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AMBIGUOUS IDEOLOGY AND CONTRADICTORY BEHAVIOUR: GENDER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARIBBEAN SOCIETIES A CASE STUDY OF ANTIGUA

MARLENE ROSEMARY MALLETT

A Thesis
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of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to

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DECLARATION

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The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) of the University of the West Indies, was set up under the auspices of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (Eastern Caribbean) (ISER (EC)). Its mandate was to look into the contemporary situation of women in the Caribbean, focusing specifically upon three Eastern Caribbean territories - Antigua, Barbados, and St. Vincent.

Marlene Rosemary Mallet, worked on the Project for almost two years in 1989 and 1990. She was responsible for producing a report on the situation of women in Antigua, based upon the qualitative and quantitative analysis of fieldwork data collected both by herself (in 1989/90) and by previous Project researchers (in 1978-1982).

The Institute is pleased to allow Ms. Mallet to use the Antiguan fieldwork material in the preparation of her doctoral dissertation at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom. This permission is granted on condition that the dissertation appropriately acnowledges the source of data collected by Ms. Mallet and previous researchers in the Women in the Caribbean Project.

Patrick Emmanuel, Ph.D.
Acting Director

September, 1993

c.c. Ms. R. Mallet

ABSTRACT

Ambiguous Ideology and Contradictory Behaviour:
Gender In The Development of Caribbean Societies.
A Case Study of Antigua.

Marlene Rosemary Mallett

The main purpose of this research is to explore the interconnections between reproduction and production, and women's roles in a wide range of social and economic process in the Caribbean in general, and in Antigua specifically. The focus on Antigua allows for an examination of women's integration into the social, political and economic development of a small Caribbean territory.

Using gender theory as an analytical tool, I analyze the results of a large social survey of Antiguan women (504), together with data obtained from my own interviews and from a wide range of previously unavailable and unpublished secondary data. These have enabled me to demonstrate both the contributions Antiguan women have made to development, and the constraints which they have confronted over the period 1834-1990.

The thesis is organized into eight chapters. Divided into two parts, it begins by examining a wide range of sociological and anthropological theories which purport to explain the nature of Caribbean family organization, and relations between men and women, namely the concepts of matrifocality and male marginality. It also looks at the utility of gender theory for analyzing Caribbean social reality. Chapter Two moves on to look at the contemporary situation of Caribbean women, particularly with respect to national development policy. Chapter Three then turns to the situation confronting Antiguan women from Emancipation in 1834 up to the present.

Part Two moves away from the general Caribbean situation to an analysis of data gathered in 1980/81 on Antiguan women by the Women in the Caribbean Project, University of the West Indies. Chapter Four sets this data in perspective, while Chapters Five through Seven examine in detail the impact of education, work, and the family on women's lives. One of the major purposes of this section is to listen to what the women themselves have to say from their own experience. This section is then followed by a concluding chapter.

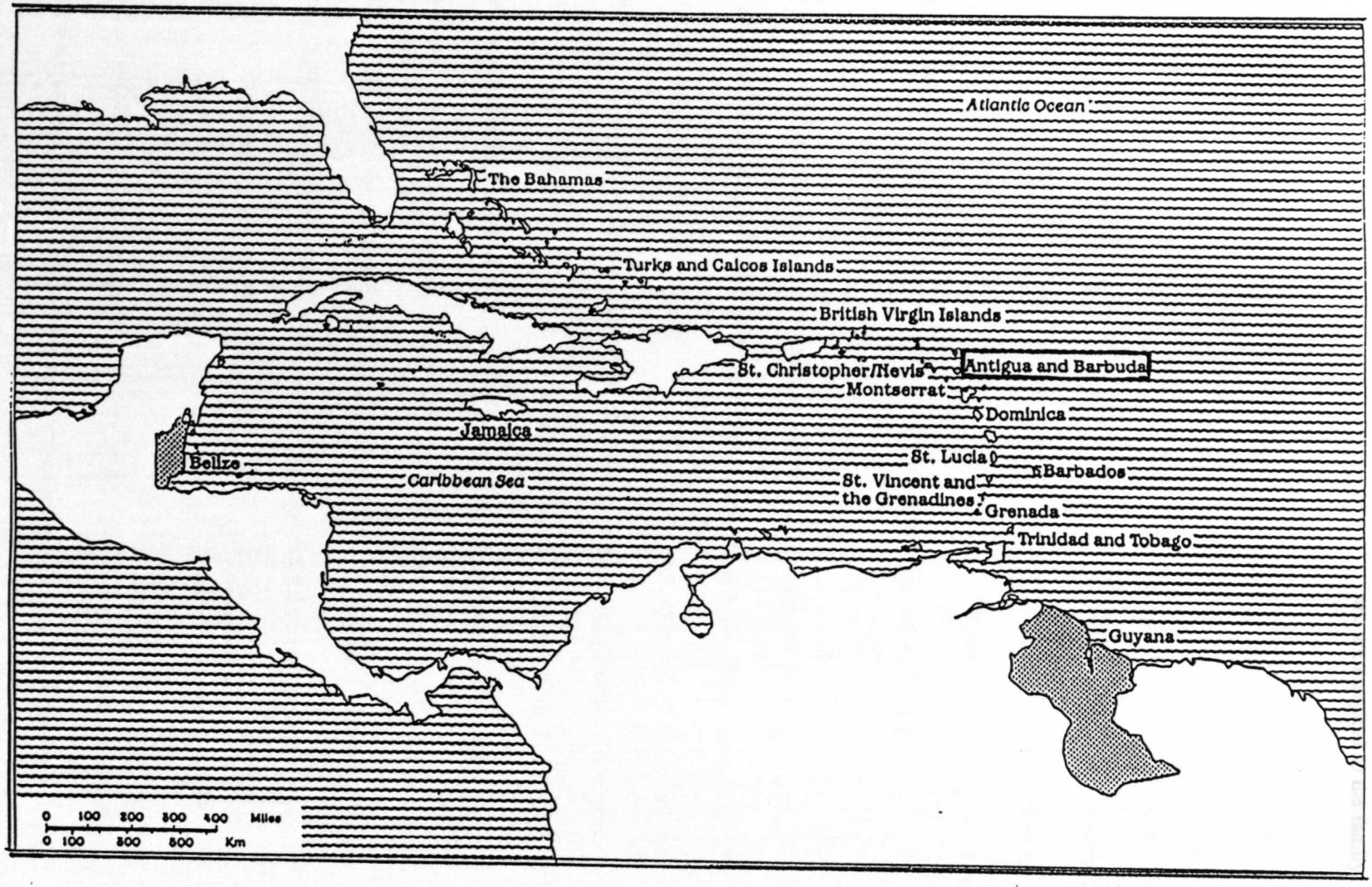
In conclusion, we see that despite new opportunities and different behavioral patterns of women and men, Antigua is still very much a patriarchal society with power concentrated in the hands of a few men. Women's self-perception and social interaction continues to be mediated by their ascribed gender roles, and both young and old women conform to traditional gender stereotypes.

It is hoped that the data generated by and included in this thesis will contribute to a cross-cultural perspective on women in development as well as offer a critical contribution to current and future research on Antigua.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACLM	Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement
ALP	Antigua Labour Party
ASIC	Antigua Sugar Industries Corporation
AT&LU	Antigua Trades and Labour Union
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Secretariat
CARIFTA	Caribbean Free Trade Area
CAFRA	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CIPAF	Centro de Investigacion Para Accion Feminina
DAWN	Development Alternatives for a New Era
EC$	Eastern Caribbean Dollar
EPICA	Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INSTRAW	United Nations Institute for Training and Research for the Advancement of Women
ISER(EC)	Institute of Social and Economic Research (Eastern Caribbean)
ISI	Import Substitution Industries
LDC	Lesser Developed Country
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PACCA	Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PLM	Progressive Labour Movement
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDOL	Sexual Division of Labour
SES	Journal of Social and Economic Studies
TUC	Trade Union Congress
TNC	Trans National Corporation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and The Caribbean
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UWI	University of the West Indies
WAND	Women and Development Unit of the UWI
WICP	Women in the Caribbean Project
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

MAP 1: Map showing Antigua in relation to the other territories of the English speaking Caribbean



To my Step-father,
Charles Walcott,
whose example showed me
that male and female roles
cannot be stereotyped,
and that Caribbean men
are not marginal to the family.

INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean consists of a chain of large and small land based and island territories, each with a distinctive colonial and political character, and each struggling with the problems of creating economically viable, politically stable states. Contemporary Caribbean societies encompass an intricately combined diaspora of English (American), Dutch, French, and Spanish speaking women and men of African, Chinese, European, Indian and Middle-Eastern descent, differentiated by political beliefs, class position, religious persuasion and cultural heritage. This distinctiveness and complexity has created difficulties for social scientists attempting to use homogenising tropes and concepts to categorise the region and its people.

There are however certain commonalities between the countries of the region due to the nature of their historical development and insertion into the global economy. The plantation economy and colonialism left an indelible mark upon all of the Caribbean territories, not only in terms of levels of economic, social and political development and the structural links to the former metropolis, but also in the complex nature of social relationships between women and men and the assumptions and practices underpinning those relationships. What sets the Caribbean apart as a discrete area of interest in the realm of gender studies is the historicity of women's challenge to the common ideology of gendered spheres of activity, and the resultant distinctiveness of the social relationships between women and men in the region.

Using the Commonwealth Caribbean[1] territory of Antigua as the exemplar, the analysis in this thesis centres on the interconnections between reproduction and production and

women's roles in a wide range of social and economic processes, and the intersection of gender and social class in African-Caribbean women's lives. Focusing on Antigua, one of the smaller Caribbean territories, makes it possible to examine the lives of African-Caribbean women in a country better known for the patriarchal-oligarchical tendencies in the political process, but also to assess the nature of women's integration in the social, political and economic development of a small Caribbean society.

In the Caribbean, as in all other regions of the world, the processes of socio-economic development and change over the past five decades have led to women's deepening integration into the societal structures of their countries. Since the inception of universal adult suffrage in the Commonwealth Caribbean in 1944 (in Jamaica), there has been a succession of concepts, models and strategies for Caribbean development. These have resulted in a radical shift in the degree and level of women's participation in public life, and the status of women's contribution to the development of their countries. The post World War Two accession of Caribbean people to independent government, to universal primary and secondary education, and concomitantly to better paying and more professional occupations has enabled men and women of African-Caribbean descent to transcend class and economic barriers.

The oft-cited and much contested area of women's work provides evidence of the level of change. Due to the nature of their integration into the plantation economy, African-Caribbean women's participation in the labour force has historically been high. Even with the withdrawal of women from the labour force after Emancipation,

African-Caribbean women still constituted about 50% of the total regional labour force in the late nineteenth century, and this trend continues to date (Massiah: 1989). Working class African-Caribbean women participated as wage earners and own-account workers in the public and private sectors, as entrepreneurs in the informal sector, and as subsistence workers in the household economy. In general, their waged work was restricted to agricultural labour or domestic service and their business activities to small-scale market trading or home-based retail, tailoring and laundering services.

Over the last fifty years however, traditional mobility patterns have been assailed and African-Caribbean women have entered senior management and administrative positions in both the public and private sector, their presence in some cases outnumbering men. For example, in territories as diverse as Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad (both in size and political/economic history), women are to be found at the highest levels of the Civil Service, and are the significant majority of employees in the teaching profession and the banking/financial sector. In some countries concern has been openly expressed at the growing proportion of women in white and "pink" collar work. Together with this very high level of female economic activity, the region has record levels of female enrolment and involvement at all levels of the educational system (Drayton 1993).

In fact, the structural integration of women is sufficiently advanced in some countries for it to be taken as a sign, by both women and men, of women's equality and parity.

Some male (and female) professionals are now raising concern over what they see as an imminent crisis for men in the Caribbean. Their fears arise out of changes in the education sector over the past thirty years. Women are now the majority of the teachers at all levels in the educational system, which is perceived as offering boys no male role models in school. At the same time, as well as outnumbering boys at every level in the school and tertiary education system, girls have had greater success than boys in both primary and secondary school examinations. These changes may eventually, some feel, result in a preponderance of qualified women in the society and the double marginalization of Caribbean men, out of the family and out of prominent public positions at some future date (Miller 1986, 1991; Women's Forum 1990).

Despite a high level of matrifocality in many Afro-Caribbean families (ie. the role of the mother is structurally central to the operation of the household as a social and economic unit), it is difficult to speak of the marginalisation of Caribbean men.[2] Women throughout the Caribbean exist within a male dominated social order. They are sparsely represented in the policy making bodies at national and regional level and their views and perspectives on development are rarely sought after. Too often women are viewed as beneficiaries of development and not as contributors. Too often emphasis is placed on the development of women's participation in the structures, and insufficient attention given to the level and quality of that participation and the attitudes and perceptions which keep men super-ordinate, and which continue to undervalue and underrate women's contribution.

Caribbean society continues to be underpinned by a patriarchal gender ideology which works to construct the masculine and feminine identities of Caribbean women and men, and orders the social relations between and among women and men in all aspects of their lives. Gender stratification is evident at all levels in society, and men dominate all aspects of social life. The material reality of the lives of women in Antigua, the focal area of this study, will be used to illustrate and demonstrate both the patriarchal nature of Caribbean society and women's continuing subordination.

Research on Antigua is particularly fascinating due to the way in which politics, social development and gender issues interface. Antigua is a small twin-island state, with a population of approximately 61,000[3]. Independence from Britain was attained in 1981 after a 14 year period of apprenticeship as an Associate State. From an economically depressed sugar producing colony in the 1950s, Antigua has become one of the jewels in the crown of the regional tourism industry and a middle ranking country in the regional economic ranking system[4]. Antigua has been governed for almost all of the past 50 years by one man. Dr. Vere Bird has led the present party of government, the Antigua Labour Party (ALP) and its progenitrix and sister organisation, the Antigua Trade and Labour Union (AT&LU), since 1943. This latter was the organisation which oversaw the "home rule" and independence negotiations with the British government, and which formed the first national government in the 1950s. Put simply this means that all aspects of the socio-economic development of the country over the past 50 years, including national perspectives on the integration of women in development, have, for better or worse, been guided by one man's

outlook. As will be demonstrated, this has meant that to bring about change, women have had to insert themselves into the clientelistic relationships which dominate the political administration of the country.

In Antigua women constitute approximately 43% of the household heads and make up just over almost 45% of the workforce (Antigua and Barbuda: Women's Desk 1981; Rooke 1993). As in other Caribbean territories, and despite the rise of some women to key positions within the Antiguan civil service and private sector, most women continue to be concentrated at the bottom of the occupational ladder and to head the poorer households. Women play very little part in the political process other than as vocal and ardent supporters of the various male political figures. A major premise of this study is that gender differentials between women and men in Antigua have been exacerbated by the specific male-dominated political system put in place after the establishment of the Trade Union and the political party in the 1940s and 1950s, and that the very real contributions women have made to the development of the country are subordinated by the nature of their integration into the political and economic system.

Research Rationale and Hypotheses

Social scientists started studying the structure and functioning of 'Caribbean society' in the early half of this century. Anthropologists and sociologists (generally male) led the fray, using theories constructed for Euro-American and African societies. The nature of women and men's integration into social institutions, particularly the family,

was an area of particular research focus. Observed phenomena were examined and explained according to the levels of affinity to and divergence from perceived western norms and values. The images created by this discourse came to dominate the consciousness of regional and international researchers and policy makers as quintessential representations of Caribbean women and men. Two of the principal tropes used to explain the complex and contradictory manifestation of patriarchal relations among African-Caribbean women and men in the region were matrifocality, and its converse, male marginalization. It is both the longevity and the continuing distorting affect of these classifications of Caribbean society which provide the rationale for this thesis. While the asymmetrical and paradoxical relationships between women and men are the central focus of this work, the aim of the thesis is to shift the gaze away from the restrictive focus on family structure and domestic organisation that dominated those earlier works, to an analysis of the role of women both in the family and the wider society.

This study postulates that for the majority of African-Caribbean women, there can be no dichotomization of the domestic and public into separate spheres of activity. It is, in fact, the structural relationship between those two spheres which sets the pattern for women's participation in public life. The central hypotheses of this study is that the roles performed by women in Caribbean society are determined by an overarching gender ideology which accords to women a subordinate status in the society, and that women's access to waged employment is mediated by their gendered reproductive role in the household. The nature of women's integration into the social

structures and state apparatus determine the way in which they can access the political system, the types of activities they undertake, and their perceptions of their role, status and contribution to socio-economic development.

Women's position in society cannot be disconnected from a broad analysis of current social and economic trends and the politics which propel them (Cooper 1989:44). The second aim of this study is thus to establish how the socio-economic, political and legal changes at the international, regional and national level have affected women's attitudes and behavioural patterns in relation to education, careers and family life. It is our hypothesis that the changes which have occurred have served to reshape and reinforce the gendered roles and responsibilities of women. Rather than just highlight women's participation in the institutional structures in society or focus on the key role played by women or the qualities of women's experience, this thesis will illustrate how the structures actually function to subsume women.

To establish these hypotheses, this study will identify and analyze the factors which influence African-Caribbean women's participation in socio-economic development, their access to and control over resources, and the benefits derived therefrom. Issues of relevance to a fuller understanding of the complexities of women's lives will be examined through a range of topics. These include state policies on women and their impact on women's educational access and achievements, the effects of industrialization and development policies on the sexual division of labour, the link between women's reproductive and productive activities, women's political

consciousness and participation in political life, their perspectives of household structure and organisation, fertility and life-cycle changes, their time use patterns and participation in recreation and leisure activities, as well as their perceptions of men and their attitudes to their own role in society. The focus of analysis will be a detailed examination of the social and economic participation of Antiguan women, their viewpoints on issues related to their ability to participate in the development of their families, and their country.

Method and Methodological Concerns

The detailed case study of Antigua stems from the work of the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), based at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in the Eastern Caribbean (EC) territory of Barbados.[5] This project was designed and developed in the late 1970s to analyze the conceptual disjuncture in perceptions of the role and status of women in the Caribbean and to generate empirical material which would provide a more accurate picture of the totality of women's lives in the region.

The perspective of the Project was Caribbean-wide, but the primary research was conducted in the three Eastern Caribbean territories of Antigua, Barbados and St. Vincent.[6] The research framework of WICP was multi-disciplinary, embracing the disciplines of anthropology, demography, sociology, social psychology and political science. Research work was carried out in three stages. The first phase of WICP research covered the entire Commonwealth Caribbean region and focused on the

collection and review of available documentary material on the situation of women in six specific areas (law, education, the family, politics, work and perceptions of men). This was carried out alongside a small pilot study designed to test the instruments for use in the survey phase of the project.

The second phase consisted of multi-stage survey and life history interviewing in Antigua, Barbados and St. Vincent. The first stage of the household survey entailed interviewing a main survey sample of about 500 women in each territory. For the second stage, a small sub-sample of these women were chosen for intensive case study re-interviews. The sample population for the WICP survey were drawn from a frame constructed by the WICP research team. In Antigua, twenty five cluster sites were drawn from the seven parishes on the larger island of Antigua, and all residential areas in the selected cluster sites were mapped. A random walk method was then employed to select the specific households, and all eligible members of the households were listed. The sampling method employed to target eligible survey respondents was quota sampling, with age as the main controlling variable.

The third stage of the WICP involved the selection and detailed interviewing of key women in public life in Antigua, Barbados, Guyana and St. Vincent to provide data on particular areas of concern to the study. Collected data for the whole project therefore included all documentary material on the situation of women in the region available at that time, the results of the surveys and life history interviews in the three Eastern Caribbean territories, and the case study interviews conducted with

noted women in public life in Antigua, Barbados, St. Vincent and Guyana. The WICP methodology is fully explicated in Massiah (1986b) and Durant-Gonzalez (1986).

For the questionnaire survey in the three territories, the WICP used a multi-level multi-stage methodology which integrated a standard sociological structured survey with unstructured in-depth interviewing techniques. This latter aspect was built in to enable the researchers to not only collect material on the day to day reality of women's lives, but also to understand the women's own assessment of their experiences. The WICP was thus able to combine a statistical profile of the lives of Caribbean women with qualitative data that show the tremendous variation in the manner in which women carry out daily life. The majority of these data have not yet been brought into the public domain, and this thesis aims to do so.

The original intention of this thesis was to utilise the vast database produced by the WICP in order to bring some of the untapped material into the public domain, principally through secondary analysis of the survey data and case study material collected by the Antigua WICP research team.[7] Despite this initial intention, it was quickly realized that in the period since the original WICP material on Antigua was collected much had happened to alter the outlook, situation and prospects of women in Antigua. In the period of time between the completion of the WICP data collection and the commencement of my research work, Antigua had moved from being an Associate State to an independent nation. Changes had occurred in the economic orientation of the twin-island state, moving the country much closer to total

dependence on tourism, and recession in the Europe and North America had wreaked havoc on the islands' post-independent economy. In order to contextualise these changes and their impact on the lives of women, it was felt necessary to conduct supplementary field research and to collect new official statistical information on the legal, social, political and economic developments in Antigua between 1980 and 1990.

It was through my attempts to collect contemporary national quantitative survey data pertinent to the socio-economic and political development of Antigua and women's role in that development, that the most challenging aspect of conducting research on Antigua was discovered. I had expected to access source material from the recent population censuses, from other continuous, regular or ad hoc official surveys or from datasets derived from administrative or public records. However, as is the case with many of the smaller Caribbean territories, Antigua is a country in which little research has been carried out and for which very little documented material either on women or on general societal development is available or accessible. In Antigua this situation is exacerbated by the lack of published census or national survey data.

Prior to the 1991 population census, of which only preliminary statistics are currently available, there had not been a full census carried out in the territory since 1960. An analysis of 20% of the returned questionnaires was the base of the 1970 population census report. No census was carried out in 1980. Other than the decennial census, official statistics on social and economic aspects of the society are limited in their coverage. The last agricultural census was carried out in 1984. Between 1987 and

1990, the Labour Department conducted annual labour force surveys, with a sample size of 20%. The Antigua Women's Desk (now the Directorate of Women's Affairs) conducted a one thousand household survey in 1981 (Antigua and Barbuda: Women's Desk 1981a), and in 1990 began to co-ordinate an island-wide United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) research project on women in Antigua, the results of which are still not yet available.

Notwithstanding this shortage of officially collected quantitative census or survey datasets, it has been possible to pull together a variety of material from formal and informal sources. Some material, such as old census data, government white papers, development plans and annual and quarterly reports on Antigua were easily acquired from government offices and agencies, and merely involved visits to almost every government department and publishing outlet to collect available documents. Other material, such as programme outlines and plans, policy documents, reports of meetings and seminars, and even labour force survey information and departmental statistics, had to be garnered from the interviews and meetings conducted with key personnel in every government ministry, including permanent secretaries, planners and heads of departments and agencies. Interviews were also conducted with key trade unionists, both women and men, heads of national training institutions and heads of national women's groups, particularly the Director of Women's Affairs.

The supplementary interviews took the form of semi-structured interviews with some

twenty public figures, were carried out by myself in late 1989/1990 (see Appendix I for a full list of interviewees). These interviews were designed to collect detailed information from public figures, both women and men, as to their perceptions on the contemporary situation of women in Antigua and on the impact of the changes that had occurred in the country in the ten year period since the initial WICP research was carried out. The paucity of official published data mentioned earlier meant, however, that these interview sessions always included a request for departmental statistics and any policy/programme documents which could be cited. Officers searched through their own desks and adjoining offices for information, which was always forthcoming. The material gleaned in this way, often originally for internal circulation only, ranged from fragmentary to comprehensive in coverage. Together with the data from official published sources it represents, however, most of the available statistical, policy and programme information on the country.

Apart from the need to augment the quantitative and qualitative material it was also necessary to pay attention to the significant theoretical and methodological developments in the field of Women's Studies which had occurred since the original theoretical framework for the WICP project had been conceptualised. A systematic theorization of gender has emerged during this period aimed specifically at analysing the structure of male and female roles and responsibilities and the ideology which keeps that system of gendered relations in place. A detailed discussion of gender theory and its applicability to Caribbean social reality is contained in Chapter One.

Coming over a decade after the initial conceptualization of the WICP research goals, this thesis utilizes gender theory to bring new perspectives to the 1989/1980 case study material from the WICP Antigua database, and the contemporary quantitative and qualitative material collected in 1989/90. However, despite the new focus, the thesis holds firm to the original WICP aim of linking national and regional quantitative data (on the socio-economic context within which women function) with qualitative data (which record women's everyday experiences), so as to understand better the relationship between women's productive and reproductive roles and national development.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into two parts, the first part concentrates on women's integration into the broader structures of Caribbean and Antiguan society, and the second part focuses upon a case study of the lives, experiences and perceptions of women in Antigua. In Part One, a review of the literature on gender/women, employment and the family in the Caribbean generally and Antigua specifically provides the mainframe on which the theoretical insights in the thesis are based. To this end the discussion encompasses not only gender theory but also theories of development as they apply to the Caribbean, as well as the sexual division of labour and its present manifestation both in the Caribbean and Antiguan contexts.

Chapter One sets out the conceptual framework behind the present study discussing gender theory and its utility as a conceptual tool for analysing socio-economic

phenomena in the Caribbean. Theories of the social construction of gender and methods of gender analysis developed in the 1980s are explored to determine their utility in explicating the role of African-Caribbean women in processes of socio-economic development, and the ways in which gender differences are produced, reproduced and recomposed in the Caribbean.

Using gender theory as an analytical tool, Chapter Two and Chapter Three outline the socio-economic and political context in which Caribbean and Antiguan women operate, and examine the complex interrelationship of historical, economic, socio-cultural and political factors shaping the contemporary Caribbean. Preceded by a short introduction to the political economy of the region prior to the second world war, Chapter Two outlines various economic development concepts utilized and strategies pursued by the regional governments in the Caribbean post-1950. This chapter traces major political, economic and social developments, and charts the impact of these on opportunities for women. Chapter Three looks specifically at national, regional and international structures which impinge on Antiguan socio-economic and political development strategies and the impact these have had upon the general position of women. Contemporary quantitative data are used to site Antiguan women within wider historical and societal processes at national and regional level through analysis of both the official programmes and policies as well as the perspectives of the government and other public officials.

Part II of the thesis looks in detail at the women within the WICP Antiguan sample, positing their expressed views and perspectives against national level quantitative data. The aim of the case study is to establish the manner in which socio-economic and political changes at the international, regional and national level have affected the orientation of Antiguan women in relation to work, educational opportunities and their legal status, in the values they hold, their priorities, problems, needs, and aspirations and their perceptions of themselves and of men. The perspectives of the Antiguan women contained in the WICP empirical material are used to provide both the detailed basis and the substantiation of the hypotheses on the continuing subordination of Caribbean women.

Following a brief introduction, Part II of the thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter Four outlines the sampling method and the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the survey respondents; and Chapters Five, Six, and Seven focus upon the respondents experiences, attitudes and aspirations with regard to education, employment, and family and kinship responsibilities. The final chapter summarises the quantitative and qualitative material presented in the body of the thesis and points to areas of future research and action.

Research Goals

A principal aim of this study is to deconstruct the monolithic image of African-Caribbean women which is used to inform popular perceptions and images of Caribbean women and Caribbean gender relations. As Hill-Collins (1990: 68) notes:

"Even when the political and economic conditions that originally generated the images disappear, such images prove remarkably tenacious."

The behaviour, experiences, attitudes and beliefs of the Antiguan women are used to provide a more balanced view of the roles and status of African-Caribbean women. By recording the views and perspectives of these 504 Antiguan women, the thesis attempts to give voice to ordinary women and to use their knowledge to bring greater clarity to theoretical analyses of the forces which continue to subordinate women in Caribbean society. This study places African-Caribbean women's work and family experiences at the centre of analysis and focuses upon gender, class and race in the context of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The analysis is multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional, and is not grounded in any specific tradition of feminist thought. It is hoped that this approach will allow insights into women's position, past and present, and point out possible directions for change. Instead of the centre/marginal polarity suggested by earlier research, it will be seen that African Caribbean women are sewn up in the interstices of men's lives, and vice versa.

Finally, in the last decade, prominent Caribbean researchers such as Hart (1989), R.T Smith (1988) and Massiah (1991a) have re-emphasized the significance of the Caribbean as a pivotal area of study. Hart (1989:5) goes as far as positing the Caribbean as an avant garde crucible of modern social movements and cultural forms. Although the structures of Caribbean societies developed as a part of Western society and the Western political system (Littlewood and Kareem 1992:8), the Caribbean region and its people have evolved indigenous social and cultural processes

particularly in relation to gender roles and responsibilities in the private and public spheres. However, the similarities and differences to Western society offer great opportunity for a comparative analysis, particularly in relation to social structure and family life.

Research on the Caribbean may give countries (r)experiencing the impact of a burgeoning female workforce and the growth of female headed households some insights into future dilemmas in social relationships that they may come to experience. It is hoped that the data generated by, and included in, this thesis will contribute to a cross-cultural comparative research process, offer critical contribution to current and future research on Antigua, and add to the field of gender studies regionally and internationally.

1. The English-speaking Commonwealth Caribbean consists of the countries which were former colonies of Great Britain. These and other Caribbean countries have now formed themselves into a regional grouping, the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), which was established to act as an free trading economic community to encourage regionalism, and a common stance vis-a-vis world trade. CARICOM includes Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bermuda, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos.

2. This is a conceptual term developed by R.T. Smith in his 1956 seminal work on family structure and social change in British Guiana.

3. This unofficial figure is taken from the provisional estimates of the 1991 Population Census. It represents a dramatic decline in the population since the last full census was carried out in 1960 (Rooke 1993).

4. See WICP (1986:325) for an explication of this ranking system. It must be noted that while in 1985 Antigua was still deemed as a lesser developed Caribbean economy, developments in the tourist industry since then have propelled it into middle ranking status as measured by per capita income.

5. Throughout the rest of this thesis, the abbreviations, WICP and ISER (EC) will be used to refer to the Project and the research institute in which it was based.

6. The choice of Antigua by the WICP research team as a field research site appears to have come about through providence rather than design, from a random selection process from a set of objective socio-economic indicators. The main factor seems to have been, as noted earlier, that Antigua represented a middle stage of the Commonwealth Caribbean development continuum, Barbados being above and St. Vincent below Antigua on that continuum. In addition selection may have been influenced by knowledge of the country and local personalities. From a reading of the WICP literature (Massiah 1986b:7), it appears that little consideration was given to **specific** hypotheses on the social and economic aspects of women's life in any particular country, for the hypotheses which informed the original Project were pan-territorial and focused upon the universal aspects of asymmetrical gender relationships in the region.

7. Although this material is now ten years old, it still represents the only large scale survey of behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of women in the region. And while there have been changes in the nature of Antiguan society since the survey was conducted, it is generally recognised that attitudes change much more slowly, so that the day to day realities of the individual women's lives is still pertinent to understanding the general situation of women today.

CHAPTER ONE

From Matrifocality to Gender: Evolving Theories of African-Caribbean Women's Role and Status

As with other societies, in the Caribbean the concepts of family and household, and the roles of women therein, are viewed as the key to understanding gender roles in the region and have therefore been and continue to be at the core of sociological, anthropological and demographic research.[1] Contending and contentious theories on the causes of women's distinctive role in the African-Caribbean family and in the formal and informal workforce of the nations of the region have headlined academic debates on Caribbean social life since the late 1940s. Up to the 1970s almost all discussions of women's role in Caribbean life were found in the literature on kinship and the family.

The analytical perspective of the majority of these embryonic gender studies, as Trouillot (1992:26) would have us believe, attempted to confine women to a structurally defined and somewhat stigmatised domestic role. The palpable reality of women's self-sufficiency and their significant contributions to the economic life of their families and countries only served to strengthen theories of Caribbean societal degradation and aberrant gender relations. Some (Antrobus 1988a; Tang Nain 1993) would argue that the ideological assumptions underpinning the most prominent of those theories continue to guide social policies directed at women and structural adjustment policies aimed at transforming the sluggish economies of the region.

Despite the attempts of contemporary researchers and women activists to widen the focal frame to examine all aspects of women's social interaction, the conceptual frameworks of the early researchers continue to dominate the discourse. Prevailing images of independent matriarchs continue to conceal the structural and ideological barriers which confront women's attempts to progress in Caribbean society. In part those images persist because African-Caribbean women have always found ways to surmount hurdles in order to fulfil the economic responsibilities intrinsic to their socially ascribed role of child bearer/rearer. These women's productive activities are therefore intrinsically bound up in their reproductive roles. The domestic sphere does not delimit African-Caribbean women's economic activities but the ideology of women's domestic role is used to restrain their ambitions.

In order to explicate African-Caribbean women's subordination it is necessary to comprehend the nature of family structure, the sexual division of labour and patriarchal relations in the society. It is not necessary, however, to maintain the ideologically suspect and analytically inhibiting theoretical frames of past research. This chapter traces the evolution of theories of Caribbean gender relations from past structural-functionalist debates on matrifocality and male marginality through to current feminist discourse on patriarchy and gender theory, and argues the utility and applicability of gender as an analytical tool for understanding gender differentiation in Caribbean society.

Rather than trying to review the extensive literature on the family, after a brief introduction to the different types of family formations in Caribbean society, part A of this chapter will examine the early debates on patriarchy and matrifocality in Caribbean family forms.[2] Only the work of the major figures whose analysis of the relationships between women, men and the family and household in the Caribbean have informed these debates will be reviewed, and some of the problems with their analytical constructs will be discussed. Part B brings the discussion up to date with a look at the work of contemporary Caribbean researchers on gender, women, and on the family, and raises a number of critical questions about present research trends. Part C entails a critical review of feminist theories of patriarchy in light of their ability to interpret social relationships in the Caribbean and an exposition of gender analysis as a tool for analysing Caribbean social reality.

