered. What it does is to secure mass loyalty for a regime whose policies and programmes are diametrically opposed to long term lower class interests.

NOTES

1. L. A. Despres, "The implications of nationalist politics in British Guiana for the development of cultural theory" in Reinhard Bendix, **State and Society** (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), pp. 502-528. Those who subscribe to this view include Lloyd Braithwaite, "Social stratification in Trinidad." **Social and Economic Studies,** vol. 2 (1953), pp. 5-175 and "Social Stratification and cultural pluralism" in Vera Rubin ed., **"Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean.** Annals of the New York Academy of Science, vol. 83, art. 5 (1960), pp. 816-823; B. Benedict, "Stratification in plural societies" **American Anthropologist,** vol. 64 (1962) pp. 1253-1256; R. T. Smith, **British Guiana** (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962).
2. For a history of politics in the two countries after World War II see for Guyana, Leo A. Despres, Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana (Chicago): Rand McNally, 1966); Percy C. Hintzen, "The colonial foundations of race relations and ethnic politics in Guyana," **The Guyana Journal of Sociology** vol. 1, No. 3, (April 1977), pp. 24-66: Ralph Premdas, "The rise of the first mass-based multi-racial party in Guyana." **Caribbean Quarterly,** vol. 20, No. 3 and 4, (January 1975), pp. 5-20; Robert H. Manley, **Guyana Emergent** (Boston: Schenkman, 1976). For Trinidad see C. L. R. James, **Party Politics in the West Indies** (Port of Spain; James, 1962); Ivor Oxaal, **Black Intellectuals Come to Power** (Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman, 1968); Selwyn Ryan, **Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago** (Port of Spain: PNM Publishing, 1962); Krishna Bahadoorsingh, **Trinidad Ethnic Politics: The Persistence of the Race Factor** (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1968).
3. For a discussion of the colonial structure of power and its implications for post-colonial politics, see Percy C. Hintzen and Ralph Premdas, "Guyana: Coercion and control in political change." **Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs** (August 1982), (forthcoming).
4. See, for example Lloyd Best, "Outlines for a model of pure plantation economy" **Social and Economic Studies,** (September 1968), pp. 283-326; and George Beckford, **Persistent Poverty** (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972) passim.
5. See especially Beckford **op. cit.** For a good statement of the plantation model see Charles Wagley, "Plantation America: a culture sphere" in Vera Rubin, ed., **Caribbean Studies: A Symposium** (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1960), pp. 3-13; and Charles Wagley and M. Harris, "A typology of Latin American subscultures" **American Anthropologist,** vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 428-51.
6. Beckford, **op. cit.,** p. 6-7.
7. **Ibid.,** p. 224.
8. For Guyana see L. A. Despres, **Cultural Pluralism , op. cit.,** and for Trinidad see Selwyn Ryan, **op. cit.**
9. West Indian economist, Clive Thomas, **Dependence and Transformation: The Economics of Transition to Socialism** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972) sees this as

the endemic failure of all small less developed countries. For evidence of the deterioration of working class conditions in Guyana and Trinidad see Percy C. Hintzen, "Capitalism, socialism and socio-political confrontation in multi-racial societies," Ph. D. dissertation, Yale Univ. 1981), ch. 2.