Part A: Form or Content: Patriarchy, Matrifocality and the Structure of Caribbean Societies

1.1 Whither Patriarchy? Family Structure and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Caribbean

Since the seventeenth century the Eurocentric concept of the family as a legally sanctioned unit consisting of a man, his wife and their legitimate children has been universalized as the normative family type (Tilley and Scott 1987; Smith 1988). In the 'normal', stable, legally constituted family the man is the perceived and actual head of the social unit and the chief economic interface between the family and the polity, while the wife-mother inhabits the domestic domain, taking responsibility for

household upkeep, child care and intra-familial social interactions. This model of domestic and social organization is best described as the closest definitional form of patriarchy. The family in this form is seen as the primary site of male authority, and by many feminists as the main site of female oppression. The specificity and exclusivity of this nuclear household model bears little relation to the permutations of family life among the people of the Caribbean. Assumptions of the nuclear household are less than relevant in a region where households and family units are often of the extended variant with single mothers and young people continuing to live at home or with family members until they can afford a degree of economic independence. Also, in poorer households, the responsibility for the economic maintenance of the family is either shared or firmly placed upon the shoulders of mothers.

Patterns of family formation in the Caribbean, and perceptions of African-Caribbean women and men's familial responsibilities, stem in part from the cultural patterns of the slave plantation - with the amalgamation of African and European value patterns and their manifestation in plantation life - and in part from the socio-economic developments of the post-slavery period. The different types of family forms were first set out in detail by Henriques (1953) in his classificatory system of domestic groupings: the Christian Monogamous family, Faithful Concubinage, the Maternal or Grandmother family, and the Keeper Family.

In the first form, which is analogous to the legally sanctioned nuclear household, the husband-father is dominant, and the man's employment position and earning potential

are the sole determinant of the family's economic stability. In Caribbean society, the exemplar for this formation was the family units of white plantation owners and colonial government officials in which the women were concerned wholly with domestic duties and the men provided all the economic support for the family. During slavery, legal marriage was proscribed for slaves, and stable family forms were generally unfeasible. In the post-Emancipation period, however, colonialists actively encouraged former slaves to form into legally constituted families in which previously withheld religious sanction now bestowed respectability to the union. However, for many African-Caribbean women and men:

> *"The meaning of marriage was rooted in the context of the historical plantation society..."* (Waithe 1993: 31).

Working class Blacks looked to elite white families for social role models and for social approbation, men had to be able to assume economic headship of the unit and women withdraw from extra-domestic waged work. With the low wages offered to male ex-slaves, legal marriage was a class defined institution that many African-Caribbean's aspired to, but could not afford. Thus their familial aspirations were structured by both class and race oppression, as were their perceptions of women's and men's roles within these family units and within the wider society.

In practice, most ex-slaves settled into the three other types of family formations described in Henriques' model. In these formations:

> *"...mating and fertility patterns do not necessarily involve the partners sharing residence, and both women and men shift from one to the other type of family*

union" (Massiah 1989b:966).

Many of the Faithful Concubinage (**common-law**), Grandmother (multi-generational **extended** households), and 'Keeper' (women alone or with their children, and partners **visiting** the home on a non-residential basis) types of family forms depicted by Henriques were to a large extent *de facto* or *de jure* female-headed, and were characterized by a certain amount of equality between the sexes and a certain level of economic instability (Henriques 1953:103). Common-law unions are generally regarded to be as binding as marriage, especially when children are part of the unit. However they lack the prestige and potential benefits of legal status and are harder to dissolve than visiting relationships (Senior 1991:85). The absence of a formal marriage contract appeared to weaken societal perceptions of male dominance in the common-law family unit and also perceptions of male economic responsibility to the unit. For many women this often meant the added ascribed duty of augmenting or providing for the economic maintenance of the family. Henriques' model is still a useful descriptor of the majority of contemporary African-Caribbean family formations, although the archaic terminology has been changed. As Rodman (1971:122) and Stuart (1993:2) have pointed out, these forms have evolved according to what people found functional to their needs and their abilities, both socially and economically.[3]

Paralleling the development of pluralistic family forms, slavery and the plantation economy also effected a characteristic trait in the sexual division of labour among African-Caribbean women and men. During slavery African women worked alongside men on the plantations as agricultural workers as well as in the homes of the

plantation owners. The poverty of ex-slave families and households after Emancipation in 1834 precluded a withdrawal of many of these women from the workforce. Extensive levels of African-Caribbean male migration, particularly from the smaller Leeward islands in search of better wages, also increased the proportion of women *de facto* heads of households. This migration was a key factor in emphasizing and reinforcing female economic independence, as women often became totally responsible for the economic maintenance of themselves and their families (Senior 1991:108). The absence of males and of their economic support imbued women with a high degree of autonomy in decision making with regard to their participation in economic activities and the household, which survives to the present day.

1.2 All Form and No Content: Social Science Theorization and The Mythical Matrifocal Caribbean Society

In 1939, and at the start of what has proven to be a catalytic period of profound social and economic change for the people of the region, Zora Neale Hurston, an African American essayist visiting the region wrote:

> *"....It is a curious thing to be a woman in the Caribbean.... It is considered down there that God made two kinds of donkeys, one kind that can talk. Everywhere in the Caribbean women carry a donkey's load on their heads and walk up and down mountains with it..."* (Hurston 1990:75)

Hurston's impression of the burden of Caribbean women's responsibilities prior to World War Two, was echoed by the social policy, anthropological, sociological and

demographic discourses of the 1940s and 1950s. Analytical constructs and conclusions on the structure of Caribbean society were influenced by the social mores of the period vis-a-vis male and female roles and responsibilities, and by the concerns of the colonial government. These bureaucratic concerns came to the fore after the publication of the Orde Browne Report in 1939, the report of the West Indian Commission of Inquiry in 1945, and of the Colonial Social Welfare Officer, T. Simey, in 1946.[4] These authors felt that the 'disintegrated' family system among African-Caribbean people was the causal factor of unhealthy social conditions, such as deviancy, promiscuity, marital instability, defective paternity and deficient child socialization. The above social conditions were to a large extent linked to the prevalence of female headed households, the centrality of the mother figure in family forms and the importance of women's economic contribution to family life (Orde Browne 1939; Simey 1946; Great Britain 1945).

From the late 1930s with the work of Herskovits (1941) and Frazier (1939), followed by Simey (1946), Henriques (1953), R.T. Smith (1956), Clarke (1957), M.G. Smith (1962), Greenfield (1966) and Rodman (1971), elaborately constructed theories have been developed by ethnographic researchers on the Caribbean, both Caribbean born and foreign, to explain why the patriarchal male-headed/male breadwinner nuclear family unit should exist and the forces which inhibited its proper development. With a few notable exceptions, up to the 1970s the lower income Afro-Caribbean household/family was used as the primary unit of analysis by an almost totally masculine social science community.[5]

In fact, the images of self reliant but downtrodden Black women leading a socially disorganized matriarchal society were developed from the research analyses of this period. Many of the researchers and the policy makers, both Caribbean and European, acceded to a value system which accepted women's existence as being delimited by the household. Evidence of women's primary role in the economic and social reproduction of their families was used by researchers and colonialists alike to prove theories of African cultural retentions, matrifocality, male marginality and dysfunctional creole Caribbean family structures and social life. Almost all of the studies viewed the Euro-American ideal of the male authoritarian breadwinner as normative, and presumed from the high level of male absence from working class African-Caribbean households that men lacked authority in, and were marginal to, the household and family. Most of these theories assumed that deviant family forms were contained solely within the African-Caribbean lower classes.

Anthropological research carried out on the family in the 1940s was dominated by the social pathology theories of Frazier (1939) and the African cultural survival theories of Herskovits (1941). The former claimed that slavery and plantation life had destroyed original family forms and made the creole family structure dysfunctional, while the latter based his theories of female headed households upon a concept of retention or modifications of West African cultural characteristics by the slave population. In his 1956 seminal work on the family in the Caribbean, *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, R.T. Smith argued that the creole family form was neither deviant nor part of a survival of Africanity in the Caribbean, but rather an adaptation

to the situation of poverty and economic marginality. He used a structural functionalist approach, and employed the concepts of matrifocality and male marginality to explain the features of family and domestic organization in the West Indies.

In developing his theory of matrifocality, Smith focused upon the role of women in the developmental cycle of the family defined as the domestic co-habiting group. All of the households in which matrifocality predominated were located among the lower classes, and the development cycle in lower class domestic groups appeared to Smith to revolve around the fertility and mating patterns of women.[6] For Smith, the starting point of all household groups began with the birth of children, and he firmly centred the mother-child bond as the strongest in the whole matrix of social relationships. As he emphatically reiterated in 1988, for Smith:

> *"...the term matrifocal family referred not to a system of female headed families nor to a matriarchal family system, but to a social process in which there was* ***a salience of women*** *- in their roles as mothers - within the domestic domain, correlated directly with the class position of the population involved, and focusing on the articulation of kinship and class* [my emphasis]." (Smith 1988:7-8)

The centrality of the women's role was, for Smith, determined by the level of economic functions performed by the male in lower class family life. The weaker the economic position of the man, the more marginal the husband-father role, there being:

> *"...a correlation between the nature of the husband-father role and the role of*

> *men in the economic system and in the system of social stratification in the total...society.*" (Smith 1956:221)

Men were adjudged solely on the amount of money that they could contribute to their families. Inability to adequately fill or maintain this role meant that a man was deemed incapable of commanding respect either from family members or from society at large (and was presumed to be marginal). This focus upon male economic ability and social standing was not confined to analyses of working class African-Caribbean families, and was also discussed in Wilmott and Young's (1960) work on lower-class families in London in the 1950s.

Smith's dualistic theory of matrifocality (whether or not he agrees with the way in which it has since been interpreted) and male marginality has been used as a primary building block for constructing a series of myths about social relationships among lower class African Caribbean people and has influenced the tenor and focus of all subsequent research.[7] Edith Clarke's (1957) study of three communities in Jamaica, and Rodman's (1971) work on lower class families in Trinidad utilized Smith's analytical methods, and similarly concluded that types of family organisation were related to the low economic position of men. Clarke's work emphasized the role of the mother and the social pathology of 'denuded' families, while Rodman highlighted the occupational and financial insecurity of men in determining the organisation of lower-class Caribbean families. Others such as Solien-Gonzalez (1960, 1970), adapted Smith's original thesis and looked at male absence through migration as the cause of matrifocality/male marginality and the female-headed household. [8]

While the structuralists were able to devise categories for the way in which domestic relationships were organized, little attention was paid to the content of the relationships. M.G. Smith's work on *West Indian Family Structure* in 1962, sidestepped the matrifocal/male marginal thesis and focused instead upon the different type of mating patterns of a pluralistic Caribbean people, and the way in which these influenced household development. He followed Henriques' classificatory system, redesignating the household groups as either married, common-law or visiting. He directed attention to the **domestic spheres of influence**, that is the areas of power and influence held by an individual within the household. Through his focus upon the sexual division of labour he brought attention to the male role in the household. His work pointed clearly to the fact that African-Caribbean men were considered as father and household head even though they had not cohabited with the family for a long time, physical presence not being necessary for the father-husband to fulfil his obligations or participate in the decision making process of the household.

In another attempt to direct attention away from the matrifocal/marginal male dichotomy, Wilson (1969) postulated that social and marital relationships are defined not in terms of the structure of the family or household, but from the point of view of the values which define the notion of 'male' and 'female'. Unlike the structuralists who focused upon the mother-child dyad and treated the family and household as a closed domain, Wilson focused on male-female relationships and linked gender roles and gendered behaviour to the wider society.

In Wilson's theorization, neither continuous economic contribution nor physical presence in the family are used as symbols of a tangible male role. In a further refinement of M.G. Smith's argument for the presence of a male role in the household, Wilson pointed out that men enjoy a prominent position in their relationship with women, and are not marginal either in the community or in the ideological value systems in which social relationships are conducted. Noting that many of the earlier studies had conflated domestic organisation with social organisation, he asks whether this meant that men had a marginal role in society or the community, for if they were marginal "*...where do they go and what do they do?*" (Wilson 1971:18). Echoing this query, Remy interrogatively points out :

> "*...no anthropologist has reported a society anywhere in the world in which males take a subordinate position in the practical affairs of the community or in the ideological system of values by which social relationships are conducted. Is the Caribbean an exception?*" (Remy 1973:60).[9]

Wilson made clear that the Caribbean is no exception. He noted that almost all of the ethnographic studies obfuscated the image of men by focusing solely upon the family and the household, which were in his words "*...the frameworks for female social relations*". His analysis of informal male peer groups goes some way to illustrating how, through their participation in a male social life external to the household, men achieve the qualifications that allow them to play dominant roles in the society. Women were located to a 'respectable' domesticity while men lived their lives and gained their 'reputation' in the public arena. In his view, women upheld and

perpetuated the hierarchical and Eurocentric ideology of the colonial institutions while men challenged the status quo with an indigenous egalitarian response. Wilson's theory of reputation describes a pattern of male social relationships which, as Besson (1993) blisteringly maintains, was based upon tarnishing the reputation of women.[10] Like all other theoretical dualities posed to understand Caribbean reality, Wilson still relied on an unreconstructed notion of normative male and female roles in the society and in the domestic/private/passive female and the public/aggressive male domains.

Another problem with almost all of the studies so far mentioned is that they used a simplistic colour-class dichotomy to determine social and economic status, white being equated with wealth and upper/middle class status and Black with poverty and lower class status. Colour and economic criteria were thus used to explain different family types, the upper/middle class Christian monogamous/ nuclear family form being used as the standard by which to adjudge the deviancy of other forms. Matrifocal families/households were located to the Black lower classes, and all lower class families were assumed to be uniformly deviant. Almost all of the authors generalized their theories, which were based upon analyses of a limited number of small-scale studies among mainly English speaking African-Caribbean people, to the wider society and to the family life of the entire region. Other than those arguing for the primacy of African cultural retentions, none of the theories or concepts could explain why other ethnic groups, such as East Indian migrants, undergoing similar patterns of economic and social reorientation did not have similar patterns of domestic organization.

Theoretically, much early social science research obscured the complexity of social relationships in the Caribbean. In the exegesis of their theories many early researchers on the family in the Caribbean centred women at the core of family structures, and located men outside. This, coupled with the high levels of female economic independence and household headship, and women's primary role in the economic maintenance of their families, led to the myth of the Caribbean family as matriarchal. Presumptions regarding male absence from the household and the conflation of social organization with domestic organization by the researchers led to the second myth, that of a matrifocal Caribbean society.

Most analyses paid little attention to the sexual division of labour in the private and public spheres, and while women's reproductive and domestic activities were theorized almost beyond recognition, their extra-domestic productive activities and contributions to the society were virtually ignored. In fact, the recognition and praise given to women's performance of familial responsibilities by all of these researchers was in direct antithesis to perceptions and analyses of their roles in the wider society. The assumption of a male headed nuclear family model as normative operated to obscure the extent and nature of women's involvement in the productive sector. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, women were presented as preoccupied with home and economic dependence on men, which in the circumstances of poverty has always been highly unlikely.

Although it was clear from early research that many women were maintaining their families economically, little was known of the exact level or areas of concentration of female employment, the contribution of women to the economy or even of the reality of women's overall economic independence and autonomy. Little or no attention was paid to the fact that despite their economic activities, women and the households they headed represented the majority of the poor in a region with high levels of unemployment and underemployment (Orde Browne 1939; Macmillan 1938). When authors did comment upon the generally low status of Caribbean women workers, there were few conclusions or policy recommendations aimed specifically at improving their economic lives. Discussion often centred on the unseemliness of women undertaking manual labour, and such recommendations as there were aimed at ameliorating the situation of men so that women could better occupy their rightful place in the home (Great Britain 1945:50).

Part B: The Contemporary Situation - From Women in Development to Gender Studies

1.3: Add Women and Stir: From Research on Women to Research by Women

A major turning point for the field of Women's Studies in the Caribbean was the launching of the United Nations's International Year for Women in 1975, and the Decade for women which commenced in 1976. The espoused goal of the Decade was to correct the socio-economic and legal inequities faced by women. A major plank of the United Nations agenda was to ensure that women were included in development planning and programming in member states.[11]

At that time it was presumed that to bring about changes in women's status and their ability to access the material benefits of society, it was necessary to 'integrate' women in development. This was to be achieved through a series of special international and national policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's access to education and employment, and giving them greater control over their fertility. The United Nations' policies and programmes were to be based upon information gained from improved data collection on women's reproductive and productive rights. To ensure that the data was collected in a manner which counted women in, the United Nations established the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The UN's actions in fulfilment of objectives and goals also included support for government agencies charged with dealing with women's affairs as well as grass-roots women's organisations, and a fund for women's development was established (UNIFEM). United Nations support was a key determinant in the establishment of numerous women-centred non-governmental organisations in the region. Regional governments acceded to the UN objectives and the lobbying of women's groups, and some fourteen Caribbean governments established what the United Nations termed, 'national machineries' (ie. Women's Bureaux), and set in motion research programmes and projects to put women squarely on the public planning agenda.

The UN's focus upon policy, programmes and research paralleled the 1970s rebirth of the Women's Rights movement and the second wave of feminist activism. This convergence helped focus international and national attention upon women's issues

and served to stimulate intense research and encourage a worldwide proliferation of literature on all aspects of women's lives. The recent overview texts by Epstein (1988) and Hess and Ferree (1988) in the US, Lovell (1990), and McDowell and Pringle (1992) in the UK, and Mohammed and Shepherd (1988) and Momsen (1993) in the Caribbean all point to a voluminous literature covering a vast range of substantive and theoretical issues.

In the early 1980s, LeFranc emphasized the necessity of women related research studies in the Caribbean:

> *"...because of...the inappropriateness of many of the concepts, models and tools of analysis utilized by most of the social science disciplines for an adequate understanding of the actual social and economic experiences of women. This inappropriateness is in turn largely due to the fact that they have usually come out of research activities which concern themselves with the problems of political and economic systems which are male dominated..."* (LeFranc 1983:89)

Her words were in fact paying tribute to the work of the new generation of researchers who, while acknowledging the extensive amount of literature on the Caribbean family (and concomitantly on women), had started a process of reappraising the earlier research constructs and conclusions.

By the 1970s researchers on the Caribbean such as Gerber (1973), Greenfield (1973), Higman (1975), Marks (1976), and Moses (1977) had begun to criticize the previous

approaches used to analyze the family. They called for a re-examination of the conclusions leading to the classification of the Caribbean family as matrifocal. Others such as Barrow (1977) and Roberts and Sinclair (1978) raised concern at the neglect of crucial research areas such as the impact of migration and (un)employment on family structure; male - female and male - male relationships; the areas of women's work, power and authority in the household and the segregation of gender roles; the type of households women control; the influence of female headed households upon the whole society and also male-female relationships in such households. Comparative analyses on various forms of Caribbean family structure and organization according to class and ethnicity were viewed as essential. These researchers were concerned that the existing paradigms did not provide illuminating answers to the issues confronting Caribbean people.

While agreeing the need for a paradigmatic shift, the growing number of women researchers also argued for a refocusing of the research frame, and made women, both within and outside the home, the focus of their research efforts. The Caribbean women academics Edith Clarke (1957) and Lucille Mathurin (1975) were among the pioneers of the field of Women's Studies in the region. The work of Joycelin Massiah, and the WICP under her stewardship, provided the driving force for its establishment as an academic discipline.

1.4: A Research Focus on Women: the Work of Joycelin Massiah and the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP)

Joycelin Massiah is one of the most prominent Caribbean post-1980s women researchers and, quite apart from her input into the WICP, her individual work has had a tremendous impact upon the study of women in the region. Her early work on *Women Heads of Households in the Caribbean: Family Structure and Feminine Status* (1983) has put her at the forefront of international research in this area. In this study she did not concern herself with the *"notion"* of matrifocality or *"...determinants of female headed households..."* (1983:12-13), concentrating instead upon an examination of the demographic characteristics of women who head households, the problems they face and the strategy they use to cope with their situation.

Her work threw new light upon the high incidence of female headed households in the region and the composition of those households. Emphasizing women's continuous involvement in the labour force, Massiah was one of the first Caribbean researcher to focus upon the productive activities of women in the public sphere and to call for new directions in social policy, recognizing women's contribution and meeting their practical needs. She found that the women heading these households were concentrated in low-paid, low status occupations and that the members of the households were disadvantaged comparative to those in male headed households.

These results formed the focus for much of her subsequent work such as her analysis of *Work in the Lives of Caribbean Women* (1986c). Massiah is also at the fore of developing a system of indicators which can help in the analysis of the socio-economic status of women and allows for identification of the factors contributing to female well-being, autonomy, increased status and integration of women's concerns into development planning (Massiah 1980; 1984; 1989a). However, a wealth of excellent demographic and empirical detail, and an instructive and constructive focus on definitions, indicators and model building for policy initiatives do not in themselves bring full comprehension of the causal mechanisms keeping women in the Caribbean subordinated, and do not in fact challenge the status quo. Though extensive, very little of Massiah's work has dealt with theoretical concerns. This lack of a theoretical focus was also noted in the work of the Women in the Caribbean Project (LeFranc 1983).

The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) of the Institute of Social and Economic Research based in the Eastern Caribbean (ISER-EC) was the first major interdisciplinary regional research project to attempt to understand the role and status of women in the region, and the complex nature of their integration into the social structures. For the WICP researchers, women were the primary focus of analysis together with the resources they use in discharging their responsibilities and their access to and control over these resources. The main WICP research was carried out between 1979 and 1981 when the field of Women's Studies was just becoming established in the Caribbean. The research direction resulted from an amalgam of the differing epistemological frames and research interests of the multi-disciplinary team

of researchers. This may have proven to be a hindrance in the conceptualization of a unified theoretical framework.

The project researchers aimed to replace what they saw as inappropriate research design and data collection techniques with new methods which would allow for a better analysis of women's roles and responsibilities, better research results/conclusions, and better policy recommendations to government and other agencies. The innovative nature of the WICP approach was best seen in their approach to the study of women's work activities. Researchers on the project had noted the way in which past sociological research had overlooked the issue of work in the study of women's lives. Starting from the assumption that women perform a multiplicity of roles relative to men, the methodology of the project was to let the women identify for themselves what they perceived as work. The WICP used experimental classifications of employment status aimed at capturing those economic activities masked by conventional categorization, with an emphasis upon identifying all economic sources of livelihood available to women. This classificatory system encompassed activities included in economic and demographic statistics as well as informal sector work, small scale domestic production, market gardening and the unwaged domestic activities which few often count as work.

The results of the WICP survey demonstrated the integral link between women's reproductive responsibilities and their productive activities and economic roles. For many women respondents the separation between work and household activities,

between public and private, is at best blurred and is in essence non-existent. In contrast to official definitions of women's formal sector waged work, the research discovered that women in the Caribbean hold a broadly based perception of work, which many saw as anything functionally necessary to maintain themselves and their households (Massiah 1986c:186). Women's work, whether done for wages or profit, is a valued activity and has a positive impact on a woman's sense of self, and makes a positive contribution to their societies (Massiah 1986c:226). For these women participation in some form of work was essential to the maintenance of their families and all activity was regarded as of equal importance.

The wealth of empirical data collected by the WICP served to confirm the subordinated position of women and:

> "*...provided abundant evidence of the inability of many women to exploit the apparently favourable infrastructural arrangements*" [in spite of] "*...a formal political ideology which seeks to provide opportunity for personal and social development of all individuals...*" (Massiah 1986d:165). [12]

Women's integration into the structures were found to be horizontally and vertically segmented, and improved educational achievements did not translate into labour market success for the majority of women. Female wage labour participation remained confined to traditional occupations, concentrated at the bottom of the ladder in relation to employment, income level and status.

The work of WICP proved to be a major catalyst in establishing women-specific issues onto the academic programme of the University of the West Indies. In 1987, an inter-disciplinary course on Women and Development Studies was introduced. This was subsequently followed by the formation of three interdisciplinary campus-based Women and Development study projects and courses (Massiah 1986a). In 1992 the first Professor of Women's Studies was appointed, and a School of Gender and Development Studies was established in 1993, with its headquarters based at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies, and branches at the two other campuses in Barbados and Trinidad.

1.5: New Directions in Research on Women: All Roads Still Lead to the Home

Since the first WICP publication in 1979 there has been an abundance of research and published materials on Caribbean women. These include the publication of edited collections of academic papers in Ellis (1986), Hart (1989), Mohammed and Shepherd (1988), Momsen (1993), Social and Economic Studies (1986: 35, No. 2/3); of literary works in Cudjoe (1990), Espinet (1990), Esteves and Paravisini-Gebert (1991), Mordecai and Wilson (1989) and SISTREN's Lionheart Gal (1986).[13] There have also been four subsequent regional research projects on varying aspects of women's lives carried out by the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the University of the West Indies/Population Council in 1982-83, by the Centro de Investigacion Para Accion Feminina (CIPAF) in 1986, by the Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America group (PACCA) in 1989, and ongoing work by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) which started in 1989.

Caribbean women academics such as Anderson and Antrobus (economics), Brereton and Reddock (history); Besson and Powell (social anthropology); Drayton, Ellis and Leo-Rhynie (education); Brodber, Haniff and Mohammed (sociology and social history); Massiah (demography) and Senior (literature) have expanded the discipline of Women's Studies through a plethora of individual studies on all aspects of women's lives. Their work has been complemented by the work of the male historian Beckles, and by other women researchers on the region such as Barrow, Bush, Freeman, Momsen, Safa and Sutton, all of whose work has added significantly to the discourse. Included in the post-1980s literature output are also studies by Dann (1987), Miller (1986, 1991) and Smith (1988) which do not focus specifically on women but by definition include analysis of women's and men's ascribed social roles. These studies have provided a wealth of information which have widened the knowledge base about the lives of women (and to some extent men) in the region. [14]

Like the WICP researchers, the research work of the majority of regional female academics has concentrated upon empirical detail. To a large extent this work has been compensatory in nature with the central objective of deconstructing the androcentric bias of previous research, recording demographic and ethnographic details, and generally making visible the hidden contribution of women to all aspects of social life. Many of the research studies and their findings on Caribbean women and development have been directly related to policy, the research producing new insights into the planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation of development policies and programmes.

Caribbean women researchers and activists have used these research findings as a strategy to sensitize policy makers and planners (generally male) about the important link between gender issues and the success of development plans. Many, such as Ellis (Ellis 1987:8) and Massiah (1989a), argue for changes in the planning procedures so as to ensure the incorporation of women into social and economic structures. Recommendations focus on improving women's access to better jobs, to equal pay, to better vocational education, to day care facilities etc. However, the academic work and activism of women in the region to create alternative development models have had little impact upon policy makers, and little influence upon the general attitude towards women in Caribbean society.

This may in part be due to the fact that the various recommendations are based upon women's integration into the existing development process, predicated as it is upon the prevailing structures of inequitable distribution of resources between women and men. They thus attempt to define and recommend solutions for women within structures counter-productive to their achievement. They offer technical solutions to what is essentially a political problem. As Massiah herself notes:

> "*...the possibility of predominantly male public sector officials drawing on research which contradicts the traditional gender ideology appears limited* " (1986d:161)

While trying to distance themselves from some of the analytical constructs of earlier researchers, the research of the WICP, Massiah and many of the post-1970s

researchers continued the established pattern of focusing upon issues of family structure and organization, matrifocality and Afro-Caribbean women and their familial relationships. A dominant focus in the current literature is on female kinship networks and female headed households and their relative disadvantaged economic position. There continues to be a tendency to categorise all female headed households as uniformly poor or disadvantaged, which has not pushed analysis much further than in the 1960s. In general, research continues to focus upon the transparent relationships between women and men, without looking at the determinants of these relationships and the continuous subordination of women in the society.

Researchers who have tried to move beyond the restrictive analytical frame of the female head/marginal male approach include Mohammed, Reddock and Wiltshire. Mohammed is one of a small but growing number of women academics openly working within a feminist discourse. She is also one of the few not blinded by form and structure, and her work deals with the substantive issue of the content of gender relationships. As she notes (Mohammed 1982:65) the majority of family studies focus on matrifocality and exclude male domination from the equation. At that time she called for an investigation of sexual oppression at it operates both in the family and in the society. In her 1986 paper on "Changing Family Structures and Socio-Economic Development in the Caribbean", she suggested that the major source of change in family structures and in women's productive and reproductive roles can be traced to changes in the system of gender relationships and the distribution of power and authority within and outside the household.

Pointing to the lacunae in knowledge and the lack of theoretical conceptualization which could explain the discrepancy between women's actual behaviour and their beliefs about social roles and responsibilities, Mohammed argues for the need to focus upon the domain of culture and ideology for explications of these contradictions. Her work focuses upon the system of gender relationships, the distribution of power and the intersection of race, class and gender in the lives of Caribbean women. Mohammed discerns these as being inexorably defined by the sphere of culture (Mohammed 1982), and changes in women's productive and reproductive roles, which are themselves culturally defined (Mohammed 1993).

Reddock's historiography has been employed to dispel two pervasive myths about Caribbean women (1984, 1989a). Concentrating upon labour history and the struggles of Trinidadian and Tobagonian women, Reddock attacks the images of women as politically conservative housewives, which underpinned many earlier studies. Her empirical material demonstrates women's continuous involvement in the labour force and their labour struggles and political activism. In her work she sought to show that the division of labour in the Caribbean was premised upon a hierarchical and exploitative relationship based on the appropriation of women's labour (Reddock 1985, 1989b). Reddock also pointed to the contradictory situation whereby women allowed their activism and militancy to be led by men, grassroots militancy thus not being converted into political representation at the national level. In her work, Reddock has moved completely away from the matrifocal/marginal dichotomy, focusing instead upon deconstructing the dependent female/male breadwinner ideology

which guides both mainstream research and social policy, and examining the factors which reproduces this ideology.

Wiltshire's work looks at the importance of Caribbean family networks functioning under the impact of migration and being transformed into transnational family networks, with shared social reproduction responsibilities. In her 1986 study, which looks at migrants from Grenada and St. Vincent to New York and their families back in the Caribbean, it appears as though the Caribbean family:

> *"...is characterized by mutually supportive interdependent links, enabling growth and adaptation in the context of poverty and dependency"* (Wiltshire 1986:17).

In Wiltshire's view, rather than destroying the family migration often served to provide a basis for survival, remittances being primarily used for subsistence needs and the education of children. Wiltshire argues that the defining characteristics of the Caribbean family are interdependent linkages rather than common residence, pointing out that in the traditional approach to family studies it would be easy to label units of the transnational family as matrifocal or disorganized if relationships across national boundaries were not examined. Her study showed that males participated actively in these transnational networks executing their familial responsibilities, in no way meriting the label of 'marginal males'.

There have been few attempts to investigate male roles, and men continue to be absent from most analyses of gender relations in the region. For instance, while the WICP

was aimed at understanding the institutional structures which hinder or facilitate women's participation in public life, there was insufficient focus upon the causal mechanisms for the gendering of social relationships and the institutionalizing of patriarchy in all aspects of women and men's lives. Men and the state were treated as one homogeneous group. What such a premise did not make clear was whether power inheres in men as individuals or in their position in the social structure (Young 1986).

In 1975, Henry and Wilson produced a very comprehensive guide to the literature on women and the family in the region. In that work they concluded that the roles which Caribbean women play may vary, first according to the economics of the community in which they live and second, according to the type of mating relationship women participated in, and the type of household they lived in. Henry and Wilson's survey showed:

> *"...that women do continue to play what can only be defined as subservient roles to men in many spheres, but this may in the long run be related to the severe economic under-organization of these societies. Thus lower class men are often economically vulnerable in that they are frequently unemployed and underemployed. From this perspective it is not only women who are subjugated but poor, powerless, lower class men are equally denied access to desired goals."* (Henry and Wilson 1975:193).

The narrow gaze of a low-income Afro-Caribbean women-only focus of almost all the research on women limits the ability to look at the nature of social relationships

between men and women or the nature of patriarchy in the region. On this subject Peters (1983:118) states:

> *"...it is paradoxical that given the weight placed in analyses of female headed households on women's difficulties in assuring regular support from male partners that these relations have been so poorly documented."*

In fact, outside the work done by Barrow (1986b), Brana-Shute (1979), Miller (1986, 1991), Waithe (1993), Whitehead (1979) and the commissioned reports by the International Planned Parenthood Federation on male attitudes to fertility by Abdullah (1975) and Dann (1987), there has been very little published research work on men in the Caribbean family. Following in the earlier footsteps of Wilson, the work of Dann (1987) offered a male perspective (albeit foreign) on the structure of gender attitudes in the Caribbean. In amplification of the small study carried out by Barrow in 1986, Dann's survey of Barbadian male views on women found that there still exists a pattern of asymmetrical relationships based on notions of female subordination. The qualities which men deemed desirable in women were those which permitted continuing male domination. Men saw their role as being largely outside the home, while women were expected to operate within the more circumscribed world of the household and the family.

Attempts by Caribbean researchers and activists to move away from the traditionally dichotomised discussions of matrifocal households and marginal males have been

stymied by developments in regional and international patterns of social relationships and domestic organisation. Aspects of gender relations and gender roles that were thought to be particularly lower-income [African]Caribbean and African-American - ie. lone-parent families, female headed households, dependent and economically marginal males - have become the focus of attention of social scientists throughout the world. According to Hart (1989:3) :

> *"... as the nuclear family worldwide collapses from a variety of social forces, it has become much more difficult than it once was to hold that the Caribbean family is a backward failure to achieve the modern nucleated norms celebrated by American sociologists in the 1950s."*

These developments have served to re-intensify the early research focus on the matriarchal/marginal male dichotomy in the region. The main proponent of this thesis is now E. Miller (1986, 1988, 1991). Miller's work looks at the marginalization of Black men in the Caribbean. In his thesis Black male marginalization and Black women's liberation are the outcome of Euro-American patriarchy. With a focus on Jamaica, his contentious and often contradictory argument is that in the Caribbean Black men have suffered more from patriarchal domination than Black women. He postulates that there is an elite white male conspiracy to keep poor Black men out of certain parts of the power structure, and, in the Caribbean, Black women are used as the means to achieve this.[15] While admitting that uneducated women are among the most marginalised persons in the Caribbean (burdened by both productive and domestic labour and the double jeopardy of belonging to the lower strata and of being

women), Miller still contends that Black women have benefitted enormously from a 'relaxation of traditional patriarchal closure' and the ploy of elite white male patriarchy will eventually lead to women taking over Caribbean societies (Miller 1991:91).[16] This relaxation of patriarchal closure has encouraged women to move away from the normative and socially determined patriarchal family order to more egalitarian structures. For Miller this has been in large part the cause of the social disorder being witnessed today.

Miller (1991:97) adds fuel to a growing debate on the role of women and the 'crisis of manhood' among men in the region by also pointing out, in his alarmingly titled book *Men at Risk*, that far from curing the problems of single parenthood and deviancy of family forms, national development has exacerbated, expanded and extended the problem of matrifocal family forms into the middle income strata. While Miller's views are seen as somewhat eccentric he speaks to a growing body of male (and some female) social scientists and public figures who want to roll back the advances secured by women in the past few decades and lessen women's perceived social power. The matrifocality/matriarchal debate is once again on the agenda as women are depicted as failing to fulfil their womanly role by spending time away from home and children, emasculating their men through earning better wages and denying their children a male role model by deliberately choosing an unmarried lifestyle (Drayton 1993:9). Women's achievements over the past twenty years are now being engulfed by ever more vociferous calls for women to return to the home.

Miller's work, and the strident calls of those who wish to restrict women to some notional domestic role are aided by the fact that most research has paid insufficient attention to the analysis of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions which keep men super-ordinate in the society, and which continue to undervalue and underrate women's contribution to national development. There is an urgent need for an analytical framework to help comprehend the universal subordination of women in the political, social and economic context, and within relations between women and men.

Part C: Into the Realm of Gender Studies

1.6: Patriarchy Revisited: Feminist Theorization and Caribbean Social Reality.

As far back as 1982, in her comments to a conference which marked the conclusion of the WICP research, LeFranc indicated the need for a theoretical perspective which could help explain the polarized nature of the exposed conflicts and contradictions in women's lives. The major contradictions identified in the work of WICP were between behaviour and perception, and indicated the need to examine the role of ideology and the way in which cultural concepts of gender guide behaviour. Such an approach, which focuses upon cultural conceptions:

> *"...forces the analyst to not only explore the link between individual action and social processes but also the link between the individual and society, between the personal and the political."* (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:1).

By the mid-1980s, Anderson (1986) also indicated the necessity of identifying the causal and intervening variables contributing to the system of gender relations in the

region. She pointed to the system of gender relations as the critical intervening variable explaining women's position in Caribbean society, and re-emphasized LeFranc's call for a theoretical framework capable of explaining women's independence and dependence in Caribbean society. Such analyses are generally undertaken within the remit of a feminist discursive frame.

Feminist theory is broadly focused upon investigating the existence and reproduction of asymmetrical power relations between women and men, and analysing male (and female) resistance to attempts to bring about a more equitable gender balance in the social relations which structure all areas of life. These areas include the family, education and welfare, work and politics, religion, media, culture and leisure, even the accepted norms of femininity and masculinity by which we live. Feminist activism is directed at finding ways to transform the oppressive economic and ideological structures in society and the behaviour and attitudes of both women and men.

The re-emergence of feminist scholarship in the 1970s has transformed understanding about the position of women and men. Since Boserup's landmark study *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), the international feminist approach to Women's Studies has combined strict empiricism with new far reaching theoretical analyses. Research activities span a range of analytical and methodological approaches, from concentrating on 'integrating' women into development, to theorizing the inter-relationship of the domestic and extra-domestic sphere of economic activity, and the methods by which power is allocated and distributed within the society.

Some feminists dismiss theory as an elitist attempt to tell women their experiences and, to a certain extent, see theory as a form of class and 'race' domination reinforcing the inequalities between women (those with knowledge and those without). Others reject it as a masculine form of discourse and refer to the fact that most accepted philosophies and theories are male conceptions. However to dismiss all theory is unhelpful for that hinders the development of conceptual frameworks which enable interpretation and explanation, and provide insights which take us beyond intuition. What is important is ensuring that the theory is not only relevant but accessible. The theory must be able to speak to the subjective and objective conditions of women's lives by:

> *...showing where it comes from and how it relates to material social practices and the power relations which structure them...this involves understanding how particular social structures and processes create the conditions of existence which are at one and the same time both material and discursive."* (Weedon 1987:8)

The distinctiveness of Caribbean social relationships has led many of the region's researchers on women to discount the relevancy of feminist models for explicating the social construction of gender in the region. Feminist theorization is viewed with extreme scepticism, often prompting cries of Western academic and ideological imperialism, while efforts to apply feminist analysis are labelled inappropriate or foreign. Many Caribbean women academics have distanced themselves from feminist discourse, which is often seen as homogenizing and radical. As a result feminist

theorization is an area which is less well researched, documented or conceptualized in the Caribbean. However, Caribbean academics such as Antrobus, Mohammed, Reddock, and activist organisations such as CAFRA, WAND, and national women's organizations like SISTREN in Jamaica all work within a feminist discourse.[17] According to Anand (quoted in Antrobus 1988b:45):

> *"...for women to become a vital force in their societies, change will have to be based on a new theory of development which embraces feminism".*

Internationally, much of the feminist theoretical debate centres around the concept of patriarchy and theories of women's oppression. At its most general, the term patriarchy is used to refer to male domination and the set of power relations by which men dominate women. However, the concept of patriarchy is not fixed and there are many and diametrically opposed concepts and theories about the meaning and nature of patriarchy. These differences are generally associated with distinct schisms within the feminist movement and the epistemological differences within feminist discourse. Analysts of feminist theory generally identify four dominant theoretical approaches. These fall within what are generally referred to as liberal, radical, marxist or socialist feminist discourse. Others such as Mies (1986), Weedon (1987) and Scott (1988) go on to explicate the positions held by psycho-analytical feminist theorems. Williams (1989) catalogues two further approaches within contemporary feminism which she classifies as libertarian and welfare feminism, and Black women such as Antrobus (1988b and 1989b), Carby (1982), Sen and Grown (1985), Hill-Collins (1990) and Hooks (1982, 1984) give excellent expositions of Black and Third World feminism.

Each of these differing approaches has implications for the assumed basis or cause of women's oppression and the role of biological sex differences or a culturally specific gendered structuring of relations between women and men. Each interpretation offers differing analytical perspectives of women and men and different implications for strategies for changing power relations. With the obvious exception of Black and Third World feminism, almost all of these theorems on the nature of patriarchy pose conceptual problems for an analysis of gender relations in the Caribbean, as they were designed to take account of sex stratification among white women and men in capitalist societies.

Radical feminist theories limit the definition of patriarchy to the sexual differences between men and women and male supremacy. Women are seen as a sex-class and patriarchy as trans-historical (Brownmiller 1973; Firestone 1979). This universalistic perspective fixes women's subordination to men as universal and is incapable of explaining the changes in social relationships or the power relationships between and within race and gender categories. The biological determinism of the radical feminists is also inherent in the arguments of feminist theorists who focus on the innateness of motherhood, and those who argue for the protection of women's nurturing role and women's primary responsibility to perform their domestic role.[18] Such arguments do not take into account the reality of the growing numbers of women who head households in Less Developed and Euro-American countries, and whose participation in the labour force is a fine juggling act between the need to fulfil reproductive and productive roles.

Liberal feminist theories also focus on the domestication of women but lay emphasis on women's enforced restriction to a private domain of household and family concerns. Proponents vehemently advocate equality of access to employment opportunities and state intervention in providing: (i) legal protection for women in the form of Equal Opportunities legislation and (ii) welfare benefits to enable women's participation in the labour market. These changes are deemed as fundamental to women's equal integration into social life. Such analyses do not explain why male domination as the premier mode of social relations continues, in light of (i) women's increasing integration into the capitalist labour force; (ii) the removal of the legal (ie. voting rights) and social underpinnings of patriarchy (the break up of the nuclear male breadwinner/ female housewife family model); (iii) and the provision of basic welfare support for women. Liberal feminists focus upon removing the structural restrictions placed upon individual women's ability to access education and employment opportunities, and give no attention to the systemic biases regarding class and race which, for many women, are the main determinants of their experiences and life chances.

Marxist-feminist theorists stress the link between male domination and the dynamics of capitalist production, and define patriarchy as male control of women's labour (Barrett 1980; Eisenstein 1979; Hartmann 1979). Women's oppression is viewed as the outcome of the capitalist division of labour into reproductive and productive spheres of activity, and women's subordination in the family and in the social relations of reproduction is seen as fundamental to the workings of capitalism. Their materialist

theories are focused firmly on reforming women's access to opportunities in the public sphere. However, a strict adherence by orthodox Marxist-feminists to viewing women as a sex-class and explicating women's oppression as caused by their exclusion from wage labour and male domination of the family does not address the lives of women in developing countries with a long history of female headed households and women's labour force participation.

While retaining the focus on patriarchy and capitalism and the interlinkages between male domination, female subordination and capitalist production, **Socialist feminists** define patriarchy as resulting from the ideological and political interpretation given to biological differentiation in differing historical and geographic frames (Beechey 1979:79). Socialist feminist analyses of the historically specific way in which material and ideological factors combine to subordinate women in the public sphere and the private sphere of family and household, and the recognition of gender, class and race as the three principle oppressors of all women (Rowbotham *et al* 1979), go some way towards meeting Black and Third world feminist criticisms of the homogenising and racist orientation of mainstream Euro-American feminism.

Black and Third World feminist writings focus on the historical and contemporary experience of Black women and how their relationships with work, family, men, sexuality, reproduction and the state are structured by race as well as class and gender.[19] They challenge mainstream feminism in three key areas. First, while using the concepts of capitalism and patriarchy as determining factors in women's

subordination, they contest a universalizing concept of patriarchy and notions of women's restriction to the domestic sphere and the household as explaining all women's oppression. Black feminists dispute mainstream feminist analyses of the family as the main site of male authority and women's oppression, deeming such theories inappropriate to Black history and experience. Many proponents cite Black women's long links to the labour force - especially in the plantation economies of the Caribbean, the United States and Asia (Hooks 1982; Hill-Collins 1990), and stress that the relationship between reproduction and production must be understood in terms of colonialism, and women's struggle against slavery, racism, imperialism and the international division of labour (Amos and Parmar 1984; Carby 1982).

Second, they challenge the notion that patriarchy is deleterious to women only, and that reforms should benefit only women. Caribbean feminists are actively working in the DAWN (Development Alternatives for a New Era) consortium of Third World activists and researchers to synthesize gender theory with a Third World women's perspective, and through research and action come up with new visions and strategies to strengthen women and the society as a whole. According to Antrobus (1989a:5):

> *"Third World feminism's special contribution to the search for alternative development is that it recognizes both human agency and structure, recognizing the need for transformation of all oppressive relationships and structures as an essential part of a process of social transformation...this concept of feminism is not concerned exclusively with women, but with the rejection of all forms of oppression."*

The aim is not only to represent the interests of women, though they are the focus of the enquiry, since a non-patriarchal reconstructed society serves the interest of all. To say that it only serves women assumes that some women are not benefitting from present structures of patriarchy, and implies a commonality among women. In this regard, Black feminist's third critique of mainstream feminism points to the lack of homogeneity between women as a sex-class and white feminist's lack of recognition of the ways in which white women have gained at the expense of Black women and have participated in the ideological, political and economic oppression of Black women and Black men.

These critiques of Euro-American feminism are of crucial importance to an analysis of the social construction of gender in the Caribbean. As noted earlier, concepts of the family and the dynamics of African-Caribbean women's and men's relation with production and reproduction are, to a large extent, the outcome of colonialism, slavery and plantation life, and are very different to models perceived as normative in Western society. Male leadership in Caribbean society does not necessarily equate with headship in the household or the family. Almost a third of the households in the region are *de jure* female headed (in some countries this figure reaches 45%) and almost the same number of households are female maintained/supported, and African-Caribbean women have high levels of labour force participation (Massiah 1989b).

A cursory glance at these statistics might lead some to conclude that women are not restricted to the household, that the household has become very much a basis of

women's power and autonomy and/or that the family is not the main site of African-Caribbean women's oppression. However, such conclusions fail to recognize that the activities of African-Caribbean women in the household are a determining factor in their interaction with society, defining and influencing their participation in society outside the home. In addition, though patriarchy in the Caribbean may not be specifically premised upon male headship of the household many women aspire to the "normative" model of male headship in all spheres, including the family. As Senior (1991:3) notes:

> *"...one of the enigmas posed by the study of Caribbean women is that while most official barriers to female achievements in these societies have now been dismantled, and although many upwardly mobile women take advantage of this, the large masses of women still appear to be handicapped not only by the invisible barriers which exist in a male dominated society but by the barriers in their heads."*

Patriarchal power and male domination reside within the institutional structures and cultural practises of society, and while regarded as a powerful socializing agency and major institution in society, the family and the household in the Caribbean are subsumed under or encompassed within the larger operations of the public domain which men control. Even if women hold decision-making power at the level of the household, their horizons are expected to be limited to a small range of closely related kin and their immediate needs (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:8). As will be demonstrated in the rest of this thesis, in the Caribbean social power continues to be

identified with male domination. Far from being a matrifocal/matriarchal society, African-Caribbean women remain subordinated by a patriarchal structuring of gender roles and responsibilities in both the domestic and public domains.

1.8 Gender Theory and its Applicability to Caribbean Social Reality

Despite epistemological differences as to the nature of patriarchy, the aim of all women working in the field of Gender/Women's Studies is to point out, challenge and work to change women's subordination in society. There is general agreement about the nature and parameters of women's subordination and general acceptance that patriarchy takes a number of forms according to historical and/or geographic frame. Most feminists also accept that there is a distinction between basic biological sex differences and the socially constructed gender identities and roles assigned and ascribed to women and men in all societies.

The distinction between sex and gender was first developed by Anne Oakley in her *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972). According to this theory, sex is connected with biology and physical attributes and physiological differences. Gender on the other hand refers to the social and psychological construction of the identity of women and men across time and cultures. Gender systems are created out of the material and ideological interpretations placed on the biological differences of women and men. The prevailing ideological, economic, social and political conditions are all fundamental influences upon the construction of gender in any given society, and there is no global/universal content to gender roles. Instead there are a range of masculine

and feminine identities, and gender identity is formed in response to a number of stimuli including the major social institutions such as the family (both nuclear and extended) school, the church, work, the state (and its social and economic policies) and the media.

Unlike sexual differences which are biologically determined, there is social and human agency involved in the social construction of gender identities. People play a part in choosing the type of woman and man they want to be. For Young (1986), the process of gender identity construction, like gender relations, provides both a set of constraints and opportunities for women **and** men. Creating gender is thus seen as a struggle and even those who do not conform to the system cannot escape knowing what their allotted place should be (Rubin 1975). A theory of gender allows for inconsistencies and contradictions in the behaviour of individuals, for it posits that gender identity is constantly being renegotiated and reconstructed. The perspective used is holistic - analysis being directed outward from the individual to the social structures that shape experience and meaning, providing a person's location in the social world and defining and allocating economic and social rewards.

Using gender as an analytical tool allows us to create a bridge between the reproductive and productive realms of existence so as to try to understand the diverse ways in which women and men are bound together in membership in social units and institutions which cross-cut gender divisions (Peters 1987). In exploring the realm of social interaction it is important to consider some of the fundamental constituents of

gender relationships. There is a need to focus upon the link between the **social construction of gender**, that is the acquisition of gender identity, and the **political economy of gender**, that is the sexual division of labour both in the household and the labour market.

An understanding of the causal mechanisms (determinants) of the sexual division of labour requires that we examine not only the jobs that women and men do, but the relations under which they do them. While analyses of patriarchy focus upon a study of women's oppression, a theory of gender looks at the articulation of the relations of power between women, men and children, paying particular attention to class, race and age factors. A key area of focus in any study on gender relations and social interaction must be on the distribution of power and influence between the genders in both the household and the wider society (Connell 1987). Gender theory looks specifically at power relationships, and the autonomy and control that individuals exercise over their destiny and their social environment in light of the network of practises, institutions, technologies and ideologies which sustain the positions of dominance and subordination in social relationships (Mohammed 1993:10; Dagenais 1992: 85). By deconstructing and elaborating the multiple levels of gendered experience and domination, gender theory provides a framework for analysing substantive gender inequalities, as well as class race/ethnic and sexual distinctions.

The Caribbean presents a very dynamic arena in which to analyze gender (social) relations because of the culturally specific form which relationships between women

and men, and family formation and socially ascribed gender roles have taken in many of the territories. To try and understand the specific mechanisms of gender differentiation in Caribbean development and the present position of women, the remainder of this thesis will focus upon the complex interrelationship of historical, economic, social and political factors which shape the contemporary Caribbean and Antiguan context, and women's integration into public life. The following chapter begins the process with an examination of the socio-economic developments in the post-Emancipation Caribbean, and women's participation in that process.

1. The terms household and family are used interchangeably in this text to describe a cohesive unit of kin and possibly adopted members, sharing common meals. However, the author recognizes and takes into consideration the fact that there are structural differences between the two types of social organization so that a family can be spread over a number of households while a household may contain non-kin members. A thorough discussion of these issues are contained in Rubenstein (1983) and Giddings (1984). Tilley and Scott (1987) point out the fact that families are not static entities with universal forms, but historical creations, and that the roles and activities of family members adjust to the changes in the world around them.

2. An excellent review of work on anthropology and the family is provided by Remy (1973), and on women, men and the family by Henry and Wilson in 1975. Rawlins (1987) produced an update to this work in her annotated bibliography on women and the family covering the period 1973 - 1986. Collected volumes of conference papers by Gerber (1973), ISER-EC (1986), and Marks and Romer (1978) pay testament to the central place that this subject holds in Caribbean research.

3. As noted by Tilley and Scott (1987:96), even in Europe in the nineteenth century there were a number of 'free' marriages (ie. common-law unions) of long duration, which had not been legalized since no property was at stake and because it cost money to get married.

4. In the late 1930s, the British government appointed a Colonial Office investigation, led by Major Orde Browne, and a Royal Commission of Inquiry chaired by Lord Moyne to look into the labour and social unrest in the West Indies in the years 1935-1939. While the recommendations of these commission are often best remembered for their far-reaching effect upon the political landscape of the region and the establishment of trade unions and nascent nationalist movements in many of the territories, these Commissions also made influential recommendations for the social life of the people's of the region.

5. See for example the work of Jayawardena (1963) on Indo-Caribbean's in Guyana and Wilson's work on Male Crews on Providencia (1971). Dr. E. Clarke was one of the few women researchers of major acclaim in the 1950s and 1960s and in her classic *My Mother Who Fathered Me* (1957), she also looked at middle income families in Jamaica. However, her research construct was closely allied to the structuralist frame laid down by R. T. Smith in the early 1950s.

6. Smith's schema for this cycle had four main stages. First, after attaining adulthood a young woman would continue to live in her parents house and might engage in a series of visiting relationships; after the birth of one or more children the woman generally moved into a house with a male partner into a more stable relationship based either on a marital or common law union; as the household unit endures the woman becomes more and more the central focus of the group. As the children begin to economically support the household and their mother, the man becomes more economically marginal to the operations of the household. The children, especially girls, may in turn bring their own children into the unit, thus turning the unit into an

extended three generational or 'grandmother' household.

7. See Smith's comments on the way his concept continues to be used and misused (1988 pp.179 -180), forty years on. As an explanatory variable for social relationships, the very term matrifocal has different meaning for different authors, as noted by Solien-Gonzalez in 1970. More recently, and from an international perspective, Peters (1983:114) points out:

> "*...matrifocal as a description label for households may refer to their internal structure or composition, the pattern of affectivity or interaction among members or between linked households, the cultural value placed on the mother role, the economic and social marginality of male conjugal partners or any combination of these.*"

8. In a discussion of the continuing controversy over the use of the term matrifocal, Peter's (1983: 115-116) looks at the way theories of matrifocality have been universalized to fit all situations in which there is a prevalence of female headed households, whatever the causal factors. Her work on family structure and male migration in Botswana also examines the problems inherent in presuming an obvious causal link between male marginality, social and economic deprivation of the household, and woman-centred units by the very use of the term matrifocal.

9.See Godelier's (1981) article on "The Origins of Male Domination" for an interesting anthropological exposition on the historical context of the subordination of women.

10. See Besson (1993) for a critique of Wilson's theory as it applies to women.

11. Two United Nations documents form the central plinth of governmental strategies for the "integration" of women into development. These are the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,* (1979) which has been supported and ratified by the majority of countries in the Caribbean region, and the *Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies* (1985) which has been supported by 157 governments worldwide. These documents recommend that action be taken to allow women to assume their legitimate and key positions in the strategy for affecting changes necessary to sustain and promote development.

12. The research findings of the WICP are disseminated in a number of publications. These include a seven volume set of monographs (1982-1985) on various aspects of the lives of women in the Caribbean at the regional level; three country reports (1982) which set out the quantitative research findings for each territory; a Conference Report (1983) with synopses of country reports and various papers produced for the conference; two special editions of the *Journal of Social and Economic Studies* (1986) which contained some of the conference papers; a set of recommendations to government and non-governmental agencies and researchers on possible future actions; a video tape on women and work in the region and a synchro tape-slide show on the day to day conduct of the project. A full list of WICP publications is provided in the bibliography.

13.These form part of the corpus of anthologies, bibliographies, assessments and reassessments which converge around the role of women as mothers, child bearers rearers and mates. Trouillot (1992) notes that there were over 200 titles in the field of anthropology in this area between 1970 and 1990. Rawlins (1987) lists over 100 titles on the family, and Momsen's (1993) latest overview of women and change in the Caribbean contains well over 200 references from a range of disciplines throughout the entire region. There have also been two annotated bibliographies on Women in the Caribbean, one by Massiah and the WICP (1979) and the other by Stuart (1985) at the University of Leiden.

14.This list is not exhaustive and certainly does not include the names of many excellent women and men researchers. However, the intent here was not to ignore their contributions but rather to focus upon some of the authors of key texts in the area of Women's Studies in the region.

15. Miller makes the astute point that when men sponsor women in the public sphere it is often with the intention of limiting their progress, and that subscription to women's rights is seen more often as a ploy rather than a principle.

16. It must be said that while presenting such an alarming exposition, Miller does not call for the restitution of patriarchy. He controversially calls for women to take over the society and completely overthrow patriarchy so that men can recreate themselves spiritually and morally!

17. In the 1980's small nationally based activist groups such as the Women's Forum in Barbados, The Belize Rural Women's Association, Red Thread in Guyana, and Working Women in Trinidad have taken root. Such groups seek to engage women (and men) from all social spheres in discussions on the impact of alternative development strategies upon the lives of women and men, and the ways in which these are manifested in social relationships.

18. See Williams 1989 for a lengthy discussion of the tenets of Welfare feminism.

19. This includes the work of Cchachi (1987), Davis (1981), Davis (1983), Hill-Collins (1989), Hooks (1982, 1984), Mbilinyi (1992) and Tang Nain (1991).

CHAPTER TWO

Engendering Caribbean Development: Women, Work and Socio-Economic Change

There is in the Caribbean a clearly defined sexual division of labour which underpins social processes. The concept of 'a woman's place' in this structure has emerged from and been determined by, the modes of economic production and the social relationships which existed in the plantation system introduced by European slave owners (Ellis 1986:91). Through the intermediacy of slavery, the ascribed roles of women and men have taken on a unique and ambivalent character in relation to the gendered reproductive roles assigned and assumed in the domestic arena, and the gendered roles assumed and assigned in the work/public environment. As discussed above, the amalgamation of African cultural 'retentions' and European working class and middle/upper class sex role differentiation practices and value systems are widely considered as having instituted the dimorphic set of principles and dualistic behavioural patterns which signified plantation life for both slaves and slave owners. These dualisms have contributed fundamentally to the contradictory attitudes which exist in relation to the role and responsibilities of women and their participation in national development, and the continuing subordination of African-Caribbean women.

To exemplify how this gendering of roles has affected African-Caribbean women's status in the contemporary Caribbean, this chapter overviews the social and economic developments of the past 160 years, and the gender differentiated impact of the changes. The analysis concentrates upon the three most significant periods of social

and economic change in the region since the abolition of slavery. The first section looks at the dislocating impact of the post-Emancipation period between 1830 and 1880, the second section focuses upon the challenges, changes and optimism of the post-Second World War years, while the third examines the traumatic period of burgeoning nationalism and economic denouement in the 1970s and 1980s. The final section overviews the contemporary situation of African-Caribbean women. The changes which have occurred during these era have entailed upheaval, not only in women's relations with production but also in the social relationships between African-Caribbean women and men. The general analysis and conclusions regarding the wider Caribbean presented here will be applied to a specific discussion of Antigua in the following chapter.

2.1 Post Emancipation Social and Economic Upheaval: Ambiguous Ideology and Contradictory Behaviour

Concurrent with the plurality of family forms discussed above, plantation life established two distinctive features in the role responsibilities and social relationships between African-Caribbean women, men and children in the English-speaking Caribbean. First, in the Caribbean motherhood was (and still is) seen as paramount to wifehood (Powell 1986:22), and while fertility rates in the region have remained high, marriage rates continue to be relatively low. The second characteristic feature is that the financial well-being of children and the domain of the home is viewed primarily as the woman's responsibility.

During slavery, children took their status from their mother, slave families being constituted of mothers and children. The distinctly anti-natalist policies of eighteenth century planters (when slaves were cheaper to buy than to rear) actively discouraged women from bearing children and African women and men from forming monogamous long term relationships - partly because either partner could be sold at any time (Bush 1990:133). However, with the cessation of the slave trade and a decline in the slave population of the islands and territories, nineteenth century colonial policies instituted economic remuneration for women to encourage childbearing (Beckles 1989; Goveia 1965). Women became doubly exploited as their labour power and their fecundity were harnessed into a system of capitalist exploitation (Hill-Collins 1990:50).[1] Motherhood was venerated and rewarded, and completely detached from notions of legitimacy and male economic support. Childbearing became an imperative and women derived status, security and insurance for the future by having children. In part due to these policy changes, the primacy of the maternal role became entrenched in the gender ideology of the Caribbean.

During slavery, legal marriage was not a necessary precursor for procreation (Stuart 1993). Christian marriage was not an option for slaves and women often had children from a number of partners. Smith's (1988) analysis firmly grounds this practice, which was perceived to be an aberrant African-Caribbean behavioural trait, in the licentious conduct of the white male slave plantation owners and overseers. With no regard to their marital status, white males would force themselves on any slave woman they chose. Many men kept concubines, and in later years some recognised the progeny of

these illegal unions. This hierarchical, racially constructed pattern of social relationships between European men and African women, and African women and men were used as part of the mechanisms to subordinate slave women and men. It also to helped institutionalize the fundamental feature of post-Emancipation African-Caribbean family patterns - the co-existence of legally sanctioned and common-law family units.

After slavery the existence of these 'unsanctioned' relationships was seized upon as evidence of degeneracy among African-Caribbean people. Nineteenth century colonialists, using the offices of the government and the church, tried to reverse the serial mating practises previously favoured and introduce the Eurocentric (male-headed) nuclear family form into the ex-slave population (Mies 1986:96; Waithe 1993:24). Such contradictory social stimuli brought about the different types of family formations described earlier. Although legal marriage, and the white middle/upper class respectability which it epitomised, represented the optimal familial aspiration of many Black men and women, cohabitation and visiting relationships were the more widely practised forms of family organisation. These latter households were often female headed. Prior to Emancipation men did not have to contribute economically to the upkeep of their children, and after Emancipation male financial contribution *"...was neither assured or assumed..."* (Goveia 1965:137). On women's shoulders lay the double responsibility of social reproduction and economic production.

As mentioned earlier, in the Caribbean women of African descent have always been

expected to contribute to the economic life of their countries. For African-Caribbean women, the issue was never one of equality, rather it arose out of necessity. During slavery, African-Caribbean women worked on the plantations alongside men, and it has been said by some researchers that the levelling effects of slavery minimized gender differences (see for example Brereton 1988:128; Mathurin:1975; Smith 1988:36; Wiltshire-Brodber 1988). However, under slavery the point was to maximize the exploitation of labour, and hence slave women were exploited as fully as slave men (Hill-Collins 1990:50). This does not mean that women and men shared equal status, for while female slave labourers were expected to work equally with men, the majority of slaves working in the fields at the time of Emancipation were women, and the prime agricultural and better paying artisanal positions (particularly those involving technical skills) were held almost entirely by men.[2]

The transition from slavery to the wage economy brought poverty for the ex-slaves, as women and men were forced to sell their labour in a difficult economic climate. Post-Emancipation, the Caribbean sugar plantation dominated economy took an appalling downturn, facing stiff competition from the French sugar beet industry in Europe, resulting in escalating labour costs and the expense of updating antiquated technological methods (Hall 1971). The increased mechanization of the plantations resulted in a retrenchment in waged agricultural work. Women who remained on the plantations were often relegated to the more peripheral agricultural tasks, while men moved more and more into the highly skilled operations and better paid positions. While women's labour power was expected to be the same as men's during slavery,

whether or not they were pregnant or nursing, post-Emancipation studies recorded that daily wages were determined by sex and seniority, with women being paid less than men (Reddock 1985:165; Momsen 1988:142). [3]

African-Caribbean women continued the pattern established under slavery of working alongside men on the plantations, or in other occupations outside the household. In Antigua for example, in 1891 74% of women over the age of ten worked for pay or profit. By 1949 the figure had dropped, but was still a relatively high 49%, which is just slightly higher than the current level of women's labour force participation (Massiah 1989b:967). Agriculture continued to be the dominant occupation for women in the post-slavery period (Ford-Smith 1986), but there was a significant decline in women's plantation employment at this time.

While many withdrew from the harrowing work, primarily associated with enslavement, others were forced out by the low wages offered to women. This did not halt women's waged employment, as more and more women turned to various kinds of domestic and trading work in the urban areas, or to subsistence agriculture and petty trading. At the same time *"...female ex-slaves sought the private space hitherto denied them..."*, and settled in homes with their families (Momsen 1988:145). Those women who did 'retire' to the household often continued to be economically active through their cultivation of kitchen gardens or to undertake tasks such as sewing/washing clothes for others for payment in cash or kind.

The contraction of female plantation labour should have enhanced employment opportunities for men, and one might assume that men would have acquired a vested interest in women's services in the home. However most men employed on the sugar plantations would probably not have felt that they were being paid an income sufficient to provide the sole support for a family. During this period, the economic situation of the ex-slave and indentured male population was only slightly better than for women. They too remained economically marginal in the plantation system. Those who were bonded to the sugar plantations were subject to pittance wages, exacting labour conditions and seasonal working periods, as well as to the vicissitudes of the international sugar economy as it affected the profits of their employers.

While women turned to subsistence agriculture, domestic work and informal trading activities to support their newly established family units, many men faced with similar new responsibilities turned to migration (Richardson 1980). Encouraged by regional differences in wage rates, this male out-migration exacerbated the female:male sex ratio in the ex-slave population and reinforced the plantation established system of female headed households, particularly in the smaller islands.[4] It also led to a resurgence in women's economic activity as women were left responsible for the maintenance of themselves and their families. It is with puzzlement then that Smith (1982:132) observes:

> *"...in view of the history of the West Indies and of women's labour it is remarkable to what extent the very concept of womanhood continues to be bound up with mothering and with the performance of domestic activities..."*

After Emancipation, middle class Victorian assumptions about the role of women came to the fore and the image of the male breadwinner/female dependent housewife (whether married or not) became the stereotype image projected. Attitudes on women's gender roles were buttressed by British cultural domination, and enforced by the legal, political, religious and educational institutions transplanted into colonial society. The ideology of the female dependent housewife totally ignored the reality of the lives of the majority of women and men in the Caribbean, and the conditions of poverty which precluded the full withdrawal of women from the work force.

Socialist feminist theories would argue that the development of the 'housewife' ideology and the concept of the male breadwinner, was used as justification for keeping women out of production and paying them little or nothing if they worked outside the home, since men were being paid a 'family wage':

> *"... the position of women within the system of economic reproduction is an ambiguous one. Their capacity to reproduce the labour force relegates them to a specific role in the family as domestic unpaid labour. This same role is used to rationalize the lower wages they are paid if they are forced to seek employment and to depress the wages for the working classes by means of their easy expendability as a reserve labour force."* (Mohammed 1982:56)

Certainly the ideological impulsion towards the male headed nuclear family may have been underpinned by practical economic reasons on the part of Caribbean colonialists. The need for economic rationalization of the sugar industry (in the face of a serious

drop in profits) may have informed gender differentiated post-Emancipation employment practices. Plantation owners could not afford to pay wages to all able-bodied workers needing employment, and a policy which devalued the cost of women's waged labour and forced the working class to shoulder the responsibility for its dependents provided a way out (Cooper 1989:26; Tilley and Scott 1987:124). At a time when 'agricultural labour' was still synonymous with female labour, the growing image of Caribbean women as 'dependents' and 'weak' (in part due to the discernible increase in reproductive activity in the post-Emancipation period) contributed to the contention that women, if they were to work at all, were better suited to casual work (Reddock 1985:75).