10. See Percy C. Hintzen, "Capitalism, socialism . . . "**op. cit.**; and Ralph Premdas, "Guyana: Socialist reconstruction and political opportunism," **Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs,** vol. 20, No. 2, (Moy 1978), pp. 133-164; Ivor Oxaal, **Race and Revolutionary Consciousness** (Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman, 1971); **C. Y. Thomas, "Bread and justice:** the struggle for socialism in Guyana," **Monthly Review,** vol. 28, No. 4., (Sept. 1976), pp. 23-35.
11. See Beckford, **op. cit.,** pp. 224-233. Some, such as Colin Leys, "The 'overdeveloped' post-colonial state: a re-evaluation," **Review of African Political Economy,** No. 5, (January-April 1976) have argued that the post-colonial state remains under the direct domination of international capital and a "metropolitan bourgeoisie." Others have argued that the post-colonial state, and hence the state-controlling elite, performs a mediating function between international capital and the local society. Representing this view are H. Avali, "The state in post-colonial society: Pakistan and Bangladesh," **"New Left Review"** 74, (July-August 1972); Roger Murray, "Second thoughts on Ghana," **New Left Review** 42, (1967); John Saul "The unsteady state of Uganda: **Obote and General Amin," Review of African Political Economy,** No. 5, (1978); and Michaela von Frehold, "The post-colonial state and its Tanzanian version," **Review of African Political Economy** (January-April 1977), pp. 75-89.
12. While this is generally true for most of colonial history, it is also a fact that independence movements have been led by members of the colonized middle class, even though relying upon working class mobilization. R. S. Olson, "Economic coercion in world politics," **World Politics,** No. 4 (July 1979), pp. 471-498, proposes that relative deprivation explains a great deal of the cases where the middle classes mount challenges to a regime. Middle class participation in nationalist and independence movements can therefore be understood, economically, from the fact that after World War II economic expectations in the colonies far outpaced the ability and willingness of colonial regimes to satisfy them. Politically, demands by the middle classes for greater participation in government and in the running of their countries were, largely, rebuffed. The combined effect of the two was a greater willingness to challenge the legitimacy of colonial rule.
13. Beckford, **op. cit.,** p. 224.
14. See Despres, Cultural Pluralism . . ., **op.cit.:** and Premdas, "The rise of the first mass based . . ." **op. cit.,** pp. 178-192.
15. See Hintzen, "The colonial foundations . . ." **op. cit.,** pp. 52-54.
16. See **Report of the British Guiana Commission of Inquiry** (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1965).
17. See Ryan, **op. cit.,** pp. 99-101.
18. See **ibid.,** pp. 138-146.
19. The theory was first formulated by economist and colonial administrator J. S. Furnivall. See the following works by that author: **Netherlands India** (Cambridge, England: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1939) **Colonial Policy and Practice** (Cambridge, England: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1948), and "The political economy in the tropical Far East," in Reinhard Bendix, ed., **State and Society** (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), pp. 460-472.
20. Furnivall, **Colonial Policy, op. cit.,** p. 230.
21. Furnivall, **"The political economy . . ." op. cit.,** p. 472.
22. See especially M. G. Smith, "Institutional and political conditions of pluralism," in Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith, eds., **Pluralism in Africa** (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971) pp. 27-65 and "Some developments in the analytic framework of pluralism" in the same volume, pp. 415-458. See also by the author, **The Plural Society in the British West Indies** (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974).
23. See especially M. G. Smith, Institutional and political conditions . . ." **op. cit.,** and, by the same author, **The Plural Society op. cit.,** pp. 79-80.
24. See Leo A. Despres, **Cultural Pluralism op. cit.,** pp. 21-29.
25. See M. G. Smith, "Some Developments . . .", **op. cit.,** pp. 421-430.