The division of labour along gender lines introduced the notion of public and private domains into the ex-slave labour system. Overall, this period saw the development of an anomalous situation wherein African-Caribbean women were regarded as equal to men in their labour power, but were now expected to retreat into the domestic sphere and maintain the private domain of household and family, economically and symbolically subordinate to men. Men were now viewed as the main labour force participants. In reality, women were forced into a range of marginal occupations and means of survival, often outside the formal labour market. Their contributions to national economic development were 'hidden', and their sex and the dual burden of social reproduction and production worked to subordinate them.

This subordination was embedded within a sexual division of labour socially constructed in both the public and the private spheres. This division of labour was not the direct outcome of 'natural' biological constraints, but rather the combined effect of ideological and socio-economic developments (Godelier 1981:12). Perceptions of African-Caribbean women's and men's roles and their economic endeavours were structured by their class position, their race and by the prevailing gender ideology. While women and men suffered under a system of 'race' and class oppression, women alone suffered under a system of the gender division of labour and the triple oppression of class, race, and sexual exploitation (Clarke 1986:148). Nineteenth century socio-economic developments and labour force stratification practices set the pattern for many twentieth century practices.

2.2 Unbridled Hope and Limited Possibilities: The Transition to Self Government in the Post-Second World War Era (1944-1967)

The framework of contemporary Caribbean social and economic life was established through a coalescence of events in the 1930s. Unemployment, underemployment, low wages and a depressed standard of living spawned mass strikes and civil unrest in the Caribbean colonies. The working class struggle for improved access to resources for the local population, better pay and labour conditions, better prices for agricultural produce, a broader franchise, more local autonomy and ultimately the struggle for independence itself represented an exceptionally important period in the development of the popular politics in the region (Thomas 1988:71).

The organised labour unrest of the late 1930s, and the mass movements for political independence of the 1940s, foreshadowed the decline of the British Empire and the colonial economy in the Caribbean. In these critical years women often played a pivotal role in mobilizing support for the nascent unions and embryonic political parties. However, while being the locus of support for these groups women were very rarely part of the decision-making committees, and the lesser skilled areas of women's labour force participation were little represented in strike organisation activities and reform discussions, since they were often outside the recognized 'formal' labour force (Gloudon 1986:64; Ford-Smith 1986:169). Prior to 1950, most African-Caribbean working class women were either employed in subsistence or manual plantation agriculture, or as workers outside the formal labour market, as domestics, traders etc. Men were mainly concentrated in sugar estate, port, construction or factory based wage work. Trade union organizations (which were often the nucleus of the political parties) concentrated their actions mainly in support of the estate and factory-based labour force.

After a decade of turbulent protest in almost all of the colonies of the Empire, the British government granted universal adult suffrage to its Caribbean colonies in the 1940s and 1950s. Elections were held in all British Caribbean territories, and from 1944 the Colonial Office began to cede local economic policy formulation to the various national governments elected in this era of political devolution and decolonisation. By 1962, Jamaica had gained full independence, quickly followed by Trinidad, Barbados and Guyana. At that time the other territories such as Antigua, St.

Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, Grenada, British Honduras, St. Lucia and St. Vincent gained the devolved status of associated statehood, which allowed for internal self-government.[5]

This period saw the first phase of nationalist economic development strategies in the Commonwealth Caribbean, when Caribbean born economists and development planners, and in particular Arthur Lewis, began to explore sectors other than agriculture as potential engines of growth. Economic growth and employment creation formed the major thrust of most of these post-World War Two development planning strategies along with ameliorative social policies. For Lewis (1950) and others, the creation of a manufacturing sector through foreign investment held the key to the transformation of Caribbean economies, providing a major solution to existing and prospective unemployment problems. It was felt that agriculture could no longer be relied upon for job creation. Governments wanted development policies which would allow them to exploit the region's natural advantages with a view to expanding employment opportunities, raising incomes and sustaining foreign exchange inflows into the economy. Lewis' method for the creation of this industrial base involved establishing industries that were labour intensive (utilizing cheap Caribbean labour) to produce manufactured goods for export to markets in metropolitan countries.[6] The approach was to attract foreign capital through policies which kept wages low, governments docile, and taxes on foreign investors virtually non-existent.

Together with the creation of a manufacturing sector, governments also actively pursued policies which exploited the region's natural resources, as well as resources in which they held a comparative advantage over other countries (such as cheap labour, links with colonial metropoles, proximity to the US, the widespread use of English etc.). For the larger territories exploitation of natural resources focused on mineral exploitation. In the region, the major products in this sector are petroleum and alumina bauxite. Smaller territories were very eager to exploit the physical beauty (and tax-free haven status) of their environment and their human resources by promoting a service sector, consisting mainly of tourism, and to a certain extent off-shore banking (Barry *et al* 1984). In this way, the three pillars of present day Caribbean economic development strategies were established: light manufacturing, tourism and services, and primary extractive industries in the larger countries.

Before the 1960s, the concept of the West Indies or the Caribbean as a homogeneous entity, existed only in the minds and workings of the colonial authorities. Despite their common history of British domination, there were few structural linkages between the various territories. Each territory had been linked as an individual unit to Britain and this individualism led to the dissolution in 1962 of the British-backed Caribbean Federation, the first attempt at a politically integrated Commonwealth Caribbean. By the mid-1960s, Demas (1965) and others began to advance economic development strategies which focused on bringing about a structural transformation of the economy through greater reliance on national and regional resources. Objectives included the elimination of open and disguised

unemployment, and the diversification of the productive base away from the 'extra-regional oriented monocrop sectors/manufacturing base' dualist approach.[7] However, the economic development strategies pursued, though integrating some aspects of social development and regionalism, were essentially a continuation of the earlier Lewis-style 'industrialization by invitation' approaches. Up until 1970 the various governments confronted the problem of developing their resources by inviting foreign capital to continue to exploit them.

Issues of gender were seldom addressed in these strategies, the assumption being that all sections of the population would benefit from economic development. However, these strategies were to have a significant effect upon the integration of women into the formal labour market. They have not only led to a definite expansion of the areas of employment and the range of occupations, but also to an increase in labour stratification along gender lines. Within the industrialization and employment strategy there emerged a further refinement and re-categorization of the distribution of employment by gender already in operation. While men moved from estate work into the areas of construction, mining/quarrying and oil drilling, women moved out of agricultural labour into manufacturing and the service oriented sectors.

In promoting industrialization, Lewis' focus was on employment creation in general. However, the policy of replicating North Atlantic strategies with the creation of a light manufacturing base also replicated their gender differentiated employment practices. In those countries there was a large concentration of female workers in light

manufacturing industries (with men working in heavy industry), and North Atlantic investors brought their preferences with them. Female employment increased in the new cheap labour havens of 'finishing touch' and 'assembly' operations, and the fiscal incentives offered to foreign companies paved the way for their exploitation on a large scale. A similar pattern occurred in the emerging service sector, particularly tourism (Henry 1988:184) .

While the economic development strategies pursued in the 1950s established a new pattern of women's participation in economic life, the 1960s were of signal importance to women's social development. The attainment of universal adult suffrage coupled with post-independence legislative changes, significant improvements in standards of health (morbidity and mortality rates), improved educational provision, and increased employment options have all contributed to improving the status of all Caribbean women.

On attaining independence or internal self-government all the governments of the region undertook increased responsibilities towards the majority African-Caribbean population. Figuring high on the nationalist policy agenda was increased investment in public sector services, through expanded education, health, welfare and social security provisions. These changes also meant an expansion in public sector employment and career opportunities for indigenous trained and skilled professionals and para-professionals, particularly in the health service, the education sector and the Civil Service. As large numbers of nationals began to assume general, clerical and

technical positions at all levels of government service, the need for local training institutions grew and prompted the development of higher education institutions within the West Indies. This period witnessed the establishment of the University of the West Indies, as well as teacher training and technical colleges and a greatly enlarged primary and secondary school system to feed into these tertiary institutions.

Prior to 1950 few African-Caribbean children went to secondary school, their education being generally limited to the government primary school system. Girls were certainly encouraged to go to primary school, and in fact made up the greater proportion of primary school teachers in some islands such as Antigua and Jamaica (Smith and Smith 1986; Miller 1986). There were, however, few girls secondary schools in the region as a whole, and cultural traditions and the socialization process ensured lesser participation by females in higher education (Cole 1982; Great Britain 1945). There were some scholarships for Black boys to secondary school, while almost none existed for girls. By this token the small elite of Black educated professional class of the 1930s and 1940s were predominately male.

With the introduction of new metropolitan approaches to education, the post-independence educational policies focused upon equality of access to education, and girls began to participate in greater numbers. By 1970, female student enrolment had increased significantly at all levels of the education system, overtaking male participation at primary, secondary and tertiary level in many countries in the region (Sinha 1988:87). Despite the official ideology of equal opportunity, the expanded

educational system helped to entrench accepted sexual stereotypes of appropriate male and female roles, and encourage the sexes to pursue different educational activities. As Okwesa (1989: 4) notes:

> *"It is obviously the education system which determines to a large extent people's future occupation and societal roles."*

The content of the education curriculum was (and still is) gender biased. Girls clustered in arts subjects and domestic science, while boys were concentrated in science based and technically oriented courses. Boys were trained for a profession, and girls were geared towards non-technical areas in which they were seen to have a 'natural' proclivity (such as teaching, nursing, needlework, domestic science) at a time when industrial/economic policy required an increasingly skilled technical and scientific work force.

Notwithstanding these limitations, education did offer women channels of social and economic mobility into the formal sector, as they became secretaries, teachers, nurses, etc., in the burgeoning state and para-statal sector. At the same time as public service employment began to offer both men and women the chance to attain professional careers, there was also a parallel growth in formally and informally established small-scale service oriented enterprises such as hairdressers, dressmakers, domestics, etc., to meet the needs of an increasingly educated, professional and clerical urban-based salariat (Dagenais 1993).

What is interesting to note is that because of the sex-role stereotyping of occupations, women held a comparative advantage in gaining employment in many of the new areas opening up. Increasingly they comprised a significant percentage of those being employed in the service sector (as waitresses and maids), in shops and offices (as clerks and typists), and even in light manufacturing (as unskilled manual workers) and in the growing public sector in the areas of teaching and nursing (Massiah 1984:59). Jobs created in these areas were often viewed primarily as women's work. These changes in women's occupational activities have shaped the pattern of women and men's present day integration into the formal labour force.

The strategies of export-oriented industrialization and the expansion of the manufacturing, service and public sectors, did not resolve the underlying problem of unemployment. Henry (1988:185) points out that the percentage of the working population employed in manufacturing dropped between the census years 1960 and 1970, when the strategy should have made its greatest impact. The new industries also failed to show much success in exporting to extra-regional markets, being oriented mainly towards domestic markets. As analyzed by latter day economists such as Bernal *et al* (1984), Girvan (1988), Howard (1989) and Thomas (1988), the development strategies pursued were more characteristic of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) than the export promotion model proposed by Lewis in 1950. Most of the investment was in import-substituting types of industries such as textiles, clothing, food processing and the assembly of consumer durables such as cars and radios.

The emerging urban-based factory/manufacturing systems and nascent tourist and service industries did not create any real linkages with the pre-existing production system and aggravated the crisis of the agricultural sector and those employed within it. A net result was a lack of attention paid to agricultural diversification, a lack of investment and/or technological development in the sector, little infrastructural support in rural areas, and a decline in the working population in agriculture. While manufacturing opened up new opportunities for the semi-skilled and skilled population, it also displaced those who had been employed in agriculture, particularly the older labourers - many of whom would have great difficulty in finding a job in manufacturing or the service industry because of the need for basic educational qualifications. In much of the Caribbean the unskilled (subsistence) agricultural work force was predominantly female, and in the post World War Two Caribbean models of development many rural women found the basis of their livelihood and independence eroded.

The new areas of employment could not take up the gap left by the movement of labour out of agriculture. Labour migration, which has always been an important if not central feature of the economic history and social life of the Caribbean, once again offered the small economies of the region a release from the pressures of growing national population and restricted employment opportunities (Marshall 1982; Peach 1968; Richardson 1989, 1992). After World War Two migration began again, this time to the United Kingdom and, after 1962, when the U.K. closed its doors to

Commonwealth immigrants, to the United States and Canada. Regional governments followed the lead taken by Barbados in supporting an extra-regional migration policy by attempting to secure temporary openings for their nationals in the form of short-term farm labour schemes in the United States of America and Canada, and encouraged or supported longer term migration to Britain and Canada under various work schemes (Parry 1987). According to Thomas (1988:67), almost one million West Indians migrated to the United Kingdom and the United States between 1950 and 1970.[8] The migration policy of the 1950s was distinctly different from other schemes because women were a significant proportion of emigrants. Along with U.S. and Canadian farm labour schemes and U.K. transport industry employment, opportunities included domestic work, (auxiliary) nursing, and hotel and catering schemes (Bakan 1993; Byron 1992; Senior 1991).

Overall, the agenda of the various development strategies and economic approaches used by regional governments between 1950 and 1970 were determined, as convincingly argued by Thomas (1988), almost totally by external stimuli. The economic take-off these strategies were aiming for has not occurred. However, their implementation created expanded educational, employment and political opportunities for women and men, and there has been a radical shift in the nature of women's participation in the formal labour force and in public life. However, women did not make gains commensurate with those made by men, and despite improved educational status, women's occupational choices continued to be restricted, often to areas characterized by a similarity to their domestic responsibilities. The effect of

industrialization and tourism was to open the way for women to be exploited as cheap labour. At the professional level women were clustered in the areas of services, both in the private or public sector, and in occupational areas where they predominated, they remained at the bottom half of the occupational category in terms of income and position.

The spread of the wage economy thus brought new forms of the sexual division of labour and women's subordination with it. According to Safa, Caribbean women are a perfect example of the limitations of the concept of economic autonomy (and I would add educational attainment) as the panacea for female subordination (Safa 1986:17). Improvements in the level of female formal labour force participation and educational attainment was not accompanied by any significant enhancement of their overall status vis-a-vis men. As Trouillot (1992:26) points out:

> *"In the region, female economic independence does not necessarily mean the breaking of traditional ties... nor modernization...mean the demise of putative 'feudal' patriarchy. On the contrary, recent Western inroads often create new forms of gender inequality..."*

2.3 Coming to Terms with Dependent Independence: From Alternative Development Strategies to Structural Adjustment Policies (1970-1993)

The 1970s marked a situation of flux in the Caribbean for almost all territories. Frustration with continued poor economic performance in both the industrial and agricultural sectors, persistent high unemployment and increasing external debt

contributed to the theorizing and implementation of alternative development strategies in the larger territories. These new approaches included the 'nationalist/socialist' state driven social and economic strategies attempted in Jamaica, Guyana and Grenada, as well as state financed expansion policies in Trinidad and Barbados. Moving away from the foreign-capital led, market-oriented economic policies, the new strategies involved the increased role of the state in driving the economy through direct investment and nationalization of major utilities.

Rather than a total reliance upon external stimuli for economic growth, development was pegged to other factors such as increasing reliance on national savings for financing investment and income redistribution. Diversification included establishing inter-industry linkages between primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of economic activity. Some of the other features of this strategy were nationalization of state participation in the major traditional exports (ie. sugar, petroleum, bauxite), selective participation and investment in other industries (such as tourism, manufacturing, banking) and the use of government investment and government spending to drive the economy. The strategy also (re)focused on the utilization of domestic and regional resources in an effort to change the demand structure away from metropolitan linkages towards a more closed regional policy. After the collapse of the earlier Caribbean Federation, it is significant to note that the 1970s witnessed another attempt at integrated regionalism with the establishment of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in 1974, a regional economic grouping of the English speaking Caribbean countries.

The new 'statist' strategies, as Girvan termed them (1988:17), emphasized that development should be defined more in human terms and have as its focus improvements in the well being of the entire population. The expanded public sector was an important element in this strategy and together with the newly created para-statal enterprises continued to provide a major conduit for government job opportunities for women and men. Although the policies were not couched in gender terms, some governments displayed an increased sensitivity to the needs of women as they turned their attention to providing better social welfare facilities such as day care centres, hospitals and vocational training projects, all of which eased the household burdens of women and gave them opportunities to train in new non-traditional areas.

Overall the economic performance of the countries utilizing these 1970s development strategies was extremely sluggish. The main focus of industrialization continued to be import substitution, the extractive industries and the service sector, while tourism and manufacturing failed to generate required incomes and jobs. State owned enterprises generally performed inefficiently, sustaining large losses. Nationalist efforts to get increased returns from the trans-national companies (TNC's) exploiting national resources, while producing initial benefits, saw the transfer of many of these companies' activities out of the region (United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations 1978). Growth remained largely dependent upon the performance of traditional agricultural and mining industries which were still suffering from the lack of investment and technological advancement necessary to upgrade their performance. The increasing prices of farming inputs, and the difficulty of accessing credit in this

sector acted as deterrents to small farmers. In 1970 over 50% of the food consumed in the area was being imported at a cost of approximately US$1,000 million (Thomas 1988:126). Increases in extra regional food imports placed local food production in greater jeopardy.[9]

With the decline in agriculture in the Caribbean and a slow down in hiring in the public and private sectors an increasing number of women and men turned to the 'informal sector' for wage and self employment. They worked either in the marketplace in small enterprises, or at home in some form of domestic outwork in an effort to extend the economic support base of the household. This is often the sector where women, especially older women, face the least systemic discrimination due to their lack of education and experience. In general, informal sector activity remains attractive because such jobs as trading, home-based tailoring and domestic service continue to be available and easy to enter (Castells *et al* 1989; Bromley and Gerry 1979; Hart 1973; INSTRAW 1991; Roberts 1990). As such the swelling of the informal sector represents the formal sector's (growing) inability to absorb the employment needs of a countries labour force.

The decline in economic activity had a negative impact on an already unbalanced distribution of income as well as on high levels of unemployment. During this period unemployment grew among women and among youth, especially secondary school educated youth, who were now educated to expect professional career opportunities. All this was exacerbated by the accumulation of the external debt, and a larger

percentage of government expenditure and export earnings had to be used to pay interest and debt amortization abroad. This resulted in a new form of dependency which Girvan (1988:18) terms 'debt dependency'.

The world economic recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s affected all countries of the region indiscriminately with most countries experiencing serious economic deterioration. Countries which attempted economic sovereignty using state ownership of the 'commanding heights of the economy', as well as those relying on tourism as the main engine of economic growth ended up following similar kinds of structural adjustment programmes (whether government or International Monetary Fund/World Bank sponsored). These programmes entail import restrictions, control of foreign exchange, currency devaluation, a credit squeeze, severe reductions in government expenditure on social services, as well as divestment of state owned enterprises and consequent cut backs in public sector employment. Their central objective is to:

> *"...secure stability in the balance of payments and ensure that external debt is serviced...rolling back the role of the state and entrenching the role of the private sector."* (Girvan 1988:19).

Structural adjustment programmes almost totally depend on external markets to stimulate growth and development. Job creation measures focus on export-oriented programmes, often at the expense of social services and production geared to meeting the needs of Caribbean people. Policies to attract foreign enterprises offer fiscal incentives, particularly the continuation of a low wage structure.[10] Export-led

manufacturing development policies and tourism marketing strategies pit the various regional countries against each other, as they compete among themselves, mainly on the basis of cheapening of labour to gain a competitive edge in targeting metropolitan markets (Kelly 1987:90).

In spite of four decades of diverse development strategies, Caribbean countries are still faced with underdeveloped economies heavily dependent on external sources, either for investment or markets, and with a large proportion of their populations suffering from unemployment. This condition affects both women and men as they attempt to develop themselves and try to maintain a basic standard of living for themselves and their families.

2.4: Adjustment With a Female Face

As with all other economic development strategies in the region, women have been differentially affected by the outcome of the structural adjustment measures (Chinery-Hesse *et al* 1990; Cornia *et al* 1987; Scott 1991). However, while former policies did not specifically factor women into any of their equations, adjustment measures appear to be grounded in a gender ideology which continues to assign conflicting domestic responsibilities to women.[11] Antrobus (1988a) claims that adjustment policies aimed at increasing export-oriented production (eg. promotion of free trade zones) as well as those aimed at reducing consumption (ie. cuts in government expenditure on social services) are predicated upon contradictory attitudes toward the gender roles of women and upon the dual role responsibilities which women in the Caribbean take on.

The adjustment measures focus on creating employment in light manufacturing export-processing industries, which offer increasing opportunities to women in areas with few career prospects. The gender implications of structural adjustment strategies raise the spectre once again of exploited cheap female labour being used as the basis of the export-oriented industries in the Free Trade Zones, in garment, electronic and data processing industries (Kelly 1987; Freeman 1991; Pearson 1993). There may also be a shift once again of manual and low skilled women wage labourers out of waged employment into self-employment, or indeed combining informal and formal work (INSTRAW 1991:8; LeFranc 1989).[12] Due to present labour force measurement indicators, the number of participants in the informal sector and the level of their contribution is not included in labour force statistics. Unofficial estimates however, suggest that if counted, female participation in this sector would add 30% to women's labour force participation rate (Isaac 1986:51). It is true to say that whichever area of casual employment women enter, they often occupy the lowest strata of occupations with the worst pay and working conditions.

Structural Adjustment Programmes also reinforce the primacy of women's role as carer in the home. External debt has made it necessary for governments to review the commitments made with respect to all programmes and projects, especially those with a social emphasis. As governments cut back subsidies on basic commodities and reduce public spending on social services such as education, health, housing and welfare, increasing responsibility to fill the gaps created falls upon the shoulders of women. Women's fulfilment of this role reduces the pressure on the state to make

adequate social policy provisions and perpetuates women's exploitation:

> *"...as the unpaid and overworked reserve labour force onto which the responsibilities of the private sector and the state for the reproduction of the labour force are shifted, particularly in times of crisis."* (Tang Nain 1993:1)

Governments appear to assume that households will 'cope' without the provision of such services through women increasing their input into the household, perhaps by giving up jobs, working part-time or in shift work or finding someone to take on their domestic duties. Elson (1986:4) calls this a transferral of public sector costs to the household, further burdening women already constrained by their workload. Poor households headed by women are even more affected because, with only one source of financial support, the increases in basic food prices and a cutback in the provision of health services, and rising unemployment severely limit their ability to manage (Charles 1989:33; Chinery-Hesse *et al* 1989:26). The short term effects of these strategies have serious implications for food availability and the nutritional status of poor households.

At the same time public sector contraction differentially affects women's labour force contribution by limiting one of the most apparent sources of women's formal sector professional employment opportunities. Many women enter professional work through the service sector, especially in community and social services, as teachers, nurses, social workers etc. As Structural Adjustment Programmes often hinge on a contraction of the public sector through reducing the bureaucracy, these moves not only affect

those presently employed but also limit future employment possibilities for women in a region where unemployment amongst women is consistently higher than for men.

In a society such as the Caribbean, where a large proportion of households are supported by women either solely or as a significant contributor, increases in female unemployment have far reaching consequences. High rates of female unemployment, lack of stable, well paid jobs, and increasing dependence upon remittances from family overseas all erode the ability of women to maintain economic autonomy and their households. One result is that :

> *"...women ... face a double guilt - as breadwinners because they are unable to earn as much as they need, and as mothers because of the limited possibilities of caring for their children adequately."* (Jolly, Quoted in Scott 1989:11)

While it is recognized that women are not an homogeneous category and that not all will be affected by public sector contraction, it must be observed that the majority of women and their families - whether from rural/urban areas or poor/better-off households - will be affected in some way by the changes. Structural Adjustment Programmes imply reduced access of the majority of the population to goods and basic services and a loss of ground in the degree of participation of women in economic development.

While there has been an overall decrease in female employment in the region, these changes have not signalled a retreat of women to the household. As in the late

nineteenth century, economic policies have significantly restructured rather than restricted women's labour force participation. And as in the nineteenth century, for Afro-Caribbean women a reliance on male financial support remains *"...often unavailable or inadequate..."* (Massiah 1989b:966), leaving women to continue to seek alternate means of earning an income. In their response to the regional economic crisis, women have found strategies to maintain their families and a basic standard of living. It is recognised that many women are the main economic support for themselves and their families, and for many families women's income is indispensable.

2.5 One Step Forwards, Two Steps Back: Women, Development and Change in the Contemporary Caribbean

As we head into the twenty first century there is little doubt that women play a pivotal role in Caribbean development, and that development strategies have had a major impact on the lives of Caribbean women. Since 1950, however, due to political and socio-economic changes in the society many women have moved beyond the role prescribed for them to become significant actors on the public stage. To an increasing extent African-Caribbean women have come into their own. Over the last decade or so, traditional mobility patterns have been assailed. There is a solid base of professional and technically trained women in employment in the public sector (in banking, in tourism, in retailing and in manufacturing), which has implications for the future of women and men's interaction in the public sphere and, concomitantly, for gender relationships. However, the more visible improvements mask a fundamental

reality. As emphasized by Massiah (1989b:965):

> *"...even in those territories with the most favourable statistical indicators, socio-economic conditions continue to restrict women's participation...limit their mobility...and ignore the deleterious effect on women of the macro-economic development of the 1980s."*

In most territories, since independence provision has been made for the primary and secondary education of both boys and girls. The education system continues to reflect a gender bias however, and an ideology which guides girls and boys towards stereotyped career options. For instance, while the absolute numbers of female students at the University is greater than that of men, they still cluster in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, traditional female areas. Within the educational system in the region as a whole there are generally more women than men as teachers at secondary school. This is not the case at the University where women are outnumbered 3:1, and where few of the senior positions are held by women (Drayton 1993; Mohammed 1993; UWI 1988).

As a result of education many Caribbean women have been able to attain positions of influence and responsibility in the private and public sector (the latter reflects greater equality between the sexes at almost all levels of the hierarchy). There are more women becoming qualified in the areas of accountancy and business studies, as well as in the other professions. In the professional and technical worker categories there have been significant advances by women. This is particularly true in insurance,

finance and business services. Over the last decade or so, with the growth of the public sector and of manufacturing and tourism, there has been a significant increase in the number of women in the formal economy, with women representing over 40% of the formal labour force (Massiah 1986c). As Senior (1991:191) points out, however, the rapid entry of some women at high levels in the workforce of some countries continues to mask their continued subordination and exploitation. Many women in high executive jobs and administrative positions have the opportunity to be there not because they are highly qualified and capable, but because they are willing to accept far less in salaries and perquisites and operate under conditions that men of lesser qualifications and capabilities would consider insulting.

The majority of women employed in the formal labour force women are concentrated in the service sector, rather than in agriculture where they used to predominate. In the smaller, less populous islands women account for approximately 66% of all service workers, while in the region as a whole the figure is 53% (Ellis 1986:5). However, and with few exceptions, women tend to receive lower salaries than men with comparable qualifications doing similar jobs. Professional women, by and large remain concentrated in the fields of education, nursing and social work which are the lowest paid. Governments are the largest employers of women, with the percentage of state employed women ranging from 22 - 28% in most countries. There are also a growing number of women working in the Free Trade Zones areas of manufacturing and data processing electronic industries. This sector is to a large extent non-unionized and pays wages below the minimum wage of the host country (Freeman 1990; Safa 1981).

In countries such as Jamaica, women have defied these stipulations and have organized, even at the expense of losing their jobs, to get better pay and conditions (Jones 1988:10; Power 1990:8). Antiguan women have not gone out on strike but they appear to avoid working in the sector (Bird 1987). Even with growing opportunities for waged work, a significant number of women still continue to find employment in the informal sector as seamstresses, hairdressers and petty traders/higglers/hucksters (LeFranc 1989).

Regionally, women account for more than one third of the agricultural labour force, with women aged over forty forming a high proportion. This aggregate figure hides the fact that in smaller islands, such as St. Vincent (54%), St. Lucia (47%), and Antigua (50%), women play a major role as agricultural labourers, heads of farming households and retailers of agricultural produce (Ellis 1986:36). Many women also engage in subsistence farming by cultivating kitchen gardens or small plots adjoining their homes as a means of supplementing their household budget. The farms that women operate have always been amongst the smallest, and typically are constrained by the lack of capital, land and labour.

Although women constitute almost half the electorate, their representation on political and legislative bodies remains disproportionate to men. There are few women judges although the number of trained barristers is growing. Notwithstanding that Dominica has a female Prime Minister and Barbados a female Governor-General, throughout the region there are only a sprinkling of women members of parliament, senators and

permanent secretaries.[13] Although women candidates have been entering politics at an increased rate in the last ten years the numbers of female representatives remain pitifully low, perhaps because women do not appear to vote specifically for women candidates but along party political lines. Caribbean women, according to Clarke (1986:114), perceive themselves and their subordinate status more in terms of age differentiated education and work opportunities and the effects of adverse social and economic conditions, rather than in terms of gender inequality. Issues of poverty and development, economic exploitation, racism and class differentials rather than those of gender remain central to the political concerns of many women.

At the level of public life there are increasing numbers of women on boards and executive bodies of national institutions and private corporations. However these women still remain a minority and, as Massiah(1989a:134) notes, sizeable proportions of women on statutory boards continue to be concentrated on boards of education, child care and welfare agencies, with few women on boards in chief decision making positions.

Despite the high level of female employment in the labour force and their increasing involvement in the formal sector, women are little represented in executive positions in the unions, while leadership positions continue to be held largely by men - by a ratio of 75:25 (Gloudon 1986:82). In Antigua this situation is even more attenuated since no women hold leadership positions in a country in which all political institutions have been dominated by the labour unions for over 50 years, and in which

women have always represented a large proportion of the mobilizing force of both the political parties and the unions. Instead, women's involvement has generally tended to be in subsidiary roles on recreational and social welfare committees and in organizing the women's auxiliaries/arms of the various unions. As a result, their trade union education and administrative abilities appear to suffer. More recently this matter has been addressed through the work of the Caribbean Congress of Labour which has been holding regional seminars for women in the trade unions in such areas as leadership training (Bolles 1989; Duncan and O'Brien 1983; Sunshine 1988; Gloudon 1986).

The paucity of female involvement in the political and public sphere stems from both ideological and practical reasons. The lack of support for women candidates is perceived by some as a lack of confidence in the ability of women to lead. Societal perceptions of women's capacity to hold such positions may deter applications from and the appointment of women and their acceptance of these positions. Women's non-involvement is also a deliberate choice. The practical difficulties such positions pose for women, such as the increased demands made on their already constrained time availability and on their responsibilities for family life may tend to dissuade them from participating.

Post independence constitutional and legislative changes in many countries have provided a legal framework for the incorporation of women in society and legal and

institutional barriers to the equality of sexes are uncommon. Legislation such as Maternity Leave, Equal Pay, Status of Children and Married Women's Protection Acts are on the statute books in many territories (Forde 1981). Some countries, such as Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, have amended the Succession Acts to recognise the rights of unmarried women (and their children) who are 'permanently co-habiting' in consensual union.

Despite the various reforms, all too often a wide gap remains between *de jure* equality and *de facto* reality. While women appear to enjoy equal rights, in some territories they are not protected in the constitution against sexual discrimination. There is no legislation to protect women against exploitative conditions at the work place which can sometimes involve sexual favours for promotions. Sexual harassment is very difficult to prove. Few countries have legislation and adequate provisions to protect women against (wife) battering, incest, rape and the general acts of violence which are on the increase in many countries (Clarke 1991:4; Jordan 1986). Violence against women and sexual harassment is one manifestation of male dominance and superiority propagated by the prevailing gender ideology and societal attitudes. According to Waithe (1993:53):

> *"....the need of a man to be seen to be in control sometimes shows itself in the battering of women."*

Since 1974, and under the influence of the global focus on women's issues and regional pressure from academic and activist women's movements, most Caribbean

governments have indicated a commitment to initiating and implementing policies for improving women's situation. Reforms have been introduced, old laws repealed, new laws passed, and government 'machineries' (ie. Women's Bureaux) created - in response to the United Nations Decade for Women launched in 1975. The first national women's bureau in the region was established by the Jamaican government in 1974, and since then national machineries for women have been established by governments of all Commonwealth Caribbean countries. Their assigned task was to implement programmes aimed at improving the status of women as well as to coordinate the activities of government and non governmental organisations in their countries. Women's programmes have been integrated into certain regional institutions with the opening of offices and the appointment of staff. For example an officer responsible for Women's Affairs was appointed at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) in 1975, and at the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters in 1978. A Women and Development Unit (WAND) was set up under the auspices of the University of the West Indies in 1976 to monitor social and economic integration of women in the Caribbean.[14]

However advocacy of international declarations and the establishment of posts by national governments has not generally translated into socially meaningful action. While official policy is couched in terms expressing a concern for the welfare of women, existing practices are in fact the result of deeply ingrained attitudes in which the holders express unconscious attitudes (often internalized and accepted by many women) perpetuating a gender ideology which accepts that a woman's place is

subordinate. As Mies (1986:15) and Miller (1991) note, the actions of governments and universities can also be regarded with a certain amount of cynicism as displaying a paternalistic benevolence in granting the 'girls' a niche in the system. This cynicism comes from the knowledge that such appointments are rendered almost totally impotent by the relatively scarce financial, material and human resources allocated to government agencies and non-governmental organisations to carry out the tasks assigned to them. National Bureaux established to oversee the integration of women remain understaffed and underfunded. National offices are transferred from Ministry to Ministry, Directors are changed depending on the party in power. In general the Bureaux are often ignored when it comes to national planning, and are therefore largely ineffective. This ensures an in-built weakness/impermanence in the machinery established to monitor and follow up stated public policies (Gordon 1984).

Women's lack of involvement at senior levels denotes a lack of access to centres of power and decision making at the highest levels of government. This has severe implications for the formulation of plans and programmes specific to the needs of women in all areas of social life. Even when plans and strategies are adopted, a concomitant change in the attitudes of the male decision makers as well as a determined programme for increasing social awareness may not follow. Political leadership continues to envision women's role as indirectly supportive and to believe that women will be satisfied by legislative reforms which fail to challenge the material forces which condition women's exploitation in the work force and in the home (Ford-Smith 1986:173)

The political consequences of women's continued subordination are manifested by a failure to consider and plan for women's contribution as well as their needs and a failure to take into account a significant portion of economic activity. This in turn not only affects women's development but also ensures a failure to increase the effectiveness of labour, resulting in a slower rate of economic growth. Caribbean governments need to utilize all their human resources to successfully confront the various crises generated by current economic circumstances and cannot afford to lock half of the population into systems and institutions where their contribution is not fully appreciated and their potential unrealized (Henry 1988:201).

One could almost say that things have come full circle since the 1890s and that women are once again being forced into an increasingly subordinated role, after a period of expanded economic opportunities. However, it must be borne in mind that the changes of the last four decades have affected both men and women. While accepting that female waged employment is everywhere lower than men's, and that women have little influence upon the agencies of social power or the areas in which they do work, their ability to bring influence to bear is qualitatively different than in the past. The issue is not simply that they are at the bottom of the ladder, but that they are increasingly at the middle level in many areas of both the public and private sectors, and are present in significant numbers in all the growth areas of employment. Women are now visible in all the major institutions in society.

The reshaping of gender relations essentially necessitates a whittling away of the hegemonic male power base, which will in most cases be strongly resisted and may in some cases result in a backlash against women's increasing social and economic mobility (Faludi 1991). Some men increasingly perceive themselves as being restricted to the bottom of the labour market, particularly those who leave school early without appropriate qualifications. Recent educational enrolment statistics show that more women than men are enrolled at all levels of the education system (except primary level), and that women postgraduates outnumber men. Women have been blamed for this problem, if indeed it is such (Drayton 1993).[15] The feminization of the teaching profession and co-education are among the explanations given. There have been calls advocating a kind of positive discrimination for young men in the form of the re-establishment of single sex schools.[16] As women become more upwardly mobile, men feel increasingly threatened (Lewis 1990:107).

In fact, in recent years there has been a questioning of the role of women in society and the need for specific institutions and activities which focus on women. Some charge that men are once again being marginalized in society and call for a return to systems which have never existed for many Afro-Caribbean people (ie. the male headed nucleated family), blaming the female headed family unit for increasing social problems. Unlike the economic and political changes which have transformed Caribbean societies in the past 160 years, the low frequency of marriage and the dual marriage system seem to have been least affected by change. Far from showing looseness or disorganization, Caribbean family structures have proven very stable

(Senior 1991:83; Smith 1988). Some Caribbean men, such as Miller, are concerned at the growing phenomena where women of middle-class backgrounds appear to be eschewing purportedly middle class values and deliberately choose lone parenthood. For many of his persuasion, it is these women of good education and solid career prospects who signify the rise of matriarchy in the Caribbean (Miller 1988).

Paralleling these concerns about the marginalization of men, the growth in public visibility and the undeniably increasing social power of women, or perhaps because of them, has been the promotion of traditional stereotyped typologies of masculinity and femininity and gendered role responsibility by the major socializing agencies in society such as the media, the church, and the state (Mohammed 1993). Paradoxically, while on the one hand women are generally considered central to the maintenance of the Caribbean household, at the same time their participation in the institutions of power in the society is often perceived as peripheral.

The distance between the ideal stereotypes and the actual behaviour of the women is manifested by the double standards in Caribbean society where women are expected to contribute to the support of their families and at the same time if in a relationship they are perceived (and often perceive themselves) as dependents of their partners. This ambiguity is so entrenched that, as Senior (1991:41) graphically asserts:

> *"While the modes of behaviour were not culturally possible and were not performed by the majority of women... they are still a part of women's psyche and influence their behaviour...the dualisms of the society have become*

manifest in women's interior landscape."

At present women themselves continue to invest their menfolk with a leadership role and give 'nominal' deference to the socially assigned authority and decision-making roles. This apparent contradiction between the designated and actual head of household continues to reflect women's apparent need to conform to societal norms concerning male dominance (Safa 1986:10) and also underlines the fact that patriarchy structures the organization of Caribbean society.

In a telling disapprobation of the present ordering of social relationships, one of the respondents to the WICP survey stated:

"...Woman is a donkey - she work at work and then she go home and work again." (WICP respondent 1980)

This woman saw the situation as part of her lot in life. It is a sad indictment that after almost fifty years of significant social and economic changes, many Caribbean women continue to bear a very heavy burden. Borrowing a turn of phrase from Cooper (1989:44), it is clear that:

"The architecture of power...still remains in male hands, especially in terms of the main institutions of power."

Many of the socio-economic changes of the past one hundred and sixty years have in fact served not only to reshape but also to reinforce traditional views of women's roles in society. In spite of a formal political ideology which since the mid-1950s has sought to provide opportunity for personal and social development to all individuals,

for many women participation is often refracted through the perspective of their familial responsibilities. Despite talk of a matrifocal society and male marginalization, power for women in the Caribbean appears to be concentrated within certain relationships in the domestic and maternal spheres. This power is severely restricted in the public sphere as the gender ideology and sexual division of labour in society act to ensure that lesser status and lower rewards are ascribed to women's activities (Anderson 1986:320).

The following chapter focuses specifically on Antigua and examines the impact of localised development strategies and a specific gender ideology upon the participation and integration of women in Antiguan development. The conclusions drawn in this chapter will be fully explored with regard to the specific situation of women in Antigua. After an historical introduction, the chapter outlines the various development strategies pursued by the Antiguan government, particularly post-1950, traces certain political, economic, social and cultural developments and charts the impact of these on socio-economic opportunities for women. Issues of employment, health, education, political participation and legal status, along with the effect of policies to improve women's access to these resources are analyzed in greater detail.

1. According to the 1798 Amelioration Act, masters were to encourage monogamy and child rearing, but not necessarily licensed marriage. Instead a type of 'nominal marriage' was encouraged and those who entered such an institution were entered into the plantation books. Females keeping within these conjugal confines were paid 4 pounds sterling for the first child and 5 pounds sterling for every child thereafter while living with that partner. The couples were to be encouraged to stay in the institution by the payment of 1 pound sterling each year (Goveia 1965:196).

2. Outside of feminist writing it is little emphasized that the majority of slaves working in the fields at the time of emancipation were women. However, the skilled artisans and driver positions were most often held by men. Slaves worked for wages on Sunday, especially slave domestics and artisans. These skilled slaves were often highly valued by their masters, and some were hired out for a lease fee. Some even worked for themselves, paying their masters for the privilege (Goveia 1965:142).

3. This parallels the situation in England before the industrial revolution when many women worked as agricultural labourers (Tilley and Scott 1987).

4. History records that more women than men survived the Middle Passage, and that with the cessation of the slave trade women came to outnumber men, especially in the smaller islands (Momsen 1988: 142).

5. Most of the Associate States have since moved into full political independence - Antigua gaining independence in 1981 with the exceptions of Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands.

6. In this concept of development, growth was seen as synonymous with material output (measured by the rate of increase of Gross National Product (GNP)) and change measured by the structural manifestations, the locus of the labour force, increasing mechanization of the labour processes and fragmentation of the division of labour.

7. Demas' ideas influenced the formation of the 1968 Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in 1974. These were all organisations which sought to enhance regional and national economic viability through renewed economic cooperation.

8. There has been a vociferous and protracted debate as to the socio-economic impact of this policy in the region. Some researchers see migration as beneficial to economic growth, while others such as Palmer (1974) felt that migration helped to deplete Caribbean countries of some of their trained labour force, both male and female, at one of the most crucial periods in their existence, nascent independence.

9. Despite the decline, by the mid 1980s agriculture was still contributing significantly to the GDP of a number of Caribbean territories such as, Belize (20%), Dominica (30%), and Guyana (24%) (Thomas 1988:134).

10. Any retrenchment in this area delivers a major blow to the small economies of the Caribbean. The efficacy of this economic approach to genuine transformation is questionable - a fact borne out by the experiences of one Caribbean territory. Such was the case in Barbados in 1986 when INTEL (a U.S. data processing firm) and Playtex (a U.S. undergarment manufacturer), both major employers of female labour, pulled out. Barbados' manufacturing is still recovering from the blow this dealt to the economy and labour force participation (Barbados Export Promotion Corporation, 1988).

11. See Antrobus (1988a) for an extended discussion of the impact of structural adjustment policies on women in Jamaica, along with C. Y. Thomas' (1988) informative analysis of economic policy and change in the Caribbean. Mbilinyi (1992) provides an international perspective with her work on the impact of SAP's on women in Southern Africa.

12. Of late much international and regional policy and academic attention has been focused on the informal sector as a dynamic component in the strategy for increasing income earning opportunities in developing countries. The sector is now expected to play a vital role in contributing to renewed growth and to national economic development in many developing countries. Often it is also viewed as providing a training ground for entrepreneurs and as a potential source of new jobs for the growing labour force (INSTRAW 1991).

13. However, in Antigua for instance there are a high proportion of women who serve as Permanent Secretaries. In 1990 four of the eleven in post were women, one women worked at the key ministry of legal affairs and another as the head of the civil service. In Barbados there are a growing number of women judges.

14. Since its inception, the CARICOM women's desk has carried out intensive lobbying of regional governments. That work has been aided by the results of regional research projects and international organisations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, and has enabled some countries such as Antigua, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica and Trinidad to go on to produce national policy statements on Women and Development. Governments such as Barbados and St. Vincent have included sections on women in their development plans. Almost all regional governments have signed the various international conventions related to women.

15. As Drayton (1993) points out, while girls were taught the importance of education for life, boys were educated for work. As education no longer leads to jobs, school has become less relevant to boys.

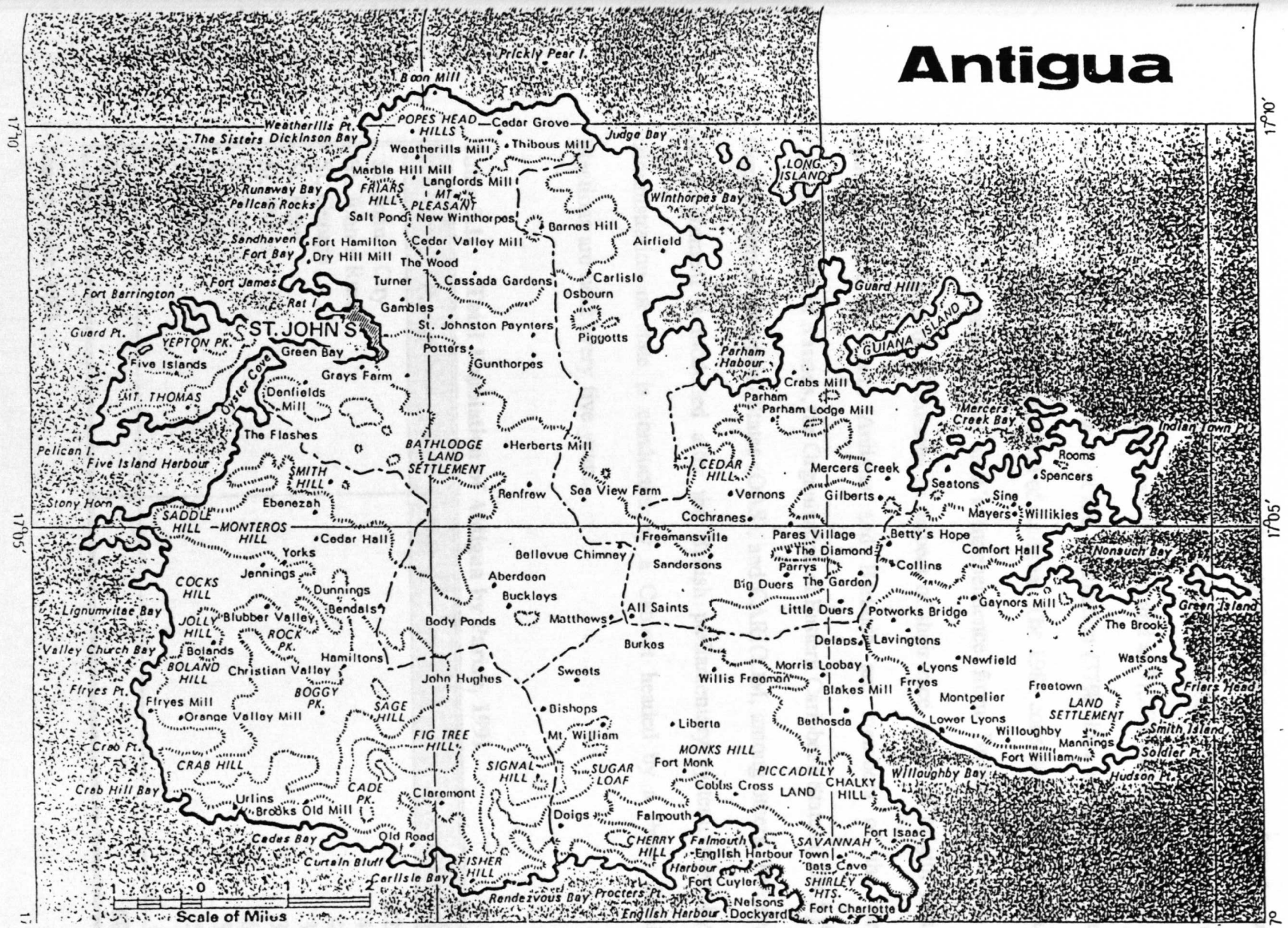
16. Co-education was introduced in many Caribbean territories in the 1970s along with the introduction of comprehensive secondary education. Unlike the UK where these schools are said to limit young women's educational chances, in Caribbean countries such as Barbados they are seen to stifle boys' academic abilities.

CHAPTER 3

Continuity and Change: Gender Differentiation and Women's Role in the Socio-Economic Development of Antigua[1]

From a discussion of gender stratification and women's participation in the regional development process, the analysis now shifts to Antigua, the focal area of this study. Since Emancipation in 1834, Antigua has undergone tremendous social, economic and political change. A major premise of this study is that the singular nature of political developments in Antigua, from the post-Emancipation village level fraternal community organisations through to the present patrimonial structure of the national government, have been fundamental to the shaping of women's insertion in Antiguan society.[2]

In exploring the significance of these political structures and their impact upon the level and status of women's participation in Antiguan development, this chapter will examine the specific characteristics of gender differentiation in Antigua looking at the changes over the past one hundred and sixty years. As in the previous chapter, the discussion is split into three historical periods. After a brief introduction, the first section looks at the period between Emancipation and 1939. This is followed by a detailed review of the era of burgeoning trade union activity and accession to internal self government between 1939-1967, and then by a comprehensive analysis of the ascendancy of the state in Antiguan life from 1967 onwards. The final section pulls together the discussion and presents an overview of the contemporary situation of women in Antigua.


Antigua
Prickly Pear I.
Boon Mill
Weatherills Pt.
The Sisters
Dickinson Bay
POPES HEAD HILLS
Cedar Grove
Weatherills Mill
Thibous Mill
Judge Bay
Marble Hill Mill
Langfords Mill
FRIARS HILL
MT PLEASANT
Runaway Bay
Pelican Rocks
Salt Pond
New Winthropes
Winthorpes Bay
LONG ISLAND
Barnes Hill
Airfield
Sandhaven
Fort Bay
Fort Hamilton
Dry Hill Mill
Cedar Valley Mill
The Wood
Fort James
Turner
Cassada Gardens
Carlisle
Guard Hill
Fort Barrington
Osbourn
Gambles
St. Johnston Paynters
Piggotts
GUIANA ISLAND
Guard Pt.
YEPTON PK.
ST. JOHN'S
Green Bay
Potters
Parham Habour
Five Islands
Gunthorpes
Grays Farm
Crabs Mill
Parham
Parham Lodge Mill
MT. THOMAS
Oyster Cove
Denfields Mill
Mercers Creek Bay
Indian Town Pt.
The Flashes
Pelican I.
Five Island Harbour
BATHLODGE LAND SETTLEMENT
Herberts Mill
CEDAR HILL
Rooms
Mercers Creek
Spencers
SMITH HILL
Renfrew
Sea View Farm
Vernons
Gilberts
Seatons
Sine
Stony Horn
Ebenezah
Mayers
Willikies
SADDLE HILL
MONTEROS HILL
Cochranes
Cedar Hall
Freemansville
Pares Village
Betty's Hope
Yorks
Bellevue Chimney
The Diamond
Comfort Hall
Nonsuch Bay
Jennings
Sandersons
Parrys
Collins
Aberdeen
COCKS HILL
Dunnings
Big Duers
The Garden
Buckleys
Gaynors Mill
Lignumvitae Bay
Bendals
All Saints
Little Duers
Potworks Bridge
Green Island
JOLLY HILL
Blubber Valley
Body Ponds
Matthews
The Brook
ROCK PK.
Delaps
Lavingtons
Valley Church Bay
Bolands
Burkes
Newfield
Watsons
Hamiltons
BOLAND HILL
Christian Valley
Sweets
Morris Loobey
Lyons
Willis Freeman
Blakes Mill
Freetown
Friers Head
Flryes Pt.
BOGGY PK.
John Hughes
Flryes
Montpelier
Flryes Mill
SAGE HILL
Bishops
LAND SETTLEMENT
Orange Valley Mill
Liberta
Bethesda
Lower Lyons
Willoughby
Smith Island
FIG TREE HILL
Mt. William
Mannings
Crab Pt.
MONKS HILL
Fort William
Soldier Pt.
CRAB HILL
Fort Monk
SIGNAL HILL
SUGAR LOAF
PICCADILLY
Willoughby Bay
Hudson Pt.
Crab Hill Bay
CADE PK.
Cobbs Cross
LAND
CHALKY HILL
Urlins
Claremont
Brooks Old Mill
Doigs
Falmouth
Fort Isaac
Cades Bay
Old Road
CHERRY HILL
Falmouth Harbour
English Harbour
SAVANNAH
Town
Curtain Bluff
FISHER HILL
Bats Cave
Carlisle Bay
Fort Cuyler
SHIRLEY HTS.
Rendezvous Bay
Procters Pt.
Nelsons Dockyard
English Harbour
Fort Charlotte
1 0 1
Scale of Miles
17°10'
17°05'
61°50'
61°45'

Introduction:

The unitary sovereign democratic state of Antigua and Barbuda is part of the Leeward Island chain of the Lesser Antilles in the Eastern Caribbean. The territories have a combined population of approximately 61,000, and at 31,204 women constitute just over half of the total.[3] Almost all of the population (37% alone in the capital city of St. John's) inhabit the larger island of Antigua. The 1981 constitution of Antigua and Barbuda, which marked the state's independence from Britain, guarantees the fundamental rights of all citizens in respect of their race, place of origin, political opinion, creed and sex. Antigua and Barbuda are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)[4], the Organisation of American States (OAS), and CARICOM, among others. The system of government is modelled after the British parliamentary system, whereby the administration of state is conducted by a Cabinet headed by a Prime Minister. Elections are held every five years.

Table 3.1: Total Population of Antigua by Parish, 1991

Parish	No. of Residents
St. John's City	22342
St. John's Rural	14376
St. George	4514
St. Peter	3633
St. Philip	3109
St. Paul	6193
St. Mary	5428
Barbuda	1252
Total	**60847**

Source: Rooke 1993

Prior to the 1930s there was no industry in Antigua other than sugar, and to a lesser extent cotton. With the virtual ending of the sugar industry in 1972, Antigua moved to almost total dependence upon tourism and the service sector for economic development. According to CARICOM socio-economic indicators, Antigua was at an intermediate stage of development in 1986.[5] However, having moved from a per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of US$100 in 1950 to a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US$3582 in 1987, Antigua has one of the region's highest economic growth rates in the 1980s, averaging 8% per annum (Augelli 1953:363; UNDP 1989).

Decolonisation, the transfer of political power to the majority African-Caribbean population, the switch in focus from agriculture to the manufacturing/service sectors of the economy, the expansion of educational opportunities, and the growth of the public sector have all had serious ramifications for the participation of African-Caribbean women and men in social and economic life. In addition to generating new employment opportunities and sources of income, the changes have led to a transformation in lifestyles and expectations. Many, including women, have benefited from the changes.

3.1 1834-1939: Full Emancipation With No Representation - New Communities and the Growth of Fraternal Political Associations

Antigua was settled in 1632 by Europeans, and like other Caribbean territories the colonial economy was dominated by sugar and slavery, under the social, economic and

political control of a white plantocracy. Slavery ended in 1834, and after two centuries of local plantocratic Colonial Assembly rule, Antigua became a Crown Colony in 1868, governed by a Leeward's Islands Federal Council (from 1871) and a national Legislative Council. The latter was comprised of twenty four white males, half of whom were nominated by the Governor, usually from among members of landed and business interests. Black Antiguans were completely locked out of the political structures (Richards 1965:8).

Table 3.2: Rough Estimates of the Antigua and Barbuda Population, 1817 - 1834

Year	Antigua			Barbuda		
	White	Free Coloured	Slave	White	Free Coloured	Slave
1817	2,100	2,200	31,500	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1834	2,000	4,000	29,100	-	-	0,500

Source: D. Hall 1971:8.

At Emancipation, Antigua was split into three distinct race and class groupings. At the top was a small white elite of planters and government civil servants who continued to control the political and economic structures in Antigua. In the middle was a larger group of Coloured women and men, some of them reasonably well to do. The majority of the African-Caribbean population of ex-slaves were at the bottom. Originally, Coloureds were the progeny of white masters and slave women (and any of the Coloured population's own children born subsequently). Many of the white master-fathers had freed these 'mixed-race' children at their birth, and some had even

made provision for their educational and economic well being. Being free, they were of higher status than the slaves, and some used their independent status and the educational opportunities provided by their fathers to establish themselves as merchants or professionals in the community. The children of these Free Coloureds were often also manumitted, and the numbers of this group grew. By Emancipation Free Coloureds constituted 11% of the population of Antigua and Barbuda.

While the majority Black population continued to be locked out of the political elite and political life, Coloureds became involved in the voting process and campaigned vigorously for their political rights. After Emancipation, although they were generally excluded from representation in the government by stringent landholding and civil service regulations, many Coloureds were quite well off in comparison to Black Antiguans. Not bothering with Black working class concerns, the Coloureds aligned themselves with the whites and tried to effect constitutional changes through petitioning. In the main they were unsuccessful, and they too remained largely unrepresented in the political process.[6] This general situation obtained until 1936, when moderate constitutional reforms saw the beginning of representative government in Antigua, with Coloured and Black middle class representatives being elected onto the Legislative Council. Mass participation in the political structures was not feasible even at this time, for in 1937 only 7% of the population were able to meet the financial requirements necessary for eligibility to vote (Henry 1985: 85).

Emancipation may not have brought political representation for Black Antiguans, but it did lead to the establishment of free primary education for children of the ex-slave population. However, from the beginning of the colonial mass education policy in the 1840s, gender, race and class stratification was built into the system in Antigua, and until 1950 the educational policy served to reproduce the racial and social hierarchies and the gender inequities established in both metropolitan and colonial society. The church-run co-educational schools for ex-slave children emphasised the acquisition of elementary education, consisting of the three "R's" and basic skills. There were no trade or vocational schools for Black adults to expand or enhance their skills.

The expansion into secondary education in the 1890's introduced single sex grammar schools. Secondary education was generally provided for boys and girls of the upper and middle classes. Here the clear divisions and distinctions in Antigua based on colour, class and sex were reinforced by the curriculum. Upper class white boys were trained for the professions and for senior posts in the colonial administration, while middle class White and Coloured boys received a second grade education preparing them for commercial life and the civil service. The education of middle and upper class White and Coloured girls emphasized social skills and a general education. Together with the tremendous class and colour restrictions, the high fees and the cost of text books and uniforms put secondary education beyond the reach of the majority Black population. Even if their parents could have afforded the fees, most Black children were excluded by the fact that these schools were restricted to children born in wedlock, not the norm in Antigua then or now.[7]

Nor did the economic condition of the Black Antiguans alter significantly after the cessation of slavery. Emancipation had made them free to be poor, despite the fact that Antiguan ex-slaves were the only group in the British Caribbean colonies to be granted full freedom and the ability to work for wages immediately after Emancipation. In all the other territories, adult ex-slaves had to serve a period of apprenticeship whereby they remained bonded to their former slave estates and masters for four to six years. The apprentices had to give just over forty free hours of labour to their former masters each week in return for food, clothing, housing and medical care.[8] The apprenticeship system arose because masters feared that the ex-slaves would withdraw from the plantation labour force *en masse* and destroy the colonial economy and the planters livelihoods.

Antiguan planters voted confidently against apprenticeship for two pragmatic reasons. First, they were confident that with full Emancipation most former slaves would not be able to withdraw from waged plantation employment. This was because there was little unoccupied cultivable land outside the plantations for ex-slaves to move onto as independent farmers of food or cash crops.[9] Second, the planters felt that the wages they could offer to the employed individuals would cost them less than if they had to financially maintain all the ex-slave population over the apprenticeship period. So rejecting the apprenticeship system, the planters took their compensation from the Crown for the slaves in their possession on the eve of Emancipation, and put the cost of reproduction of the labour force squarely on the shoulders of the nascent African-Caribbean working class and their households.

To ensure that slaves did not withdraw from the labour force however, the planter-run Colonial Assembly promulgated a Contract Act in 1835 which forced ex-slaves to enter into written yearly contracts (terminated at one month's notice) with their former slave masters. Those who wished to continue to work on their former estates had to guarantee their labour for one year, and their tenancy in estate houses and use of estate land for food crop farming was tied to this contract. The wages were fixed at six English pennies (6d) per day. To constrain the ex-slaves entrepreneurial activities even further, the Assembly also passed licensing acts which restricted ex-slaves entry into merchandising, the preserve of the Free Coloureds (Hall 1971).

As testimony to the planters convictions, and as a result of their actions, most Antiguan ex-slaves did not resort to regional migration, although some did withdraw from the plantation labour force.[10] One reason was that as well as earning wages for all their labour time, the wages paid in Antigua were actually higher than those paid to day labourers in the other Leeward islands. Another important reason may have been the fact that after Emancipation, and with support from the colonial government, Black Antiguans started to settle in Independent Villages away from the estates. The first village of Liberta was established in 1835, and from 1837 the colonial administration, against the wishes of the planters, supported the establishment of these village communities by making small plots of former Crown land available to the ex-slaves. With few Blacks having sufficient money to buy land, and many wishing to escape the strictures of the plantations, this policy would have enabled families to keep together and may have influenced the decision of ex-slaves to remain.

With Emancipation, and immediate access to wages and land, many ex-slaves were able to settle into stable communities. By 1846, there were over 9,000 people living in the Independent Villages throughout the island, with attendant parish churches and elementary schools (Hall:1971:49). However:

> *"...in dem days, man and woman married when them old, so nega man wedding was far and few between..."* (Smith and Smith 1986:120)

Family units continued as under slavery to consist mainly of women and their children. Marriage was often based on men's ability to provide a home for a wife and children, which would have been very difficult for the average Antiguan man during those times.

Blacks continued to be marginalised economically, relying almost totally on the sugar estates (and the terms and conditions set by the planters) for their livelihood. The free villages had little cultivable land, the size and quality of the plots only really enabling the cultivation of food crops. The villages remained largely residential, and in the main residents had to sell their labour for wages. The amount of land made available for the resettlement programme was not sufficient for all ex-slaves and by 1846, only 30% of the ex-slave population were in these enclaves (Hall 1971:49).

The mass of the population remained tied to their former estates and utilised the labourers' provision grounds on the estates to grow crops.[11] These lands were granted by the estate and the type of crop grown often determined by the owner. In the case of a cash crop the owner also acted as agent for the tenants in delivery of cane to the

factories and in the distribution of payments after the sale (Augelli 1953:363), and:

> *"...after the nega reap the cane, the estate owner use to collect the money for it from the factory and pay the croppers what the owners decide was enough."* (Smith 1986:129)

Many workers responded to their lack of power over working conditions by unorganized acts of burning cane fields and unofficial labour stoppages. However, alongside these spontaneous and often individual acts of protest there was a parallel growth of unofficial but organised and politicised groups to articulate worker concerns regarding their marginal economic position, poor standard of living and lack of political representation.

These organisations grew out of the nineteenth century benefit lodges and friendly societies established in Antigua since before Emancipation. In the Caribbean these associations had been started by church groups for the moral advancement of their flock. The strong presence of church and missionary societies in Antigua prior to Emancipation presaged the development of the lodges and societies, and by 1828 seventeen such organisations had been established. The villagization process in Antigua was accompanied by the growth in size of these community-based organisations, and by 1842 over twelve and a half thousand people had joined (Hall 1971:49).

In England friendly societies were mainly constituted of male members. This was not the case in Antigua where membership came from both sexes (Wells and Wells

1953:7). Despite this, these organisations took their lead from the patriarchal fraternal European groups they were modelled upon which, *"...emphasized hierarchy, loyalty and unquestioned male leadership"* (McKenzie 1986:68). Both Richards (1965) and Carmody (1978) note that these societies were powerful social and political forces amongst Black Antiguans in providing leadership for collective action. These organisations laid the foundations for later trade unions, and in fact many union leaders emerged from the leadership of the lodge societies.[12]

3.2 1939 - 1967: Free At Last? The Birth of a Black Political Elite and the Transition to Self-Government

As in other Caribbean territories, the 1930s in Antigua was a period of economic depression and widespread labour unrest. In the late 1930s, Antigua was visited by two Commissions of Enquiry which were established by the British government to look into the so-called 'hurricane of protest' in the Caribbean. One of the primary recommendations of the first Commission was the establishment of a Trades Union to represent the workers (Orde Browne 1939:103). To avoid further insurrection, the colonial administration heeded the recommendations and supported the participation of the British Trade Union Congress' (TUC) involvement in establishing a visible, structured and orderly workers' organisation. The intent of this policy was to register the workers into a union, with an organisational platform to deal with the welfare concerns and professionalization of the black working population. The administration hoped that national issues such as wages could be dealt with through the establishment of a Labour Board and an officer specifically employed to deal with localised labour

problems (Orde Browne 1939:104) Partly as a response to the counsel of the British TUC, but more importantly perhaps as a culmination of other organisational activities in Antigua at that time, the Antigua Trade and Labour Union (AT&LU) was formed in January 1939.[13] The first leader of the union was Reginald Stevens, but after 1943 V.C. Bird took over the reins of power and has held them ever since.

The AT&LU brought together male and female urban and rural wage workers, farmers, domestics, and lower middle class tradesmen. From its inception, the goals of the union were economic - to increase wages and to better the working conditions of the labourers. The AT&LU also fought for land tenure rights for workers and the right to be the sole representative of workers in negotiations with management. Between 1940 and 1941, the AT&LU initiated a series of go-slows and strikes in their fight to have a say in the organisation of work. The major AT&LU-led strikes of 1946, 1948 and 1951 were critical in breaking the monopoly of power of the planter/factory/merchant syndicate. These strikes were island-wide and produced calls for Boards of Enquiry into the sugar industry, resulting in recommendations with important consequences for the future of sugar, the AT&LU, and the emerging economy of Antigua. The 1946 strike brought an end to the system of cutting cane by the line, and the introduction of a system of rotation on the docks. The 1948 strike saw the establishment of the closed shop arrangement in work places in Antigua. The seven month strike in 1951 over tenancy rights agreements brought an agreement between the AT&LU, the estates and government for the acquisition of substantial amounts of marginal plantation land by government to be leased to workers.

In 1951, along with other constitutional changes, universal adult suffrage with no income qualifications was introduced. The political arm of the AT&LU (later called the Antigua Labour Party) contested the elections and gained control of all the elected seats on the Legislative Council and leadership of the newly established local ministerial committees. Thus the AT&LU came to provide the national level political leadership over the internal government machinery in direct opposition to the Antigua Sugar Estates plantocracy which experienced a concomitant decline in power, politically and economically. Labour had therefore established the very first working class led political party in the region, and the party grew - not around members of a foreign educated professional elite or local middle class leaders (as occurred in many other Caribbean territories) but around grassroots rural leaders and mostly working class trade union activists of the AT&LU.[14]

In the early years the AT&LU was consistent in its approach to members' struggles and took action on behalf of all members. For instance, in 1948 the AT&LU picketed the business place of a merchant who had dismissed a domestic help who was a member of the union. Although they eventually lost the case, it is evidence that the AT&LU advocated rights for working women (Richards 1965:45). In 1955 the AT&LU became involved in a lengthy legal case with a drug store over the dismissal of a female clerk. The case went all the way to the Privy Council in London. Again the AT&LU lost the specific case of re-instatement, but they won the larger battle in that the judges allowed clerks to be members of the Union.