26. J. S. Furnivall, "The political economy . . .", **op. cit.**, p. 472.
27. J. S. Furnivall, **Netherlands India op. cit,** p. 471.
28. For a discussion of the nationalist movement and the reasons why it succeeded see Premdas, "The rise of the first . . .", **op. cit.**
29. These events have been reported in detail in **Report of the British Guiana Commission of Inquiry op. cit.**; Hintzen, "The colonial foundations . . ." **op. cit.**; Peter Simms, **Trouble in Guyana** (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964); and Ernest Halperin, Racism and communism in British Guiana," **Journal of Inter-Ameican Studies** (January 1965), pp. 95-134.
30. See especially, Sammy Smooha, "Control of minorities in Israel and Northern Ireland." **Comparative Studies in Society and History,** vol. 22, No. 2, (April 1980), pp. 256-280; Ian Lustick, "Stability in deeply divided societies: consociationalism verses control," **World Politics,** vol. 31, No. 3, (April 1979), pp. 325-344; and Pierre van den Berghe, "Pluralism and the polity; a theoretical exploration," in Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith, eds., **op. cit.,** pp. 67-81.
31. Smooha, **op. cit.,** and Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle, **Politics in Plural Societies** (Columbus, Ohio: Merril, 1974) argue that majoritarianism is the critical ingredient in communial domination.
32. This is the point made by Premdas and Hintzen, **op. cit.**
33. In the 1964 elections the PPP got 45 percent of the vote and 25 seats in the legislative council, the PNC with 40 percent of the vote got 22 seats, and the UF with 12 percent of the vote got 7 seats. See Ralph R. Premdas, "Elections and political campaigns in a racially bifurcated state: the case of Guyana." **Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs,** (August 1972) pp. 271-296; and J. E. Greene, **Race and Politics in Guyana** (Jamaica: University of West Indies, 1974), pp. 19-26.
34. See **Sunday Times** (London), November 5, 1968, p. 4; Adrian Mitchell, "Jagan and Burnham: its polling day tomorrow. Has Guyana s elections already been decided in Britain?" **The Sunday Times** (London), December 15, 1968. See also the transcript of "Focus on General elections," Guyana Broadcasting Corporation, December 22, 1968.
35. See Ryan, **op. cit.,** p. 225.
36. See Hintzen, "Capitalism, socialism . . .", **op. cit.,** chs. 5 and 6.
37. Ralph Premdas, "Voluntary associations and political parties in a racially fragmented state" Occasional Papers No. 2, Department of Political Science, University of Guyana (February 1972). p. 31.
38. See Jay R. Mandle, "Continuity and change in Guyanese underdevelopment" **Monthly Review** vol. 28, No. 4, (September 1976), pp. 48-50.
39. See **ibid.**; and Manley, **op. cit.,** pp. 55-71.
40. For an account of these events see Ivor Oxaal, **Race and Revolutionary Consciousness op. cit.**
41. See Gregg Chamberlain, "The disillusioned Dr. Williams" **Guardian Weekly** (Manchester), October 20, 1973, p. 8.
42. See Hintzen, "Capitalism, socialism . . ." **op. cit.,** pp. 343-350.
43. It is the argument of R. S. Olson, **op. cit.,** that relative deprivation is the most critical factor for the political stability of less developed societies because it determines whether individuals or groups will engage in political confrontation against the regime.
44. See Smooha, **op. cit.,** pp. 270-271.
45. See Hintzen, "Capitalism, socialism . . ." **op. cit.** pp. 245-267.
46. See **ibid.,** pp. 343-350.
47. Nelson Kasfir, "Explaining ethnic political participation," **World Politics,** vol. 31, No. 3, (April 1979), p. 3.
48. **Ibid.,** p. 374.
49. **Ibid.**
50. **Ibid.,** p. 375.
51. **Ibid.,** p. 385.
52. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Sinhalese-Buddhist Identity in Ceylon" in George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, eds., **Ethnic Identity.** (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1975).

53. Leo A. Despres, "Towards a theory of ethnic phenomena," in Leo A. Despres, ed., **Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies**, (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 66-67.
54. Despres distinguishes corporate groups by the presence of "a common estate, a unitary set of external relations, a relative exclusive body of common affairs, and procedures which are more or less adequate to the administration of these affairs." See **ibid.** Of course, corporate activity cannot pertain to all components of the behaviour of members of the group. It might be confined to some specific activity which is exclusive to the group such as religious practices, recreational behaviour, or political party participation.
55. George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, "Ethnicity: vessel of meaning and emblem of contrast," in De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, **op. cit.**, pp. 376-385. See also, Cynthia Enloe, **Ethnic Conflict and Political Development** (Boston, Mass, Little, Brown, and and Co., 1973), ch. 7.
56. George De Vos, "Ethnic pluralism: conflict and accommodation" in De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, **op. cit.**, p. 33.
57. See Kasfir, **op. cit.**, p. 378.
58. Obeyeskere, **op. cit.**, p. 250. Expressive "revival" could occur among categorical aggregates when, according to Obeyeskere "the group must attain its collective solidarity and maintain its self image; and (b) when the ethnic identity is disintegrating."
59. See Olson, **op. cit.**, pp. 487-492.