While the AT&LU was active in trying to upgrade women and men's wages, women (by virtue of their sex) were paid less than men. The sex related differential in wage levels were not an issue for the AT&LU. In 1951 wages on the sugar estates increased from 20c - 24c per day in 1939 to $1.32 and $1.92 for men, and from 12c to 72c per day for women (Richards 1965:31). The movement of the AT&LU into politics was to ensure that the needs of the African-Caribbean majority were represented in the social and economic planning of the island and to effect a more equitable distribution of wealth on the island. Women were not a part of the AT&LU power structure, and despite their claim to represent the majority, the exclusion of women from the seat of power in the AT&LU and the political structures continued to be accepted without question.[15]

After accession to power in 1951, the newly elected labourist government undertook a programme of expansion of public and social services to redress some of the ills of the colonial administration. Along with negotiations for land rights and higher wages, the government introduced annual holidays with pay, sick leave, workmen's compensation, and pension schemes for government workers and civil servants. The government also initiated an extensive public works building programme. The Post Office and the public administration buildings were constructed and the airport expanded and modernized. Piped water and electricity were brought to the villages and the government established a Labour Welfare Fund Committee to operate a scheme of nationalised housing throughout the island, based on the provisions of long term loans.

The new labourist government also invested heavily in public education. Up to 1954 the educational system was limited to a range of free co-educational elementary schools and a tiny private secondary school sector in which barely 3% of the population could gain a place. Only 60% of Antiguan children enrolled in school attended on a regular basis, many pupils dropped out or failed to attend due to the need to work and contribute to the family income (McKenzie 1986:70).

By the mid-1950s secondary education for the working classes began to materialize as promised by the Labour government. Together with increases in primary school provision, the first government secondary school was opened in the 1955, followed by four others in the early 1960s (Bird 1981:26).

Table 3.3: Population Aged 10 and Over, by Educational Level Attained and Sex, 1960

Educational Level	Women N =	*Women %*	Men N =	*Men %*	Total N =
Professional	40	*30.0*	93	*70.0*	**133**
Secondary	2708	*55.6*	2161	*44.4*	**4869**
Primary only	17066	*54.9*	14030	*45.1*	**31096**
None or < 2 yrs.	574	*54.1*	487	*45.9*	**1061**
Unstated	378	*50.1*	376	*49.9*	**754**
10+ Pop. N=	**20766**	***54.8***	**17147**	**45.2**	**37913**
(Total Antiguan Population)	***(28830)***		***(25230)***		***(50460)***

Source: West Indies Population Census, Census of Antigua, 1960 Vol II:28

In 1960, only 68% of Antiguan women and 64% of men had achieved both primary and secondary education. By 1970, the comparative figures were 83.5% and 80.8% respectively. Although the figures are not directly comparable, due to the fact that Table 3.3 records data pertaining to the population aged ten and over, while Table 3.4 records information for the total population, it appears that the period between 1960 and 1970 saw a shift towards better educational access for men. In 1970 men were 80% of those with University education, and constituted the greater proportion of those with secondary, college and vocational education. The expansion of the educational system also helped entrench accepted gender stereotypes. A gender bias in the curriculum of schools saw girls being geared towards less scientific/technical training such as domestic science or needlecraft and typing.

Table 3.4 : Total Population by Education Level Attained and Sex, 1970

Educational level	**Women N=**	***Total %***	**Men N=**	***Total %***	**Total**
None	4896	*50.6*	4767	*49.4*	9663
Primary and below	27404	*53.8*	23504	*46.2*	50908
Secondary	1173	*49.3*	1207	*50.1*	2380
College	249	*47.4*	276	*52.6*	525
University	62	*19.6*	255	*80.4*	317
Vocational	220	*42.0*	303	*58.0*	523
Other	34	*41.5*	48	*58.5*	82
Not Stated	167	*42.2*	229	*57.8*	396
Total	**34205**	***(52.8)***	**30589**	***(47.2)***	**64794**

Source: Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics Division 1976 : 12

All of this social investment on the part of the government meant an increase in the number of workers in the public sector. One of the first things the government did at this time was to introduce a category of 'non-established' workers, civil servants appointed by the political directorate to expand the national component of the Civil Service. Armed with improved academic achievements, the public sector provided a conduit for many to enter into the formal labour force, especially women.

Table 3.5 : Classifiable Labour Force age 14* and over by Employer and Sex, 1960 - 1970

Employer	1960		1970	
	women	men	women	men
Government	777	2270	1599	2916
Private	5731	8700	7193	11359
subtotal	*6508*	*10970*	*8792*	*14275*
Total	**17478**		**23067**	
Total % of labour force in Gov't employment	*11.9*	*20.7*	*18.2*	*20.4*
	17.4		***19.6***	

*These figures can only indicate trends and cannot be used comparatively as the base year for the population likely to be in the labour force differs with each decade. In 1960 the classifiable labour force were aged over 15 years, and in 1970 they were aged over 14 years.

Source: West Indies Population Census, Census of Antigua 1960 Vol II:103; Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics Division 1976: 7

Workers in the public service expanded from 3,047 in 1960 (25.5% female), to 4,515 government workers in 1970 (35.4% female). Employment opportunities for women in the public sector tended to be concentrated in nursing, teaching and

clerical professions. Systemic gender discrimination was present in the employment policies of the nationalist labour government. For example, up to 1960 women teachers were discriminated against as male teachers were sent abroad to be trained (often in mathematics and sciences) while most women teachers were trained locally, often in traditional female subjects such as home economics and needlework (Benjamin 1989).

The government also invested in the service and manufacturing sectors to spur employment and economic development. 'Lewis' style economic growth-oriented theories and models of development gained currency in almost all Caribbean countries in the 1950s, and Antigua was quick to effect changes in the economic orientation of the island. Rather than relying solely on exporting agricultural produce to metropolitan markets, the aim was to lure those same metropolitan consumers to Antiguan shores either as tourists or industrial investors. However, instead of the emergence of a strong private capitalist grouping leading economic development, as envisaged by Lewis, this period marked the beginning of what has become a major element of the post-colonial Antiguan state, a policy of state capitalism.

The 1936 - 1967 years saw the Antiguan state become not only a representative of the labour movement, but also a major employer, industrial entrepreneur and venture capitalist. Starting with the nationalisation of the Antigua Electrical Service in 1943 and the subsequent acquisition of agricultural land to lease to peasants in

1951, state ownership was extended to all the productive sectors of the economy. The interventionist policy of the state came by default rather than design, mainly as a result of the declining importance of agriculture as an employer of waged labour, and the labour government's commitment to that labour force.

The post-war period witnessed a decline in those willing to work as agricultural labourers, whereas before the war almost all of the employed population had worked in the sugar industry. By 1960, agriculture accounted for 5,438 (31.1%) of those gainfully employed in the labour force, down from 7,986 (42.9%) in 1946 (V. Richards 1981:21).

Table 3.6: Percentage Share of Major Sectors in GDP in Antigua, 1953 - 1970

Sector	1953	1962	1970
Export Agriculture	31.0	10.8	3.0
Other Agriculture	11.5	5.1	-
Manufacturing	2.1	2.7	2.8
Construction	9.2	20.1	23.4
Distribution	11.6	19.5	18.7
Transport	3.5	3.7	4.0
Services/Hotels	9.4	12.4	25.5
Rent of Dwelling	5.3	7.2	6.5
Government	16.4	18.7	16.1
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Henry 1985: 130

This situation was exacerbated by the declining importance of export agriculture for the generation of national wealth, which dropped from 31% of GDP in 1953 to only 3% by 1970. After a severe drought in 1964 the Antigua Sugar Company was forced into receivership and to protect jobs, the government took over the sugar

industry and found themselves in control of all the productive agricultural land in Antigua at a time when few wanted to continue working the land.

Women and men were moving into the burgeoning manufacturing and service sectors of the economy, and after 1950 government resources formerly committed to agriculture were also transferred to these sectors. In fact much of the initial investment into the manufacturing and tourist industry in Antigua was government sponsored. Between 1950 and 1952 the government passed ordinances to provide incentives to persons declaring an interest in establishing industrial and resort development. In 1952 an Industrial Development Board was set up to help diversify the island's economy away from its dependence on sugar. In spite of their increasing contribution to the GDP, neither tourism, services, manufacturing, construction nor government employment could create sufficient employment opportunities to fill the gap left by agriculture. The result was that unemployment rose from 4.7% in 1946 to 12.7% in 1960, and upwards to 17.3% in 1970 (Challenger 1981).

Although government economic policies, in combination with the expansion of public sector employment enabled women to access career opportunities in ways not previously possible, the decline of the agricultural sector closed traditional areas of women's employment, especially for older less well educated women. In 1961, women constituted 60% of paid and unpaid agricultural workers in Antigua (West Indies Census of Agriculture 1961:19). Any shifts in policy on the part of

government would necessarily affect them more gravely, and between 1960 and 1970, the percentage of women in the agricultural labour force declined from 40% to 30%. Actual numbers of women working in agriculture declined by almost 1500 (West Indies Population Census 1960: 99-102; Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics Division 1976: 5).

Table 3.7: Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex, 1960 - 1983

Employment Status	1960		1970		1983	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Total pop.	28830	25230	34205	30589	N.A.	N.A.
Pop. 14+*	17266	13640	20104	16460	29043	25859
Labour force	6726	11428	8792	14275	12214	18629
employed	*5932*	*9918*	*6882*	*12203*	*10294*	*14115*
unemployed	*794*	*1510*	*1910*	2070	*1920*	*4514*
labour force participation rate	58.7		63		56.1	
Women as % of the labour force	37		38.1		39.6	
Men as a % of	63		61.9		60.4	
% of the 14+ pop. in the labour force	38.9	83.7	43.7	86.7	42.0	72.0
Employed labour force participation rate	88.2	86.7	78.3	85.5	84.3	75.8
Unemployment rate	11.8	13.3	21.7	14.5	15.7	24.2
Overall Unemployment	12.7		17.3		20.85	

* These figures can only indicate trends and cannot be used comparatively as the base year for the population likely to be in the labour force differs with each decade. In 1960 the base population was 15+, in 1970 it was 14+ and in 1983 it was 16+.

Source: West Indies Population Census, Census of Antigua 1960; Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics Division 1976; UNECLAC Report on Economic Activity in the Caribbean 1987

In 1960, the labour force comprised 58.7% of the population aged over fifteen. Women were 55% of the over fifteen population, and 37% of the total labour force. By 1970, the labour force comprised 63% of the total population aged over fourteen, and women were 38% of the total. In spite of these increases, unemployment among men and women had risen by almost 5% overall, and female unemployment rates went from 11.8% to 21.7% - a drastic increase when compared with the rise of just 1.2% in the male unemployment rate. These rising unemployment trends notwithstanding, the immediate post-war era was a time of momentous social and political developments, and for women and men the years between 1939 and 1967 were a period of significant social advancement.

These years were marked by changes in the class configuration of Antiguan society. Until the 1950s the social structure in Antigua had reflected the relation between colour, class and gender that typified colonial Caribbean societies, pyramidically structured with a small white colonial elite at the top, a slightly larger group of Coloureds in the middle, and the majority Black population at the base. Women were integrated into the different categories according to their colour and race, but were always subordinate to men in the same category. Paget Henry (1985:189) postulates that this pluralist society collapsed in Antigua after 1966 when the colonial white group left. Society became dominated by an African-Caribbean cultural system, and class membership was no longer based primarily on race, but upon access to the productive sectors of the economy, to education, and to a position in the political elite.[16]

Access to financial and political power was now the enabling factor allowing people to shift between the various strata of the new and less rigidly defined social structure. Unlike previously where white colonialists controlled the political and economic structures, there developed a split between the economic and the political elite, one owning the means of production and the other controlling the formal instruments of power. The Antiguan political elite was now drawn from Black working class males, and the economic elite mainly comprised of white North American male entrepreneurs, along with a few locals - mostly of Middle Eastern origin. The North Americans invested in the tourist sector and the local Middle Eastern entrepreneurs in merchandising and small hotels. Local Black involvement in the economic elite group also increased, comprised of a few wealthy black entrepreneurs, some professionals and members of the political elite. The middle class came to be comprised of an urban elite of working class origins. African-Caribbean people who had managed to take advantage of the new educational provisions as well as the political and economic developments of this period constituted the majority of this group. Women comprised a fair proportion of the middle classes, not as wives but in their own right, having used their academic achievements and acquired business acumen to establish themselves. They still formed no part of the political elite.

The political developments of the post-war period saw no break in the male domination of political and economic structures in the country. Foreign capital still controlled most of the productive sectors of the economy, but instead of white

colonialists a small group of Black Antiguan AT&LU executives held political power in the country. At the eve of accession to associate statehood, dissatisfaction with the monopoly of power by the union/party elite and calls for more participatory political involvement began to surface. It was this dissatisfaction with exclusion from the political elite that ushered in the next phase of Antiguan development.

3.3 1967 - 1990: State Hegemony, Political Factionalism and the Emergence of the Patrimonial State

The period dating from 1967 was inaugurated by Antigua's accession to the semi-autonomous status of associate statehood. This status provided the Antiguan government with responsibility for domestic affairs, while control of foreign affairs and defence remained firmly with the British government. Between 1939 and 1967 the AT&LU/ALP coalition had been the sole representative of labour and the only political power after 1951. AT&LU executives were ministers of government, and the president of the AT&LU became Premier of Antigua in 1967. In the same year, some executive members of the union-party collective questioned the ability of the government to effectively represent Union members in labour disputes with the government. They demanded a break in the oligarchic system of union-party rule, insisting that the new government could not wear two hats at the same time.

The refusal of the majority of the AT&LU/ALP executive to separate the two functions led to a split in the government and a purge of the dissident members. This

was followed by the establishment of an alternative union, the Antigua Workers Union (AWU) and its associated political party the Progressive Labour Movement (PLM), and four other political parties. Between 1967 and 1971, the AWU/PLM coalition launched an extremely combative and successful political campaign against the ALP/AT&LU collective and against policies which were seen as increasing foreign economic domination of the economy, culminating in the election to power of a PLM government in 1971.

Unfortunately for the PLM, their stewardship of the country came at a time of mounting economic crisis. The collapsing sugar industry was shut down in 1972. A disastrous earthquake in 1974 caused EC$10 million dollars worth of damage. The economic recession in Europe and North America kept tourists away and foreign investors' fear of the avowedly anti-foreign investor policies of the early PLM government caused the economy to stagnate further. By 1976, the year of the next election, unemployment was reportedly as high as 40% (Challenger 1981:15). Labour dissatisfaction and a heavily personalized political campaign saw the PLM voted out in 1976, and the ALP/AT&LU consortium back in power. Since then no other party has dented the ALP's hold on power and at the last election in 1989 the ALP won 15 of the 17 parliamentary seats.[17]

Despite this ALP grip on state power, Antiguan politics are marked by an extreme degree of political factionalism. People support and vote according to personal ties, and:

> *"...formal organisational structures notwithstanding...the political parties are held together by an informal pattern of personalized loyalties to maximum leaders, past or present* " (Stone in Henry 1989:5).

The result of these personalized political activities has been the development of a patron-client relationship between the party leaders and the electorate which enables access to the power structure through informal channels and networks. Favours are allegedly granted according to party support - whether it be a new road in a constituency or a job in the state enterprises. In fact, while awarding such favours may fall within budgetary allocations, the manner of their dispensation imbues the dispenser with a power beyond their formal position.

This is not a political construct unique to Antigua, political patronage being part of the profile of all governments. In small countries, however, access to resources are often through the actions of the political elite and the patron-client relationship is brought into sharper focus. What makes Antigua unique is the way in which the same tight male oligarchy have held onto power for so long, resulting in the personalization of posts within the state apparatus and a highly polarized political life in the country. Carmody contends that it is the small size of the islands and the closely connected political and personal networks which accounts for the intensity of the political conflict and the highly paternalistic and personalized style of government (Carmody 1978:105). Henry specifies the 1967 split in the party as inaugurating the increasing visibility of political clientelism between party and supporters (Henry 1985:159).

Whatever the cause, Antiguan political life turns on the actions of the ALP and its charismatic leader, V.C. Bird Snr. In the period of one-party dominance between 1951-1967, all the functions of power in Antiguan society were accumulated by the Bird faction of the AT&LU. By 1967, Bird Snr. was the 'maximum' leader, Premier of Antigua, president of the ALP and leader of the AT&LU. By 1976, after the brief interregnum of PLM rule, one of Bird's son's became a minister in the government (the other joining the government in 1980 - only to be forced to stand down ten years later after a judicial enquiry into his financial dealings). Vere Bird Snr. is now in his eighties and the son who is still a minister is looked upon as the most likely successor to position of state Premier. Antigua has become a patrimonial state in which the political machinery is in the control of the male members of one particular family, and the distribution of political capital has become part of the largesse of the state.

To paraphrase Henry (1989), the Antiguan union/party-based elite has translated political power into a form of social capital which can be accumulated and, if necessary, converted into political capital, which can then transmitted to friends and relatives. While not referring specifically to Antigua, Greene (1975:203) notes that when the party and government become indistinguishable, the organisation of the party can lead to a strengthening of the hierarchical and ideological factors of control over society at large. How much more is this the case when the party, government and members of one family are inter-changeable. Antiguan state power is not only hegemonic but recreates and reinforces the historically constructed gendered characteristics of the wider society.

Women and their concerns are generally outside the male dominated political network. Since the inception of party politics in Antigua there have been no women Members of Parliament or women Cabinet ministers, and by 1990 only three women had been appointed as Senators. This should not obscure the fact that women are deeply integrated into political life in Antigua as factional supporters of the different parties. In both the AT&LU and AWU, female members compose about 60% of the membership, and both organisations admit the critical strength of women's support, especially in terms of increasing membership and raising funds.[18] While women have been active in the union since the 1930s there is little official recognition of the signal contributions they have made and a general dearth of reliable data on women activists.

The first woman to gain a position on the executive of a union or party was Mildred Bayley in 1956. When the Women's Auxiliary of the AT&LU was started in 1973 she was elected head. Of the thirty two AT&LU executive members in 1989, six were women, two at Vice-President level (concerned with Welfare). In 1968 the AWU passed a resolution giving women equal status in the union and in 1972, the AWU formed a Women's Council. Although there had been a woman on the AWU executive since its formation, of the eighty six people who have held executive membership between 1967 and 1987 only fourteen have been women. In 1989 only five of the twenty three members elected onto the executive were women. However, out of the sixteen members on the 1988 Welfare Committee of the AWU, fourteen

were women.

Only two of the political parties which have stood the test of time in the very turbulent post-1967 Antiguan political situation have women's sections. The ALP established a Women's Action Group in 1975 as a charitable organisation to help poorer women members. Much of the work centres around fund raising for the mainstream organisation, or social welfare work such as child care, visiting the sick and aged, and providing traditional types of vocational education for women, such as jam-making. The Antigua-Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM), a small revolutionary socialist political activist party started in 1980, also has a women's branch. Like the Women's Council of the AWU, the ACLM has developed training facilities which provide poorer women with skills for income generation and decision making. However, the focus of their activities goes far beyond the social welfare goals of the other organisations and tries to deal with conceptual problems of gender subordination in the social structure.

Outside the ACLM, in which Arah Hector held a senior position on the executive before her untimely death in 1989, no woman has held a major post in any of the other unions or parties. As delegates to the annual conferences of these organisations women outnumber men, but as of 1990 few were on the executives and fewer still had been nominated for any senior position. Those on the executive were mainly confined to representation on social welfare or educational committees. The General Secretary of the AWU indicated that this absence of women at high levels was

explained by women's own lack of confidence and their general distrust of female ability to lead.[19]

However, it is factors other than women's perceptions of each other that keep women out. First, the political arena is treated like an exclusive men's club. As noted earlier, the political process in Antigua has meant the entrenchment of certain men in positions of leadership. This has resulted in the monopolization of control of the candidate selection process by the leadership. Nominations are generally from among the social networks of this group of men. Second, women's participation at prominent levels in the political arena is also constrained by the conflictual, aggressive and litigious nature of party politics in Antigua since 1967. Only the most brave women would wish to participate in the character bruising campaigns. Only three women have ever been on the hustings and all have lost their deposit.[20]

Party factionalism and the predominant male culture of the unions and the parties prevent women from going against the status quo. The tribalism of these organisations separate women from each other, women's consciousness often being obscured by the factionalism of the party/union grouping. Female political loyalty appears to be channelled into broader issues shaped by majority interests rather than specific gender issues. Rather than explicating women's lack of participation in politics by reasons of their supposed self doubt, we have to ask whether women are deliberately not entering the fray, and indeed if they have not found another way in which to use the political process as it is presently constituted in order to achieve their

objectives?

In this regard, the government's policy on women has been extremely interesting. The Antigua Women's Desk was established in 1980 and, has been extremely effective in influencing the government to amend or enact new legislation concerning women. Laws have been put on the statute books which help women in their role in the family, and which recognise the reality of low marriage rates and high birth rates outside marriage. In 1987 the government signed the Status of Children Act which eliminated the category of illegitimacy with reference to children, and also amended the Births and Deaths Act so that single mothers could put the father's name on the birth certificate. In 1986, the Interests Estate Act was passed allowing children born out of wedlock to share inheritance, even where the parent dies intestate. The pension laws for widows allow common-law wives to claim benefits in the same way as married wives (Jarvis 1987:37). The Social Security Act allows for thirteen weeks of maternity benefits, paid at the rate of 60% of earnings to affected employees (Antigua and Barbuda 1973:6). Although the Labour Code is silent on this agreement most employees grant the thirteen weeks, though not all pay the 40% of salary to make up the full salary (Benjamin 1989). Women are also paid a lump sum grant of EC$60 for each child.

To overcome decades of economic oppression of women and their treatment as second class citizens in the work force, the 1975 Antigua Labour Code set standards and requirements for the employment of women, young persons and children and

established the tenet of equal pay for equal work. While officially applied in the public sector, in the private sector women are concentrated into non-unionized areas of the economy and put up with wages and working conditions outside the scope of the Labour Code. To address some of these issues, in 1989 the government decided to amend the existing Labour Code so that it would be unlawful to treat women less favourably than men (Jacobs 1989:11).

In 1989 the government also ratified and signed the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Also for the first time, in 1989 women's specific needs were included in development planning signifying a recognition of the practical needs of women and the role of the Directorate in meeting those needs.[21] In 1990 the government agreed to bring before Cabinet a national Policy Document on Women in Development which is very strong in its advocacy of women's rights. The Policy Document stresses furthering the integration of women in the development process and recommends measures aimed at broadening the participation and contribution of women and girls in national life. Measures include a policy review of the structure of wages in both the public and private sector to ensure the implementation of the principle of equal opportunity, and to ensure that married and unmarried women benefit equally as do men from promotion prospects and other occupational fringe benefits. By acceding to the United Nations Convention and to the recommendations contained within the Policy Document for Women in Development in Antigua, Government is compelled to identify the areas of law, employment and organisational representation etc., which impede the goal of equity

and parity. All of these actions of Government have been taken despite there being no female Members of Parliament, and no women at the head of the two unions.

There is, however, a very dynamic Women's Directorate in Antigua whose Director possesses a strong network of social and political contacts. A major premise of this thesis is that the clientelistic nature of the political system has been of critical importance to the development of the Antiguan Women's Desk, the principal government organ for channelling aid to women in Antigua. At its establishment in 1980, the women's Desk started with a staff of one and no office to work from. It has now become a Directorate of Women's Affairs with a staff of fourteen, two office locations, and a substantial amount of land for constructing a Women's Affairs complex. Apart from paying for staff salaries and recurrent costs, the government also provides a relatively small grant of EC$10,000 to the Women's Desk to run projects. The upgrade from a Desk to a Directorate in 1989 brought a very slight increase in that annual grant. Despite this, the office has been able to carry out a series of activities unrivalled in the OECS, and probably in the wider Caribbean. [22]

The Directorate has carried out various projects including a research project on the lifestyle of women in Antigua and Barbuda, it has produced several magazines and newsletters and published two consumer guides and a child care manual. It has organised national workshops on stress management, health training, and physical abuse against children, together with weekly training courses in food preservation and preparation and sewing and a television programme focusing upon various aspects

of women's lives. The Directorate also runs a Sea Island cotton weaving project for women in conjunction with Partners of America who provide some funding. The cotton is provided free by the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in Antigua. Realising the urban orientation of most programmes the Directorate has tried to expand its work to the rural areas and is assisting the National Coordinating Council of Antiguan Women in a school project in a rural area.[23] In carrying out these projects the Directorate works very closely not only with local non-governmental women's organisations and receives tremendous support from the regional women's movement, the CARICOM Women's Office, and international funding agencies. [24] Since its inception thousands of women, from all socio-economic backgrounds from hucksters to Permanent Secretaries, have participated in programmes run by the Directorate.

The small government grant to the Directorate is used to produce literature and pay for equipment, office supplies and inputs for the various projects. Utilities and printing costs are provided free by the government and any funds from the income generating projects are funnelled back into the Directorate. The government grant is also substantially augmented by the financial grants and help in kind received from regional women's non-governmental organisations and international groups which enable the Directorate to carry out many of its projects.[25]

The ability to carry out such a large volume of activities is in part due to the dynamism of the Director and her adroit use of the media to keep the work of the

Directorate on the national agenda. More than this, the Director has been able to tap a network of personal contacts to access the echelons of power to support her many long and short term projects. She uses the patron-client network to get officials to make and keep promises. She has clearly identified the channels through which she can access resources and uses these skilfully.

The relative success of the Directorate of Women's Affairs is tempered by the knowledge that:

> *"How women perceive their interests, the issues on which they vote, the organisations to which they belong, the activities performed in such organisations and the demands they place on the political system, all partially inform us of a gender ideology operational in Caribbean society which provided the missing link between women's actual integration in political processes and their lack of control over the outcome of the processes."* (Clarke 1986:111)

That the Director has to use informal channels to access resources is indicative of the fact that the work of the Directorate is not integrated into the macro-planning process, except as an adjunct of the Education ministry in which it is located. The work of the Women's Directorate which focuses mainly on family life and traditional areas of women's integration into the economy and society are apparently not viewed as presenting a threat to the status quo of women's subordinated position.[26] Neither Emancipation, Associate Statehood nor independence brought any significant changes

in women's perceived role in Antiguan society.

Through the economic crises of the 1970s and early 1980s, the restructuring of the economy and the significant alterations in the form of women's labour force participation, women played no part the decision making processes of national government. The 1970s saw the collapse of the sugar industry with debts of EC$9 million. Around a thousand jobs were lost, along with the foreign exchange and government revenue losses (Carmody 1978:72). A double blow for the economy came in 1975 when another pillar of the industrial sector in the country closed, this time the petroleum refinery. As had occurred with the sugar factory in 1964, Government took over the refinery in order to save jobs, but the closure left the economy almost totally dependent upon tourism for income generation. The refinery had been set up ten years earlier with the hope that it would take the place of the rapidly declining sugar industry. However, by 1974 manufacturing in the form of export-oriented light electrical and garment manufacturing factories employed only 7% of the labour force (Antigua and Barbuda: Department of Statistics 1978:35).

The precipitous decline in agriculture and the continued poor performance of industry in the 1970s had a devastating effect on the already difficult employment situation. In 1960 there was 12.7% unemployment, growing to 17.3% in 1970, and in 1979 the official unemployment estimate was 20% (World Bank 1985a:2). The central government current account deficit for the public sector increased from 3.3% of GDP

in 1977 (EC$5.6 million) to 7.5% of GDP (EC$16.6 million) in 1970 (Henry 1985:149). To make matters worse, in 1977 Government abolished personal income tax (a campaign promise) shifting the burden of taxation disproportionately onto the shoulders of the working class through increases in indirect taxation. Private remittances from relatives became a stable and important source of foreign receipts equivalent to 49% of merchandise exports in 1977 (Challenger 1981:17).

During this period the Antiguan government could not rely upon emigration to stave off the impact of unemployment. Migration, either temporary or permanent, has historically been one of the methods of alleviating un(der)employment in Antigua, as in other Caribbean countries. Early in the twentieth century Antiguan migrants had found work on the sugar plantations of larger Caribbean countries and in the construction of the Bermuda dockyards. After World War Two the oil industry of Aruba and Curacao and the American Virgin Islands became a new source of employment for Antiguan men, together with short periods on contract to farms in the United States. Antiguan women, like their male counterparts, left for England in large numbers, to do 'nursing'. There are no records of the exact numbers who went abroad during this period, but numbers were significant. However the closure of emigration possibilities to the United Kingdom and the contraction of business in the early 1970s, both in the Caribbean and in the United States, meant that fewer employment opportunities overseas existed for unskilled would-be migrants. A decrease in migration rates also meant hardship for many of the older unemployed, who often rely upon remittances from relations abroad.[27] However, skilled migrants continue

to leave the country, and women teachers and locally trained nurses are a large proportion of those leaving.

From the start of the nationalist period of government in 1951, the Antiguan state intervened directly in the economy in a series of planned and unplanned gestures to stave off serious repercussions of unemployment. By 1980, the government had become the major local entrepreneur and employer and the owner of a number of problematic enterprises. At that time state ventures included a cotton ginnery and edible oil plant, a petroleum refinery, a sugar factory, a cornmeal plant, two large hotels, a commercial bank and an insurance company. In addition, the state now owns most of the prime agricultural land and a development bank, as well as the usual infrastructural services such as the seaports, airports, roads, energy, water, and telecommunications, education, health and social services.

The result has been a slow but steady increase in the number of people employed in government service and on statutory bodies. In 1970, of the 23,067 employed members of the labour force, 4,515 were government employees (Antigua and Barbuda Statistics Division 1976:7). By 1987 there were some 7,544 on the government payroll. 6,233 were central government employees; (2,568 established and 3,665 non-established) and 1,311 were on statutory bodies (Antigua and Barbuda, Department of Statistics 1988c: 69). The numbers of women working in the public service doubled in the years between 1970 and 1987, now totalling 38.8% of all government workers (still concentrated in areas such as teaching, nursing, social services and clerical

work).

The growth in size of the public sector was accompanied by a number of inhibiting problems which included unprofitable enterprises, inefficient management of state enterprises due to inadequately qualified personnel, and an overstaffed public sector. The upshot was a dismal overall performance and the tendency for the public sector to remain in a state of financial crisis. In 1983 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stepped in to take responsibility for initiating measures to stimulate the private sector, restore a surplus to the central governments current account, and discourage the growth of the Civil Service and state capitalist sector. In that year the government was forced to restrain spending by cutting back civil service employment by 40% and cutting the salaries of government workers (Barry *et al* 1984:258).

In spite of the economic burdens of the 1970s and early 1980s, Government continued to extend the social and economic enfranchisement of the majority population, especially in the provision of education, health and social services. There have also been significant improvements in health service provisions since 1950. By 1987, infant mortality was 26.05 per thousand, down from 93.6 per 1000 in 1953. The birth rate per 1000 dropped from 34.4 in 1953 to 14.8 in 1985, and the death rate declined from 12.3 per thousand in 1950 to 5.04 in 1985 (Jones 1987:49). The government has developed an island-wide network of community health centres and satellite clinics staffed by family nurse practitioners, public health nurses, district midwives, community psychiatric nurses and dental health aides. Health care is largely

in female nursing hands. However, like most other countries in the region Antigua faces a shortage of nurses. More and more locally trained nurses are migrating to the United States in search of better working conditions and wages, and those trained overseas often choose not to return. This has created staffing problems and to a large extent Antigua relies on labour from other Caribbean territories, such as Guyana.

Although a specific health plan has yet to be written, the government has made significant changes in national health provisions. New wards have been added to the main Holberton hospital. In terms of social welfare provision, the Government runs a Citizens Welfare Division which deals with the old, destitute, and the shut-ins, and provides education for drug users and rehabilitation for drug addicts and discharged prisoners. In 1972, the government set up a social security scheme covering those gainfully employed aged between 16 and 60 years. This scheme insures against illness and injury, and includes benefits for old age, invalidity and maternity, as well as pension and funeral grants. Since 1978, Antigua has also had a medical benefits scheme in place for workers paying contributions and for the elderly.

In 1979, the government established a Health Education Unit which works with organisations counselling on health issues such as family life education, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Family planning activities, which had previously been provided by the private sector are now integrated into clinic services (Scott 1989:41). There is, however, also a need for

social and educational programmes dealing specifically with teenage pregnancy and the ensuing difficulties these women and their children face. In 1987, 23% of all live births were to teenagers under 19, down from 28.5% in 1982 (Antigua and Barbuda Department of Statistics 1989c:14). These adolescents are neglected under present social security and educational policy. They are not allowed return to school, and there is no child benefit outside of what the father is supposed to pay. These young adults are left to find a way to support their families without having finished their education and without career guidance. Their career choices are severely limited and those who work are often employed in the lowest paid occupations.

The 1973 Education Act established free primary and secondary education for five to sixteen year olds.[28] There are 42 co-educational primary schools and 13 secondary schools (of which four are single sex), as well as special schools for the deaf/dumb and handicapped. There are also four post secondary/tertiary institutions, the Extra Mural Department of the University of the West Indies, the Antigua State College (a combined teacher training/technical/sixth form college), a state-run Nursing College at the national hospital and a state-run Hotel Training Centre.

There are now many more women than men teachers in the education system but there is still a distinct gender stratification by subject and in terms of the education level of the institution where men are to be found.

Table 3.8: Number of Teachers by Type of School and Sex, 1983 - 1988

Year and Sector	Pre-Primary Schools		Primary Schools		Secondary Schools		Tertiary Institutions*		Total	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
1983	**23**	**-**	**358**	**68**	**220**	**111**	**10**	**17**	**611**	**196**
public	-	-	279	58	161	82	10	17	**450**	**157**
private	23	-	79	10	59	29	-	-	**161**	**39**
1984	**31**	**2**	**353**	**55**	**219**	**121**	**12**	**16**	**615**	**194**
public	-	-	256	50	148	91	12	16	**416**	**157**
private	31	2	97	5	71	30	-	-	**199**	**37**
1985	**46**	**2**	**382**	**54**	**208**	**96**	**12**	**21**	**648**	**173**
public	-	-	288	54	133	63	12	21	**433**	**138**
private	46	2	94	-	75	33	-	-	**215**	**35**
1986	**-**	**-**	**375**	**45**	**215**	**128**	**23**	**33**	**-**	**-**
public	-	-	270	43	169	91	23	33	**462**	**167**
private	-	-	105	2	46	37	-	-	-	-
1987	**46**	**-**	**414**	**65**	**237**	**148**	**23**	**32**	**720**	**245**
public	-	-	310	63	186	111	23	32	**519**	**206**
private	46	-	104	2	51	37	-	-	**201**	**39**
1988	**69**	**-**	**364**	**50**	**165**	**108**	**44**	**41**	**632**	**172**
public	-	-	287	45	136	77	44	41	**457**	**136**
private	69	-	77	5	29	31	-	-	**175**	**36**

*1986-88 figures include teachers at the University Centre. This list does not include (i) Head teachers who do not teach; (ii) part-time teachers; (iii) teachers on leave; (iv) teachers away at college or university.

Source: Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Education, 1989.

In 1988, women constituted all of the teachers in the pre-primary sector, 77% of teachers in primary and secondary schools but only 49% of teachers in the tertiary sector. While the majority of head teachers at the primary level in 1988 were women, seven of the eleven government secondary schools were headed by men, even though the majority of the staff were female. As with nursing, there is a serious shortage of

teachers, with locally qualified teachers emigrating overseas. Many teachers now in the system have been recruited from neighbouring territories. [29]

Table 3.9: School Enrolment by Type of School and Sex 1987-1988

Type of School	Enrolment by Educational Level						Total
	Pre-Primary		Primary		Secondary		
	W	M	W	M	W	M	
Public	-	-	3529	3675	1718	1256	**10174**
Private*	-	-	**1579	**1275	461	481	**3796**
Total	**-**	**-**	**5104**	**4950**	**2179**	**1737**	**13970**

* only partial numbers are available. ** Private school figures for pre-primary and primary are given together.

Source: Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Education 1989

In 1988, the government estimated the total school enrolment at 13,970, 52.1% of whom were girls. At primary level the school rolls were fairly equal in numbers of boys and girls, but at secondary level 56.3% of the students were female. This represents a shift from 1970 when the majority of the secondary students were male. Secondary schools offer traditional academic subjects plus a wide range of technical/vocational subjects and some commercial courses. From government reports it appears that students choice of subject are influenced by the orientation of the national curriculum (Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Education 1986: 32). With courses such as 'Girls Handicrafts' and Home Economics (arts and craft, food preparation, household management) targeted at girls, and Industrial Arts (woodwork, metal work, automotive and electrical engineering, etc) targeted at boys, a clear gender bias can be seen.

The Girls Handicrafts course at secondary school level was staffed mainly by locally trained female teachers and, according to the 1986 Educational Report, was specifically geared towards the setting up of cottage industries and establishing those values and standards which can assist students to live more fully within their particular social economic and cultural environment. The Industrial Arts course aimed primarily at boys was designed to be career oriented and was staffed by male teachers with certificate and degree qualifications. Outside of the formal school system the government has established a Youth Skills Programme targeting school leavers who do not qualify to go onto State College. The focus is on trade skills, and more men than women participate as many of the courses are geared towards traditional male trades such as masonry and plumbing. The courses for girls, such as cookery, are also offered by various non-governmental agencies directed at women.

Until 1985, the Home Economics course offered by the post-secondary/tertiary level State College was compulsory only for the female students during their first year. In 1988, there were 225 male and 316 female students at the State College. Over half of the women (60%) were enrolled on commercial courses, which included the subjects of computing and accounts. However, only 14% of the enrolled men studied commerce. The significant majority of men were enrolled on the engineering and construction courses (42%) which attracted only 3% of the women students (Antigua and Barbuda, Department of Statistics 1989c:32). In 1989, 607 students enrolled on the new Diploma in Business Education at the

State College (356 women and 251 men). However, the commercial course at the College still attracted few male students, and only 35 men enrolled on the course as opposed to 284 women.[30] Of the 442 students enrolled at the Extra-Mural University Centre in 1987, 326 were women mostly enrolled in General Certificate of Education "O" and "A" level courses (263 women against 88 men). Of those undertaking tertiary level courses at the University Centre, there were almost twice as many women following degree and certificate oriented courses as men (47 and 25 respectively). In fact, women more than outnumbered men in the Centre's courses in all areas except law (Antigua and Barbuda, Department of Statistics 1988c:33).

In 1990 the government established a Human Resource Development Unit to co-ordinate national Human Resource planning from a vocational and management standpoint, and to match training with job availability. Most of the participants on their courses are women.[31] The 1988 *Labour Report* also indicates that more women than men are taking up opportunities for on the-job-training. Of the 75 firms interviewed for that report, 13 trained employees, and women accounted for 53.4% of those trained (Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Labour and Health 1988:27). According to the General Secretary of the AWU, in 1989 fewer men attended work release or on-the-job training and women were the majority of those being sent overseas for training.[32]

Apart from the formal education system, women have been involved in non-formal

education through voluntary organisations such as the YWCA and the government Directorate of Women's Affairs. As with the curriculum of secondary schools, non-formal education is more often than not within the traditional confines of 'female' subjects such as dressmaking, craft and home economics, and 'mothercraft'. These appear to be the areas in which women request more training.[33] Despite the overt gender stereotyping at all levels of the system, women are using their improved access to education to expand their career options.

Table 3.10 Population by Sex and Economic Activity, 1991

Sex	Total Population	%	15+ Pop. in the labour force	*% of the labour force*
Women	31204	*51.3*	12725	*45.8*
Men	29643	*48.7*	15040	*54.1*
Total	**60847**	*100*	27765	*100*

Source: Rooke, 1993

The actual number of women employed in the labour force grew from 38% to 43% between 1970 and 1983 (Table 3.7), and by 1991 women represented 45.8% of the labour force. In a survey of 75 private sector establishments carried out by the Labour department between 1987 and 1989, women outnumbered men in the hotel, trade, finance and service sectors. Men continued to dominate the traditional areas of agriculture, construction and transport, as well as manufacturing energy and communication, thus emphasizing the gender stratification in the labour force (Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Labour and Health 1989).

The upturn in the economy in the 1980s generated jobs for younger workers. Between 1983 and 1985 the Antiguan economy improved at an annual average rate of 7.9% in real terms, mainly due to the buoyancy of tourism (World Bank 1988:1). The spin off from tourism in turn stimulated growth in the retail trades, construction and the financial sector of banking and insurance. Government and private sector attempts in the mid-1970s to create new employment in agriculture and agri-business, using corn and by products from corn, failed and the 1980s found Antiguan agriculture characterized by the absence of a dominant export crop unlike most of its CARICOM partners. Agriculture's contribution to GDP, which was 3% in 1970, rose to 11% in 1978 and then declined to 7.5% in 1983 (World Bank 1985b:iii).

In 1984, The OAS *Antigua and Barbuda Agricultural Census* found that agriculture still accounted for some 4,622 farmers (8.4% of the population over 16 years). However only 30.8% of farmers were full-time. The rest worked part-time and had a variety of non-farm sources of income, and 26% were in government employment (OAS 1984:21). The same census found that female farmers were mainly engaged in subsistence or quasi-subsistence agriculture and were concentrated in crop production. Women were 37% of all farmers, but owned only 19% of all land under agriculture, with plots three times smaller than those of men. The census gave no details of workers in ancillary areas such as agricultural marketing and processing where it is known that women predominate, nor is there

any information on women who assist their spouses as labourers or dependents. The majority of those working in agriculture averaged over 46 years of age (Nurse 1988:7).

The increase in labour force participation in all other sectors for women and men has been generated by the upturn in the Antiguan economy since 1980. It was the 1978 -1980 revival of the North American economy which brought improvements in tourist arrivals and a subsequent growth in Antigua's economy. In terms of employment, the service sector in general and tourism in particular has been the major contributor of new jobs, especially for women. In 1979, 12.4% of the labour force were employed by tourism. By 1982, this figure had risen to 16% (Antigua and Barbuda,Department of Statistics 1988c:66).

By 1988, the hotel and restaurant industry employed 39.4% of the labour force, women being an estimated 63% of workers employed in this industry. This did not include those who work elsewhere in the service sector or in the ancillary informal sector connected to tourism, ie. beach vendors or other such occupations. Although there is a state-run Hotel Training Centre, the majority of Antiguans in the hotel trade are employed below middle management level, women mainly working as waitresses or hostesses. Work is seasonal and during the off season individuals often work a short week, with staff rotation being necessary (lay-offs due to seasonality are not covered in the Wages Contract). Hotel workers are not covered by collective agreements, and the last minimum wage was set in 1977. The

former labourist orientation of the government is called into question in this regard as they make little attempt to secure the conditions of the workers.

Table 3.11: Estimated Number of Employees* by Industry and Sex, 1988

Employer	Women	Men	Total
Total Labour force	**9924**	**13435**	**23359**
Industry	7360	9400	16760
Hotel/Restaurant	*5770*	*3440*	*9210*
Construction	*100*	*3710*	*3810*
Manufacturing	*1490*	*2250*	*3740*
Government	2564	4035	6599
Established	*1113*	*1000*	*2113*
Non-established	*1451*	*3035*	*4486*
% in private employment	**74.2**	**70.0**	**71.7**
% in Gov't employment	**25.8**	**30.0**	**28.3**

(*survey based on 20% sample of employees).

Source: Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Labour and Health, 1989

Nor has the early labourist background of the government influenced working conditions of workers in the textile, electronics and light manufacturing industries, which constitute the majority of the Antiguan Export Processing Zone. These export-oriented foreign owned companies have proven to be among the worst perpetrators of bad working conditions and low wages rates in the country (Bird 1987:35; Benjamin 1989:7). In 1988, women made up 40% of the workers in this sector, up from 30% in 1970. In that earlier year, 511 were women employed in

manufacturing but by 1988, this figure had trebled to 1,490 (Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics Division 1976: 99-102; Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Labour and Health 1989).

Women in these industries often have to undertake shift work and there are no provisions made for the dual role which women play as home-makers and workers. Antiguan women appear to have been showing their opposition to these industries by refusing to take up such employment. The reaction of the garment and electronic factory owners to difficulties with local labour recruitment has been to recruit immigrant female labour rather than trying to meet the demands of local women. Union activity in this area has not been obvious. Bird (1987:35) questions the contemporary role of the trade unions, and of women trade unionists amongst them, in relation to women and work. In 1990, the government was advertising the docility of the labour force as part of the attractions for foreign entrepreneurs wishing to invest in Antigua (Antigua and Barbuda, Industrial Development Board 1989).

In spite of the upturn in the economy in the 1980s, in 1986 the current account deficit rose to EC$370 (US$137 million) or 60% of GDP, and by the end of 1987 it was estimated that the total publicly guaranteed debt outstanding amounted to EC$661.5 million (US$245 million), equivalent to 95% of GDP and 111% of exports and goods. In 1990 Antigua was due to repay EC$75.6 million in debt servicing (Antigua and Barbuda, Development and Planning Office 1988:3; Nurse 1988:3). Although the government had difficulty in meeting its commitment to wages and servicing the

public debt, civil servants pay was increased by 20% in 1987 and the numbers in the public service continued to grow at a rate of 7.6% per annum, from 7,016 in 1986 to 8,307 in 1989.[34]

As in 1983, in the latter half of the 1980s a foreign banking firm, Morgan Grenfell and Company, stepped in to assist the Antiguan government to renegotiate and reschedule their external debt and to find various methods to reduce government expenditure (World Bank 1988:3). These methods have included divesting certain public assets in the manufacturing and tourism sector; selling government owned land for residential and commercial use; increasing utility tariffs; improving revenue collection; accelerating the diversification of the economy; expanding the manufacturing sector through the Industrial Development Board; upgrading infrastructural facilities to meet the needs of the tourism sector; ceasing to borrow on commercial terms,; and cutting back the wage bill.

These structural adjustment measures have strongly affected government spending on social services. While in 1983 education, health and housing were 26% of total public sector spending, by 1987 this had declined to 17.2% (Antigua and Barbuda, Department of Statistics 1988c:148). These are areas most often called upon by women as students, workers or home-makers. These are also the primary areas of women's public sector employment. Any lay-offs of staff will affect women by reducing the education and employment options available, and also affect the way in which they pursue their daily activities. At the same time, increased changes affecting

household consumption (such as on housing and utility bills, school fees, medical expenses, food) means greater economic pressure on women, especially those who manage their household alone. Now more than ever women need to find waged employment.

3.4: Women in Antiguan Society: An Overview

As in the rest of the contemporary Caribbean, Antigua has undergone major developmental changes in the post colonial era, and there have been significant changes in the socio-economic development strategy of the government. Legal barriers no longer exist to limit women's involvement in the public sphere and the introduction of universal adult suffrage, expanded secondary school programmes, and expanded career opportunities have meant concomitant changes in women's and men's integration into national economic life. However, the prevailing gender ideology continues to subordinate women's needs to those of men.

Government policy has been equitable in terms of women's ability to access the system and women are prevalent among the secondary educated cadre. However, school and college curricula display a distinct gender bias in terms of technical education, and the tendency to reinforce the gender stereotyping practised by the wider society. The management of the education system is also gender biased with men holding senior positions, although women make up the majority of the work force.

In spite of these systemic biases women have moved into all areas of the economy,

and utilize informal channels and formal structures to acquire skills to engage in paid work. The avenues open to them tend to be in traditional 'female' areas, but they are used skilfully to propel women into avenues of public life. Relatively high participation rates in both the formal and informal sector conceal the unequal status of women. There is still horizontal and vertical stratification in the labour force, and women's economic integration continues to be generally in the lower paid/lower skilled jobs, especially the service sector. While total female labour force participation rates are much lower than men's in Antigua, at present there is more work in the traditional and new 'feminized' areas of the economy and, proportionately, female labour force unemployment is lower than men's.[35] However, new census and labour force survey data is needed to verify these findings, which are based on government sample surveys and estimates.

Inter-generational as well as gender differences are highlighted and the data illustrates that young women with good secondary education qualifications are beginning to occupy middle level administration/clerical positions. More and more, clerical work and bookkeeping have become feminized and the majority of students enrolled on business and management courses are women. Older women tend to be in home services, in home production, the formal or informal service sector or in huckstering. Most women who enter the professions still bind themselves to traditional female employment areas such as teaching and nursing in the public sector. In the private sector, women predominate in the garment and light electrical establishments of the manufacturing industry. Women also constitute a majority in the service sector,

especially the hotel and restaurant trade as well as in the finance and banking (Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Labour and Health 1989).

From one lone woman amongst the echelons of power in 1958 there are now scores of women enjoying prestige from their positions in the public sector. In the public sector in 1990, women held positions ranging from General Manager of the Industrial Development Board, the Director of Tourism, The Postmistress General, The Resident Tutor of the University Centre, the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, senior positions in the Civil Service (such as Permanent Secretaries, Chief Establishment Officer and Chief Welfare Officer) and in the Senate. Despite expanded career opportunities and a few women in positions of seniority, the numbers of women holding senior administrative or managerial positions in either private or public sector, or positions on the executive of political parties unions, are still small.

Due to the operation of a gender ideology premised on a belief that men should be the leaders in society, men continue to retain the top positions in the public sector leaving the relatively lower paying positions to women, a situation which though allowing some women to be 'co-opted' into prominent Civil Service positions, and has resulted in the 'feminization' of the civil service. There are wide salary differentials between the private and public sector jobs, and men are moving to the more lucrative private sector.

Political leadership continues to envision women's roles as traditional and supportive,

and women's absence from decision making spheres allow such views to continue. Notwithstanding the changes in women's involvement in the public domain, it appears that women are still treated as peripheral to the development planning process and have to access resources through male dominated institutions. An illustration of this point is the manner in which the Directorate of Women's Affairs manoeuvres to finance their extremely popular and informative programmes with an official grant of only EC$10,000. By 1992, the Policy Document on women in Development, which was meant to address women's strategic needs, had been approved at Cabinet level but was still awaiting the machinery to put it into effect. Women remained excluded from the process of decision making which could have brought the policy into immediate effect.

Despite the growing importance of women's economic role, they are not integral to the policy making process, and they remain excluded from the social and political power structure. Bird (1987:40) feels that it is only women themselves who can take up the challenge and question the patriarchal nature of society and women's continuing exclusion from power sharing. If women do not recognise themselves as a group with the capacity for leadership then their full potential will not be developed and they will continue to be subordinated by a gender ideology which places their needs and interests second to those of men.

To expand upon these conclusions, Part Two of the thesis looks at Antiguan women's perceptions of their place in the development of their country. The following four

chapters use the qualitative and quantitative data gathered in the WICP interviews and emphasizes the perspectives of those women and their personal evaluation of the consequences of the socio-economic changes described in broad terms in this chapter.

1. This thesis is concerned with an examination of women in Antigua, the larger territory of the twin island state of Antigua and Barbuda. The WICP interviews were only conducted only on the larger island, as were the subsequent interviews with public officials carried out by myself. However, when discussing issues of national government in the text, Antigua is often used to refer to both territories of the twin-island state. While recognizing the significantly different political and economic history of Barbuda, that island was annexed by the Antiguan Colonial Assembly in 1858, and has been subsumed by Antiguan law since the end of the last century. Only 2% of the current total population live on Barbuda, and many Barbudans work on the larger island.

2. In simple patriarchalism, domination is exercised by elder males in the interest of all members of the group and is not freely appropriated by the particular person in control. Patrimonial authority, however, is rooted in the household administration of the ruler and officials are first recruited from the personal retainers and servants of that ruler (Giddens 1971: 157). Despite the trappings of a modern state apparatus, with the concentration of power in the hands of a small elite and the members of one family, Antigua has moved beyond the stage of simple patriarchalism through to being a patrimonial state.

3.This figure of 61,000 is taken from the preliminary report of the 1991 Census by the Central Statistical Office, Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance (in a personal communication from the Senior Statistical Officer, Mr. T. Rooke, on 27/9/93). These figures are the product of the first complete census of the country since 1960 (the 1970 census report was based upon a 20% sample of completed census questionnaires). The paucity of data prior to the 1991 census had resulted in a proliferation of informed estimates by a variety of national and international institutions, and the 1991 population figures differ greatly from those earlier estimates. For instance, Bouvier's *Demographic Profile of Antigua and Barbuda* (1984), used United Nations' data and demographic analysis techniques, and gave an estimated total population figure for 1980 of 75,250 and for 1990 of 88,305. The OAS *Agricultural Census of Antigua and Barbuda* (1984) gave a figure of 70,134 of which 52.3% were expected to be women. The United Nations predicted total for 1987 was 77,000 with 30% of the population residing in the capital of St. John's (UNDP 1989:1).

The data from the 1991 census is not yet in the public domain. According to Mr. Rooke, the need to utilize all statistical office personnel resources to conduct and analyze the 1990 census material meant that there have been no up to date quantitative population/labour force statistics collected since 1990. Analyses of trends at the national level in this thesis thus rely upon the quantitative statistics produced prior to 1990. As explained earlier, these varied in their representativeness, and while it has been necessary to use this data to get an indication of development in Antigua, they must be interpreted with caution.

4.The OECS is an economic federation of six Caribbean territories, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. They have a common Central Bank based in St. Kitts and a common currency, the Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC$). Since 1976 the Eastern Caribbean dollar has been pegged to the United States dollar at a rate of EC$2.70 to US$1.00

5. See the explanation of this designation in the Statistical Index of *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2, June 1986.

6. A Coloured man, John Athill became the Postmaster, a magistrate and a member of the local colonial Assembly in 1833, although he is recorded as having spent much of his time in England after this date. It appears that he in fact was one Coloured who could pass for white and was well liked among the local white population (Hall 1971:152). No Coloureds are listed as being elected onto the post-Emancipation Legislative Council until 1937.

7. At present 80% of children are born out of wedlock (Antigua and Barbuda, Department of Statistics 1988c:14). One cannot assume that figures were any lower in the nineteenth or early twentieth century when marriage was less prevalent. See Smith and Smith (1986) for a personal account of white and black attitudes to working-class marriage at the turn of the century.

8. These ex-slaves received the 'right' to demand wages for any extra hours worked over the forty and a-half-hour limit (Hall 1971).

9. This meant that at first there was no policy of large scale importation of East Indian or European/Middle Eastern immigrants in Antigua. By the mid-1840s, unable to force the ex-slaves to work on the estates the planters asked the Council to import manual labour (Hall 1971:45). Several thousand Portuguese came to work on estates whilst others came as shopkeepers (Carmody 1978:48).

10. An excellent detailed life history account of the period 1874 to 1967 is provided by the narrative of Samuel Smith (Smith and Smith 1986). His autobiographical account gives a rich insight into the social, economic, religious and political events during this period. The book is also a testimony to the strength of women in the development of social cohesion among the ex-slaves.

11. In effect this simply replaced the system under slavery, whereby slaves had to grow their own food on provision grounds set aside on marginal lands of the estates.

12. Reginald Stevens, a middle-class jeweller, was elected onto the Council in 1937. He was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge and in 1939 became the first president of the AT&LU (Smith and Smith 1986:144; Henry 1985:84).

13. A Working Men's Association, consisting mainly of waterfront workers had been established in 1933, but was not successful in motivating the workers. The leader was an Englishman named Harold Wilson and the membership were more urban-oriented

than the later AT&LU. See Novelle Richards (1965) for a thorough discussion of this period.

14. At this time there were few black members of the middle classes, the wealthier of that group tending to be the upper working class tradesmen. The mostly Coloured Antiguan middle class did not generally participate in the post-1939 political developments. Carmody (1978:52) associates this with their small size, which would of course have limited their potential to be an independent force in politics. However, few took up working class concerns or joined the protests of the 1930s, and even fewer joined the AT&LU. Most blacks associated the Coloureds with the Establishment.

> *"At the same time there was also some well-to-do nega people that had the feeling that they was white. Some of them was operating business in the island. Them well-to-do pretend not to know what was happening. Most of them was against the Union..."* (Smith and Smith 1986:144).

With no independent political force and no niche in the AT&LU, the Coloured middle class was excluded from the post-war political developments and the political power base. Those in the middle class of Middle Eastern origin did not attempt to enter politics.

15. One woman who did gain political prominence during this period was Bertha Huggins. She was appointed as a Senator to the short-lived Caribbean Federation in 1958. The Federation was the first attempt at regional integration and collapsed in 1962, when the larger territories refused to take on board the economic problems of the smaller states.

16. See M. G. Smith (1984) for a thorough discussion of this topic in relation to culture and race.

17. This was after the vote count in 7 of the seats were disputed by the opposition through the courts, and illegal electoral measures were found to have occurred. The opposition did not capitalise on the new elections that they had demanded and the ALP won again.

18. These points were made by Mrs. Percival of the Antigua Labour Party's Women's Action Group, and Mrs. L. Simon, President of the AWU Women's Group in interviews with this author on June 06, 1990.

19. This was stated by Mr. K. Smith, President of the Antigua Workers Union, in the November 16, 1989 interview with this author.

20. This information was gained from the series of interviews held with Mrs. G. Tonge, Director of Women's Affairs, held between 1989 and 1990.

21. In his 1989 Throne Speech, Jacobs (1989:11) carefully set out the developments that the government will be making to the Women's Directorate infrastructure. They will try to secure funding to finance the Women in Development complex to enable

Directorate staff to improve the delivery of services directed to women, and the implementation of projects and programmes which will assist in the social and economic improvement of family and community standards. The complex will include a convention centre/administrative block, and a training centre for income generating projects and accommodation units.

22. This information comes from an interview with Mrs. Gwen Tonge, the Director of Women's Affairs in Antigua, as well as from the various Directorate documents, which are all listed in the bibliography.

23. The National Coordinating Council of Women was established in 1975. It has nineteen religious, professional and political women's organisations under its umbrella (see Appendix II). As with the Directorate, the activities of these groups all tend to be oriented to the traditional areas of women's involvement in public life, fund raising for the church or local school, organising charitable projects to help members in the community, or providing training for women in traditional skill areas. However, the coordinating Council has also run seminars on leadership in the Trade Union and on sexual harassment in the workplace.

24. The CARICOM women's office acts as a catalyst for 'Women in Development' efforts in the region and helped in the preparation of the 1989 Antiguan National Policy document on Women in Development.

25. In 1989 EC$35,000 was provided from external sources such as the Canadian government and UNICEF. In 1990 the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organisation funded the Directorate to conduct a research project on the social conditions and economic factors that determine the role of women in Antiguan society. That work has yet to be published.

26. On this latter point, the Director of Women's Affairs, Mrs. G. Tonge, stated that although women suffer from battering, stress and substance abuse many do not say anything because of the stigmatisation which often follows. The Women's Directorate has also called for a Family Court and for rape cases to be held 'in camera', so far to no avail. Also concerned on these issues are the National Coordinating Council of Women (NCCW). In an interview on November 15, 1989, the Chairwoman of NCCW, Mrs. Arah Derick, mentioned that the Council would like to establish a call-in radio service for battered women. She explained that one had previously been started but no one called because of the inadequate exposure of the programme (the official reason given).

27. In 1990 the Antiguan Minister of Health made an appeal for workers abroad to send remittances home for their elderly relatives (reported in the *Barbados Advocate*, March 24: 8 1990).

28. At present there are 42 private kindergartens and creches for pre-schoolers.

29. This information was gained from an interview with the Minister of Education, Mr. Harris, on 18 November 1989.

30. Figures come from an interview with Mr. E. Francis, Principal of the State College, on June 08 1990.

31. As reported by Mr. Wyre, Director of the Human Resources Development Unit at the Ministry of Planning and Development, in an interview on June 06, 1990.

32. Interview with Keithlyn Smith, General Secretary of the Antigua Workers Union, on November 16, 1989.

33. Bird (1987:46) notes however that most of the courses are urban oriented and that rural and peri-urban women are often excluded due to lack of transport in the evening. The evening timing of many of these courses also causes problems as they cut into the time when women who are in waged employment during the day must undertake household responsibilities.

34. This information was provided by Mr. Michael, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, in an interview on 09 June 1990.

35. 'Feminization' here refers to a concentration of women in gender specific professions (largely the social services).

PART TWO

A COMING TO VOICE: THE PERSPECTIVES OF CARIBBEAN WOMEN ON THEIR ROLE AND STATUS IN DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF ANTIGUA

INTRODUCTION

As in the rest of the contemporary Caribbean, Antigua has undergone major changes in the orientation of social and economic policies for national development over the past forty years. These changes in direction have come as a result of the accession to power of post-colonial nationalist governments whose populist programmes have expanded the provision of educational programmes and increased the availability of employment opportunities for the majority Black population. These improvements have been of critical importance to the way in which women and men are integrated into the social and economic life of the region.

In Antigua the changes have been crucial for women, for they have enabled greater access to an educational system in which women's performance at all levels now outstrips men's, and have facilitated an increase in women's participation in the formal labour force in all sectors of the economy. Despite a vertically and horizontally segmented labour market and a male dominated political system, women in Antigua have defied the subordinate role ascribed to them by social stereotypes. A few women have reached the higher echelons of both the public and private sector and some hold positions of power in state institutions. It is being increasingly recognised that women play an important role in the development and growth of their country.

Women's endeavours, however, continue to be mediated by the ideological and cultural values of a society which subscribes to a traditional patriarchal ordering of gender relations in public life and in the home. To strive towards or attain academic and economic achievements, the majority of women must contend with their ascribed domestic roles and their responsibilities to the family. Their performance of this familial role is a crucial determinant of women's ability/need to engage in productive activities outside the home, most women having to temper their ambitions according to their household responsibilities. The prevailing gender ideology continues to envision women's primary role as oriented towards the domestic sphere, and this is evident in the types of formal and non-formal education that women are guided towards or that are provided for them. The Caribbean situation is well summed up in the words of a cryptic cartoon (originally written for a European audience, and reproduced in the print media of one Caribbean territory (The Barbados Advocate, 14 May 1990:16)). The cartoon depicts two women leaving their work place, and one asks the other if she fancies a quick drink. The other replies in the negative, and referring to her husband, stated:

> *"He believes that a woman's place is in the home - and expects her to be there immediately after work."*

While the previous three chapters have focused upon gender theory and the broader structures and systemic mechanisms of Caribbean and Antiguan society which shape and influence women's participation in national development, this part of the thesis concentrates upon the experiences of individual women in the community, their

personal development and the impact of ideological and cultural constraints on their perceptions and behaviour. Disparities in observed behaviour and the viewpoints articulated by women will be discussed thoroughly, as will women's seemingly compliant acceptance of both reproductive and productive duties, and of a subordinate role in decision-making. The women's actions and attitudes will be examined in light of government policies and national trends identified in Chapter three.

The information for this case study was obtained from the responses of five hundred and four (504) Antiguan women to the Women in the Caribbean Project survey conducted in 1980/81. The first round of the WICP interviews used a fifty-six page interview schedule containing both pre-coded and open-ended questions, along with forms for information on household composition and amenities. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Together with basic socio-demographic characteristics, the questions focused upon education, family and kinship, work and recreation activities, and aimed to gain detailed information on all aspects of the women's lives. From the initial 504 interviews, eighteen (18) women were chosen for further in-depth interviews, their life histories having been deemed as being particularly illustrative of the rich tapestry of Antiguan women's lives.

Content analysis and utilization of the qualitative and quantitative data from the survey interviews as well as the material from the eighteen life histories allows for an exploration of both the expressed views and the actual activity patterns of women in Antigua. This part of the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first, chapter 4,

provides a brief explication of the sampling method used to select the respondents, followed by a discussion of the general demographic characteristics of those interviewed. The next three chapters (5-7) look in detail at the respondents experiences and attitudes in relation to their participation in (i) education, (ii) in employment (either in/around the home or in the formal labour force), and (iii) in terms of their familial responsibilities and their time allocation to extra-domestic activities. The actions, viewpoints and perspectives of the respondents are presented and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, using tabulated data (the data in the tables, unless otherwise indicated, have been derived from the WICP database) and salient excerpted commentary of the women (in the vernacular of these working class women).

The views of just five hundred women cannot by themselves be used as definitive evidence of behavioural and attitudinal change or stasis, upon which to model theories or conceptual frameworks. They do, however, provide a picture of the actions and perceptions of a cross-section of women, of the way in which social change has affected ordinary women, and of the heterogeneity of women's experience and integration into social life in Antigua. It is only by tapping into the realities of peoples lives at the empirical level that hypotheses, theories or economic models can have any credence. This thesis allows us to bear witness to that reality by providing a tableau upon which the interests, feelings and views of Antiguan women can be played out. By providing a forum where Antiguan women's perspectives of their integration in national development can be heard, this thesis facilitates Antiguan women's coming to voice.

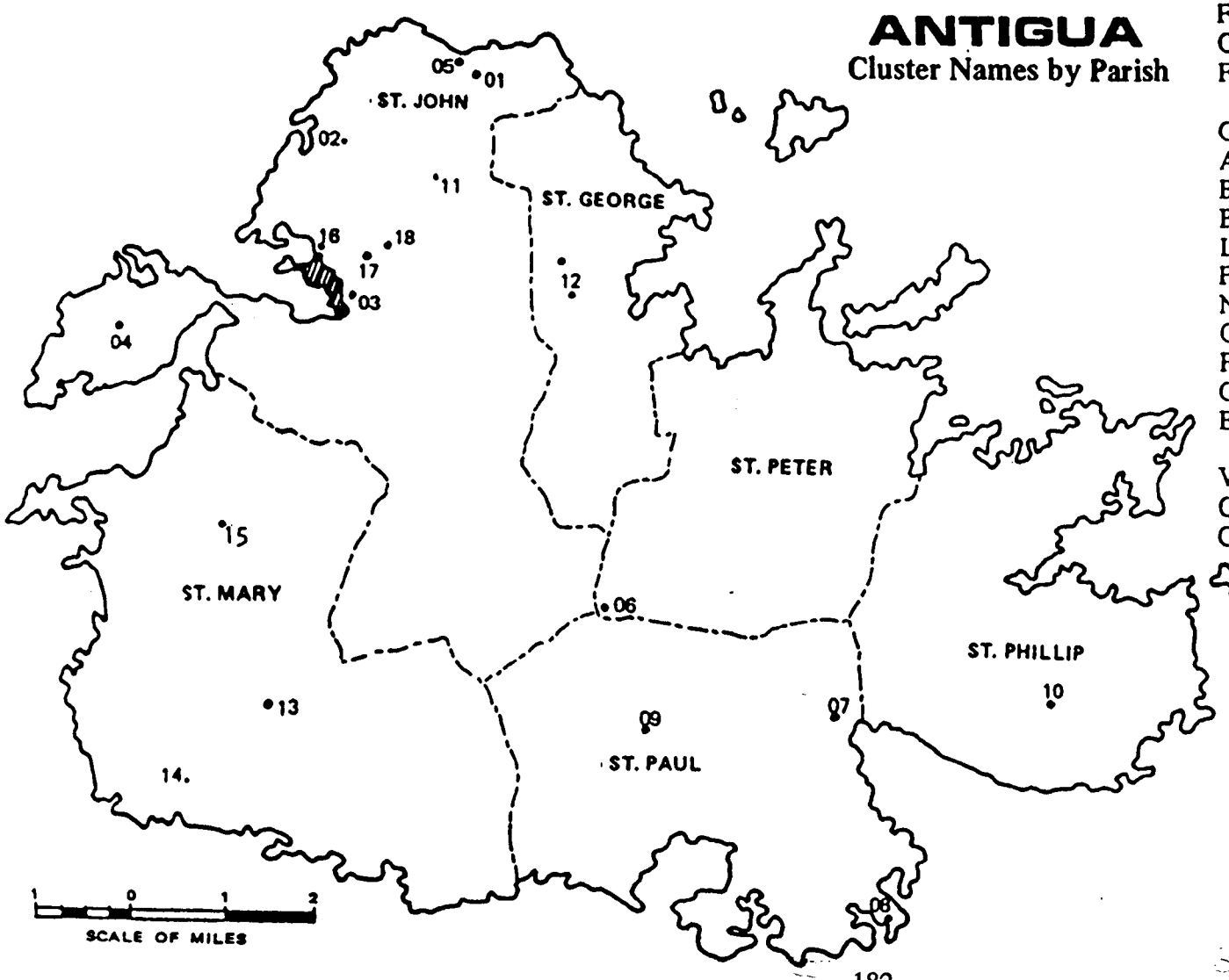
Chapter 4

The Antiguan Sample: The Sampling Method of the WICP and the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents[1]

The sampling method employed by the Women in the Caribbean Project to target survey respondents was quota sampling with age as the main controlling variable. Attention was also paid to ensure adequate socio-economic stratification and to a certain extent racial representation among the respondents. In Antigua, quota sampling was particularly pertinent due to the absence of up to date census data which could be used as a guideline for the construction of an adequate sampling frame.

Visits to specific areas were made by the WICP team prior to more detailed sampling and mapping. Adequately populated areas of each of the seven parishes on the larger island of Antigua were identified, controlling for a representative spread of rural/urban locations. Barbuda was not included for reasons of size and logistics. Mapping took place in eleven urban and fourteen rural areas. Detailed maps of cluster sites were prepared to ensure a sufficient quota of households. One of the areas chosen was designated as of upper socio-economic status, four of middle socio-economic status, seventeen of mixed lower and middle socio-economic status and three of lower socio-economic status. This was intended to reflect the distribution of income across the whole of the territory. Social history and economic change was also reflected in the choice of sample areas, as the largest and oldest village in Antigua, Liberta in the parish of St. Paul, was included in the sample as was the relatively new, and racially mixed upper class area of Crosbies in St. John's.[2]

MAP 3: MAP OF SAMPLING AREAS IN THE WICP SURVEY



Lathfield–Cedar Grove	01
Friar Hill E – Wireless Road	02
Otto's Hill	03
Five Islands & Union of South – Cooke & Montclair	04
Crosbies	05
All Saints Village	06
Bethesda & Christian Hill	07
Blacks Pt. E – Marmora Bay	08
Liberta	09
Freetown	10
New Winthropes	11
Osbourne, Piggotts & Blackman	12
Furlins – Boggy Peak	13
Crabbes Hill, Johnson's Point	14
Ebenezer & Jennings E to Green Hill	15
Villa South	16
Gambles	17
Clare Hall Village	18

The twenty five (25) cluster areas were spread across the seven parishes. Households were selected using the random walk technique in each cluster, and when the quotas were complete for each cluster, sampling ceased. Lists of all members of the selected household were drawn up and one name chosen in accordance to the specified quota requirements. Eligible and willing residents of the household were interviewed. It was expected that twenty respondents between the ages of 20 - 64 would be drawn from each of the 25 clusters, the anticipated sample size for Antigua having been five hundred. However, to meet the quota requirements a certain amount of over-sampling occurred and the whole questionnaire was administered to five hundred and four (504) women in as many households.

Table 4.1: Proportional Distribution of the Survey Population by Race

Race	Total %
Afro-Caribbean	95.4
European	0.8
Indian	-
Mixed	3.2
Other	0.6
Total	**N=504**

Source: White 1986:65

In a reflection of the ethnic origins of the majority of the Antiguan population, most (95.4%) of the survey respondents were of African-Caribbean descent. Of the 4.6% belonging to other ethnic groups, less than 1% identified themselves as European. British and European antecedents were evident in the religious orientation of the respondents as the majority (74%) were Protestant, over half of

this group belonging to the Anglican church. The high profile of the Church in the lives of Antiguan women was highlighted by the fact that less that 2% admitted to following no religion.

TABLE 4.2: Proportional Distribution of the Survey Population by Religion

Religion	%
Anglican	37.3
Roman Catholic	6.9
Other Protestant	36.7
Hindu/Moslem	-
Rastafarian	0.8
None	1.6
Other	16.7
TOTAL	**N=504**

Source: White 1986: 66

Reflecting the youthfulness of the general population and the strong pull of the urban areas for accommodation and employment recorded in various census data predating the interview period, almost half of the respondents (47.7%) were under the age of 35, and a similar proportion (45%) lived in the urban areas.[3] Almost all of the women had been to school (99%), and the majority of the younger respondents (under the age of 40) had achieved both primary and secondary education. 8.5% of those interviewed had attained post secondary or tertiary level education (most of whom were younger respondents).

TABLE 4.3: Proportional Distribution of the Respondents by Age and Place of Residence

Age Category	Place of Residence		Total N=
	Urban	Rural	
20-24	17.8	22.6	20.4
25-29	12.3	16.7	14.7
30-34	17.4	8.9	12.6
35-39	15.1	13.3	14.1
40-44	5.9	8.5	7.4
45-49	9.6	5.9	7.6
50-54	9.6	5.9	7.6
55-59	5.9	9.6	8.0
60+	6.4	8.5	7.5
TOTAL N=	**219**	**270**	**489**
TOTAL %	**(44.8)**	**(55.2)**	

Source: WICP database

TABLE 4.4: Proportion Distribution of Respondents by Age and Education

Age Category	Education Level Reached				Total N=
	None	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary	
0-24	0	21.0	71.0	8.0	**100**
25-29	0	27.5	62.3	10.1	**69**
30-34	0	46.8	38.7	14.5	**62**
35-39	1.5	53.0	36.7	8.8	**68**
40-44	2.8	52.8	36.1	8.3	**36**
45-49	0	73.0	24.3	2.7	**37**
50-54	0	85.7	11.4	2.8	**35**
55-59	8.1	73.0	10.8	8.1	**37**
60+	0	83.3	8.3	8.3	**36**
Total N=	**5**	**238**	**196**	**41**	**480**
Total %	**(1)**	**(49.6)**	**(40.8)**	**(8.5)**	

Source: WICP database

Age differentials in relation to the level of education of the respondents were reflected in the labour force participation rates and the sectors in which women were employed. As could be expected, younger women with higher levels of education constituted the majority of those in professional and clerical jobs. Most of the older respondents remained locked into family care and traditional and/or low status, low income positions.

TABLE 4.5: Proportional Distribution of Respondents by Age and Employment Status

Age Category	Employment Status						Total N=
	Not Employed	Home Services	Home Prod'	Own Business	Work for Family	Employed by Other	
20-24	23.0	14.0	-	3.0	-	60.0	**100**
25-29	12.5	23.6	2.8	4.2	-	56.9	**72**
30-34	8.0	21.0	1.6	9.7	-	59.7	**62**
35-39	4.3	18.8	2.9	14.6	2.9	56.5	**69**
40-44	-	25.0	5.5	11.2	-	58.3	**36**
45-49	10.8	35.2	-	21.6	5.4	27.0	**37**
50-54	2.8	43.2	-	27.0	-	27.0	**37**
55-59	2.6	46.1	5.2	20.5	-	25.6	**39**
60+	21.0	44.7	5.3	18.5	2.6	7.9	**38**
Total N=	**54**	**130**	**11**	**59**	**5**	**231**	**490**
Total %	**(11.0)**	**(26.6)**	**(2.2)**	**(12.0)**	**(1.0)**	**(47.1)**	

Source : WICP database

Again, when compared to the national average of 38% for women's labour force participation in 1970 (Table 3.7), the respondents displayed higher than average involvement in the labour force: 47% of the survey respondents were in paid employment and 12% owned their own business. The younger respondents were the majority of those in the paid labour force, while women over the age of 40 made up the largest proportion of those in 'home services' (domestic duties around

the home) or 'home production' (subsistence agriculture or small scale craft work carried out at home).[4] Very few women worked for a family member, but 11% designated themselves as 'not employed', most of whom were from the younger age cohort. Interestingly enough the high proportion of women participating in the labour force was almost paralleled by the number of women (67%) not participating in any type of leisure or recreational organisation/groups (Table 7.10). Age differentials were also apparent among those women who belonged to various groups or organisations, as it was mainly the older women who were involved in recreational groups.

Over half the households surveyed (50.4%) were headed by women (though not necessarily the women who were interviewed) and men were regarded as the sole head of household in 45.4% of all households. Very few of the households were designated as being jointly headed (4.1%). Men tended to be reported as head of the household in the nuclear-type families and to a lesser extent in other household types where a man was resident. White (1986:73) suggests that this may have been due to the fact that the breadwinner role in those households was mainly performed by men, while the domestic duties were left to the women. In contradiction to this assertion, the data from Antigua shows that well over half (58%) of married women in the sample worked for a salary and contributed to family income (Table 6.1). This point was of little importance for those respondents (35%) who reported themselves as the actual head of the household they lived in (Table 7.3).

TABLE 4.6: Union Status of the Survey Population

Union Status	%
Married	39.9
Common-Law	11.0
Visiting	23.9
Presently Single	23.2
Never in Union	2.0
Total N = 504	**100.0**

Source: White 1986: 67

The patterns noted at national level with regard to marriage and childbearing rates were borne out by the sample respondents: 60% of the women interviewed were unmarried. Regardless of the type of relationship the women were involved in (indeed regardless of whether they were in any relationship at all), or the type of occupation that they were engaged in, most women (82%) were mothers (Massiah 1986:199).

However, whether or not they were married and whether or not they had children, few women lived by themselves. A very small number (4.5%) lived completely alone, and just over 12% lived with their children. The rest of the women lived either with their parents, siblings or other family members (46.6%) in multiple family households either vertically or horizontally extended or some combination of the two. Only 29.4% of the households could be regarded as "traditional" nuclear families, comprised of mother, father and children.

TABLE 4.7: Proportional Distribution of Category of Household Head* and Type of Household[5]

Type of Household	Female Headed	Male Headed	Joint Headed	Total N=	*Total %*
Woman Alone	8.2	0.9	0.0	**22**	*4.5*
Woman/ partner/ Children	6.1	53.4	60.0	**145**	*29.8*
Vertically Extended	24.9	19.0	15.0	**106**	*21.8*
Laterally Extended	8.2	6.8	15.0	**38**	*7.8*
Vertically & Laterally Extended	21.6	13.1	5.0	**83**	*17.1*
Woman & Children	24.1	0.0	0.0	**59**	*12.2*
Other	6.9	6.8	5.0	**33**	*6.8*
Total N=	**245**	**221**	**20**	**486**	
Total %	**(50.4)**	**(45.5)**	**(4.1)**		

* Headship here refers to the total number of households headed by women and not to respondents who categorised themselves as the heads of their own household.

Source: WICP database

The indicators used to signify distinctions between household types and relative quality of life and socio-economic status consisted of variables controlling for the types of house resided in, the types of utilities available, as well as the type of consumer durables possessed, and access to social amenities.[6] The majority (59.1%) of the houses that respondents lived in were constructed of timber (relatively common in the Caribbean), and most had access to public utilities and basic household amenities (White 1986:76).

TABLE 4.8: Category of Household Head* and Household Size by Material of Outer Walls of Dwelling

No. of people in household	Materials of Outer Walls															T N=
	Wood			Concrete			Stone/Brick			Wood/Brick			Wood/Concrete			
	J	M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	
1 - 3	2	25	50	2	14	21	1	O	2	O	0	2	1	10	9	139
4 -6	3	56	63	7	27	27	0	3	0	0	3	5	1	9	6	210
7-9	0	32	28	2	19	9	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	3	3	102
10-12	0	7	15	1	5	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	35
13+	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total N=	**5**	**124**	**156**	**12**	**65**	**57**	**1**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**6**	**7**	**2**	**24**	**20**	**490**
Total %	**(11.7)**	**(43.5)**	**(54.7)**	**(8.9)**	**(48.5)**	**(42.5)**	**(8.3)**	**(75.0)**	**(16.6)**	**(0)**	**(46.1)**	**(53.8)**	**(4.3)**	**(57.7)**	**(43.6)**	

*The number of household head given here refers to the total number of households headed by women in the survey and not to the number of respondents who were heads of households.

J = Jointly Headed Households M = Male Headed Households F = Female Headed Households

Source: WICP database

People living in households headed by women were more likely to reside in timber-only houses (54.7%) than those in households headed by men (43.5%), possibly denoting a lower socio-economic status for the former. People in male headed houses were the majority of those living in the more expensive and solid housing structures, such as stone/brick or concrete breeze block houses. Also noticeable from the data was the fact that women headed households had less access to the more expensive consumer durables such as cars than male headed households (White 1986). This may have been due to the fact that in most cases it has been easier for men to access credit for large purchases, such as cars, as well as the fact that in male headed households there was greater likelihood of another adult working and augmenting/contributing jointly to the household budget. Much of the literature on female headed households has found that lone parent/female headed households are prevalent among the poorest households in any country.[7] With only one main income earner, often in a low paying job, and with approximately 3.6 children to support (table 7.6), the high proportion of women headed households in our sample tends to support this theory.

From this brief overview of the survey population, the next chapter goes on to look at the way in which changes in educational policy at the national level have affected women's access to and participation in the educational system, and women's attitudes towards the value of the education they received for their chosen career. It also examines education and economic mobility, and the survey respondents educational and occupational aspirations for themselves and their children.

1. This section draws heavily upon the work of Bernal and Jackson (1982a/b), the members of the original WICP team who supervised the Antiguan research and who have written on the methodology and general findings of the Antiguan sample of the survey. Some of the tables and statistics used here are taken from the relevant articles in the two special issues of *Social and Economic Studies* (1986: Vol. 35, 2/3), given over to coverage of the results of the Women in the Caribbean Project. The articles in that set discussed the Project findings on a regional basis, and no attempt was made to focus on the details of any one of the territories. This chapter draws on this published material but augments it in a substantial way with data from previously unused primary WICP data on Antigua. Variations in the totals in the tables in all of the following chapters reflect either non-response or the non-applicability of certain questions. The total given is the total number of responses received to a particular question, and not the total number of respondents.

2. The twenty five area clusters were as follows:
Villa South; Gambles; Clare Hall Village; St. John's City Central (W); Sutherlands Development; Michael's Village and Michael's Mount; Martin's Village; Golden Grove; Gray's Farm (E); Green Bay (W); Lathfield to Cedar Grove; Friar's Hill Road (E) to Wireless Road; Otto's Hill; Five Islands and Union of South, to Cooks and Montclair; Crosbies; All Saints Village; Bethesda and Christian Hill; Blacks Point (E) to Marmora Bay; Liberta; Freetown; New Winthorpes; Osbourne, Piggots and Black Man; Furlins to Boggy Peak; Crabbes Hill, Johnson's Point; and Ebenezer and Jennings (E) to Green Hill.

3. This may be of little significance in a small country with very fluid boundaries between rural and peri-urban. However, as illustrated in Chapter Three, employment opportunities tend to be concentrated in urban or peri-urban areas.

4. 'Home services' and 'home production' are part of the WICP classification of women's working activities both in the home and in the paid labour force. All the categories will be more fully explained in the chapter on women's occupational activity, Chapter 6.

5. Within the WICP framework 'vertically extended' was used to refer to a household with two or more generations, and 'laterally extended' to a household consisting of a woman, her children and her siblings and their children. Multi-generational households of grandparents, parents, siblings and children are encompassed within the 'vertically and laterally' extended households. 'Woman, partner and children' describe the nuclear-type households, and 'woman and children' the lone parent households. This descriptive WICP terminology for different type of households, which has been retained here, was developed to depict at the empirical level the varying trends in household formation among African-Caribbean people discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

6. As noted by White (1986:76) the presence or absence of certain facilities and ownership of consumer durables were taken by WICP researchers as indicative of certain aspects of the quality of life obtaining in the households. Specific attention was focused on the availability of basic utilities, water, lighting, fuel, as well as eight consumer durables (radio, bicycle, car, sewing machine, television, refrigerator, telephone). White notes that in Antigua, 23.8% of the respondents were without their own water supply and that 9.3% were without an electricity supply. The main fuel used was gas and charcoal (40.7%). 40.1% used gas alone, while 16.7% used charcoal only. Only 2.3% used kerosene. In terms of consumer durables, especially larger items such as cars, just under a quarter of the households had motorised transport, and a high proportion had a refrigerator and/or a radio or television.

7. The literature on the household focuses on such issues as the sexual division of labour and the status of female headed households. Relevant works includes Massiah (1982, 1983 1991b); Buvinic *et al* (1978), Dwyer and Bruce (1988).

CHAPTER 5

Changing Educational Policies and the Role and Status of Antiguan Women

The shift from colonial administration to nationalist government in the 1950s brought significant changes in the education policies of Antigua. Moving away from selective policies founded on the race, class and sex divisions in the society, a broader-based education system providing free primary and cheaper secondary education for the majority of the school age population were put in place. None of the post-colonial governments in Antigua have put in place policies geared specifically to improving women's access to education. However, as illustrated in chapter Three, the assumptions which underscore educational policy and national school/college curricula fosters gender stereotyping with regard to girls and boys subject interests, and guides them into different topic areas and consequentially into gender stratified career options. In the co-educational schools this has also meant a diffferential weighting of vocational options for boys and girls, with greater expenditure on the traditional boys subjects of science and technical education.

In order to capture the range of educational experiences of the survey respondents, WICP questions on education were centred on the respondents, exposure to and experiences of schooling and any gender differentiated treatment received therein, their level of satisfaction with the schooling provisions, and its impact upon their adult life and their educational aspirations for themselves and their children.

5.1: Educational Access and Social and Economic Mobility

The expansion of formal education after 1950 enabled women and men from working class backgrounds to acquire skills and qualification with which they could acquire higher paying career-oriented positions, thus increasing their economic and social standing. The literacy rate of the survey respondents was higher than the national average for 1970, when 85.6% of the total Antiguan female population had achieved a minimum of primary education. Only 1% of the survey population indicated that they had received no education. Almost half (48%) of the respondents had not proceeded beyond primary education and these tended to be the older women in the sample, 71% being over the age of 35 (Table 4.4).

TABLE 5.1: Proportion Distribution of Respondents by Education and Employment Status

Employm't Status	Education Level Reached					Total N=	*Total %*
	None	Primary	Secondary	Post Secondary	Other		
Not Employed	0.0	41.5	49.0	5.7	3.8	**53**	*10.8*
Home services	0.0	71.3	24.8	0.8	3.1	**129**	*26.2*
Home Production	9.0	63.6	27.3	0.0	0.0	**11**	*2.2*
Own Business	1.7	55.9	35.6	5.1	1.7	**59**	*12.0*
Work for Family	0.0	60.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	**5**	*1.0*
Employed by Others	1.3	35.4	50.2	14.0	0.0	**235**	*47.7*
Total N=	**5**	**238**	**201**	**41**	**7**	**492**	

Source: WICP database

As well as being the older of the respondents, women with primary education only were the majority (71.3%) of those engaged mainly in home service (domestic duties), home production (63.6%) or working in family concerns (60%). They were also a good proportion of those not employed at all (41.5%) and composed just over a third of those working for others (34.5%). In fact, just over half of the cohort with primary education only were not in the waged work force at all.

Table 5.2: Proportional Distribution of Respondents by Occupation and Educational Level

Major Job Category	Education Level Reached				Total N=	*Total %*
	None	Primary	Secondary	Post Secondary		
No Answers	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	**1**	*0.4*
Professional/Technical	0.0	4.7	22.8	79.4	**57**	*24.2*
Administrative	0.0	1.2	1.8	5.9	**5**	*2.2*
Clerical	0.0	8.2	53.5	11.8	**72**	*30.6*
Sales	0.0	6.0	3.5	0.0	**9**	*3.8*
Services	0.0	63.2	14.9	0.0	**70**	*29.8*
Agriculture	66.7	1.2	0.0	0.0	**3**	*1.3*
Production related	33.3	13.0	3.5	2.9	**17**	*7.3*
Other	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	**1**	*0.4*
Total N=	**3**	**84**	**114**	**34**	**235**	*100*

Source: WICP database

At the same time, it should not pass without note that the women with primary education only made up the majority of those owning their own business (56%). However, as many of the businesses were in the areas of handicraft and sewing, these women were ably qualified by their primary education. In the words of one woman: *" I learn farming, sewing, making tings with my hands, and now I live by it."*

Most of the older respondents felt that what education they did receive had helped them to be industrious and to live their lives as wives and mothers, and with a sense of responsibility. Although many of these women had not attained high educational status, they were generally satisfied with their achievements. These women were grateful for whatever education they had received, recognizing the lack of opportunities at the time of their schooling. As one older respondent who had managed to gain a few years of education pointed out:

> *"...it could be worse, some na go 'tall 'tall. They had it so hard dat dey parents couldn't make it."*

In fact older women often compared the differences between their educational experiences and the existing system, keenly aware of inter-generational rather than gender differences. In their time the problem had been to gain access to education. Excerpts from some of the older respondents give a good picture of the way things were in their younger days:

> *"My parents were poor, they couldn't afford any other type of school* [than primary]. *They had to go out and work with hoe."*
>
> *"My parents could not afford it. My father was a fisherman, so we could not get into a good school, and they were not offering scholarships."*
>
> *"Dem time all we so* [poor/Black] *couldn't get into dem school...dem a fuh big people."*
>
> *"Secondary school was for aristocrats."*
>
> *"You had to be white or the child of Mr. and Mrs. This Very Important Person."*
>
> *"...you had to be wealthy and not illegitimate to get into a secondary school."*

However, it ought not to be to be forgotten that up to the 1960s the completion of primary education and achieving the Standard 7 certificate meant more than it does today. While in the contemporary education system primary education includes only basic education for children up to age eleven, the previous primary system was all-encompassing, some students attending up to the age of seventeen or eighteen, and going on to become student teachers after completing their Standard 7 certificate. According to some of the women:

> *"...in the older day, completing Standard 7 and achieving a school certificate enabled the ordinary person to move up the ranks in the labour force."*

For some of the women, however, this only applied to certain people, especially those of a brown colour, or those living in town:

> *"All the secondary school's were in St. John's* [the capital] *and my parents couldn't afford the transportation."*

One older respondent recalled that *"...even if you worked and gained Standard 7, there was little you could do with it"*. Another noted that: *"Our certificate didn't worth anything. It was discrimination in those days"*. The options for black women from the rural areas were, she said: *"...back in somebody house to work as servant."* She herself became a domestic.

Certainly most of the older respondents concurred about the type of educational and job opportunities available to Black Antiguans in their younger days:

> *"Everybody couldn't go to a secondary school, there was a barrier and the*

town people and the people with high colour get certain jobs. Even the country people used to be afraid to ask for a job. In the banks only coloured people. There was a crowd the first time to see the first Black girl working in a Bank."

Many of the older respondents had not managed to complete their primary education, having had to leave either because their parents could not afford the fees, because they themselves needed to work to augment the family income or to look after younger children or, in quite a few cases, because they fell pregnant in their teens:

"Children had to sacrifice school, drive the donkey, tie up de cane."

"My parent's couldn't afford text books so I had to leave school."

"I got pregnant at 14 - and that stop everything."

"My mother was not interested in sending me to school, she sent me to lib [live] *out with people early* [doing domestic work]."

"It was plenty of us and I used to have to stay at home and help my mother."

It was in fact those women with primary education only who were most satisfied with their educational achievements. While many would have wished to stay longer and go further, they were glad of the little that they had achieved and satisfied with what they had been taught:

"It helps you in all aspects for if you don't have education you are in a bad way ... you're ignorant. As long as you get the basics you can get by in life."

"E*ven though I didn't reach far the little I learn help me."*

"... it's no use hanging your hat where your hand can't reach it."

Recognizing the greater opportunity afforded to those younger women with higher educational qualifications, one older women lamented:

" I would have really like to go to secondary school, but it was only after I leave school that secondary school come in."

Universal secondary education has provided the avenue for some women to gain economic independence in a more substantive way than their older primary educated sisters. 41% of the respondents had completed secondary education and the vast majority of them were under the age of 35. However, the younger women were less happy with the results of their school days. Having reached further in the education system their aspirations were higher. Many felt that their school education had not prepared them adequately for the world of work. In fact, younger women with higher education attainment appeared more dissatisfied with their education because of the lack of effective channels to vocational opportunities, or because of its inadequacy in preparing them for the realities and problems of life. They iterated the need for emphasis upon commercial and vocational courses. Thus:

"Other than mathematics what I have done in school have not really prepared me."

"...what I did at school didn't help me get a job"... "

"I would have liked to go to Technical or Commercial School."

"...they should teach subjects apart from the set standard. Subjects like shorthand and typing."

A small proportion of the women (8.5%) reported some form of post-secondary school training, including University. Almost all of this group were under the age of forty-four. In general the professional subjects studied were teaching and nursing (53% pursued these professions), followed by vocational and commercial subjects. These women were generally satisfied with the preparation school gave them for their future careers.

TABLE 5.3: Proportional Distribution of Post-Secondary Training Received

Type of Training Received	%
Vocational	*22.2*
Commercial	*20.0*
Professional Level II (Teaching/Nursing etc)	*53.3*
Professional Level I (Accounting, Medicine, Law etc)	*2.2*
Other	*2.2*
Total Women who have received post-school training	**N= 41**

Source: McKenzie 1986: 78

Many of these women had achieved training in the very areas that the majority of secondary educated women had aspired to:

"I am satisfied because it help me to get along with my work of teaching."

" It has helped me to achieve a goal of nursing."

"It has made me what I am today."

Like their primary educated sisters, many of the women who had managed to get to secondary school either did not complete their education or did not pass their certificates:

> *" the job I really want is secretary or bank job, but I do not have paper to show."*

A respondent who had fallen pregnant early pointed out cynically:

> *"...if they had prepared us for actual situations in life I would have been more careful."*

In fact quite a number of the respondents bemoaned the lack of sex education in the school curriculum, often using their personal experiences as example:

> *" Me really feel that they should have taught sex education in school because If I had known I wouldn't have had children so soon."*

Some of the respondents, particularly the younger women who expected more out of school than learning to read, write and do basic sums, felt that the school system offered insufficient career and vocational guidance to enable women to have a greater choice when they left school. In the words of one respondent:

> *"...most girls expect to teach or go into the bank... or become nurses or dieticians."*

She never saw such a future for herself and became an Air Traffic Controller.

The aspirations of most of the respondents were to traditional educational channels and career choices and revolved around vocations which can best be described as

extensions of women's nurturing role in the home or socially designated 'female' jobs like secretaries. And while most women did not perceive a substantive difference between their own education and that of their male counterparts, some acknowledged a difference in the gender differentiation of curricular choices and the value placed on what were seen as female courses:

> *"You had an all round education, they only thing was that they didn't have maths. Algebra was for boys and Home Economics was for girls."*
>
> *"...when commercial was offered at school, the impression was given that it was for those who couldn't make it..."*

The educational experience of the survey respondents reflected the national situation, both in terms of women accessing new opportunities and also in terms of their enroling in traditionally female curriculum choices and following stereotypical career options. While a significant number of the women felt that their years of schooling had enhanced their home-maker role, the younger women were less willing to accept that role as their primary career objective. Hampered by a perceived lack of career guidance and influenced by the attitudes and expectations of parents, teachers and the wider society, and by gender differentiated school curricula, many young women felt limited in the subject and career options.The end result was that most entered into the known traditional sphere of women's work, including domestic duties.

5.2 Educational Status and Change: Women's perceptions of the role of Education in their Adult Lives

While 60% of the women were in waged employment, it was generally only those engaged primarily in domestic duties who indicated any practical benefits from the educational process in terms of the relevance of education to their vocation. The educational system has played a large role in these women's socialization into normative behavioural patterns.

Table 5.4 : Proportional Distribution of Respondents Reasons for Satisfaction with School as Preparation for Adult Life

Reasons for Satisfaction	%
Generally happy with education received	*21.9*
Education has helped to develop personal qualities such as discipline	*33.9*
Could do no better, had no alternatives	*9.5*
Schooling helped me prepare to earn a livelihood	*13.9*
School provided knowledge, developed cognitive skills	*6.9*
School helped to prepare for adult role as housewife and mother	*12.9*
Other reasons	*1.0*
Total Responses	**N= 389**

Source McKenzie 1986:94

Of those that were satisfied with their school experiences, 13% said it helped them to prepare for adult roles as housewives and mothers, and a further 34% emphasized the acquisition of social skills. For these women their school education had prepared them for adult life:

"I would say I learnt a lot of things from school. I'm not bright but things I learn there I can recall because I can cook and wash and sew me own dress. I was taught all that at school."

"...by teaching you to cook and sew and how to approach people. School prepared me for this and it taught me good manners."

"If you don't have education you can't train your children... my favourite teacher prepared me ... she always tell me how a young lady should behave."

"First of all it learnt me to cook, and the maths helped me to be able to go out and shop. So I can handle my own money. Also hygiene, and what its like to look after your own body."

However, many of those in waged employment felt that they had been inadequately prepared for careers:

"Instead of basing the education on subjects [sic], *they should have more things like what you would be doing after school... nursing class, sewing etc."*

" I would have liked to go to a school that train you to be a secretary by teaching you to type and shorthand and how to answer a phone."

"Look what they teach you. The subjects are not related at all. If I want a job in the bank I don't want no scriptures. They should give you what life calls for."

However, despite the educational advancements of the past 40 years and the increasing social and occupational mobility of women in the society, WICP research found that

women of all ages and educational levels articulated the traditional belief that: *"...a woman's role is to be wife and mother"...*" and: *"...a woman's place is in the home...".* One young respondent, who left school early due to pregnancy, was relatively pleased with her schooling because she had learnt, *"...home economics, how to be* [a] *good housewife and how to keep clean."* She was then working as a maid.

In general, the results of the study indicated that while a majority of the respondents were satisfied with their education, many also viewed such education as having prepared them mainly to be good citizens, good wives and mothers - rather than providing any wider technical competence. The respondents' statements reflect the internalization and acceptance of a set of values which regulate the roles women play in society and their educational aspirations and career paths.

5.3: Education and Gender Ideology: Aspirations for Self and Children

For many of the women in the sample, achieving the status of mother, wife and home-maker was a firm aspiration:

"It should be every girl's dream to be a housewife."

And it was mainly those who wanted to be home-makers that achieved their dreams. However, the majority could not move straight to that "exalted" state and many of the women had to leave school and find a job. In the case of the older respondents, while the status of a wife may have been the desire, the majority focused on the immediate practical task of getting away from the rigours of agricultural work which had been the primary source of employment for both women and men prior to 1960:

"I had to go into the fields to work. My friends took me. In dem days we had to work from young, either pick cotton or in cane field."

"I wanted to do anything other than the work in the cane field."

Mostly they restricted their ambitions to domestic service, and a large number of the older respondents started out in the labour force in this occupation:

"Seeing as I knew my education wasn't to any standard, I knew I wasn't going to embarrass myself and take a job I couldn't handle. So I looked for domestic work."

Some of the older women also became dressmakers, augmenting their school education with skills learned from family members or private courses. This work could be done in the home, and quite a few of the older married respondents did tailoring to swell family finances.

Younger women with better qualifications and higher expectations after their years of schooling, aspired to be teachers, nurses, secretaries, etc. They often wanted to go on to post secondary training to achieve these ends. Some of these women also expressed non-traditional career aspirations such as physiotherapy, law, missionary work, and working in the civil service or in the banking sector (the latter two are rapidly growing areas of women's employment).

Aspirations to be wives and home-makers did not compromise the respondents practical ambitions to acquire educational qualifications and reasonable employment, which were also reflected in their aspirations for their children. All wanted their

children to complete secondary school. Interestingly enough, there was a sharp divergence of opinion when asked to make a hypothetical choice over which child, boy or girl, to finance through school, if the occasion ever arose.

Table 5.5 Patterns of Choice Displayed by Respondents Regarding the Education of Children of Different Sex

Choice Made	Number	%
Son	**85**	*16.9*
Daughter	**150**	*29.8*
Would not Choose	**255**	*50.6*
Don't Know/No answer	**14**	*2.7*
Total	**N= 504**	*100*

Source: WICP database

The majority felt that both girls and boys should be educated, and just over half of the women said that they would not choose between educating a boy or a girl, or would choose according to ability:

> *"I would give to both the same opportunities, it is left to their ability."*
>
> *"As long as I can afford I would give them the best and leave the rest to the Lord."*
>
> *"All children have a right to education, as they will all need it to get by later on, on their own."*
>
> *"Everybody come the same because de son a me child and the daughter ah me child, and if I want good for one me want good for all."*

Just under a fifth of the respondents (17%) stated that they would prefer to educate a boy because:

" ...a girl can always marry money."

"...he has a more responsible part to play than a girl. He will have his wife and family. She will get a husband. "

"...because they become heads of families and wife and children look up to him. No man wants to depend on a woman."

Some also expressed the fear that girls would get pregnant as a reason for preferring to educate a boy. *"A son won't bring me belly"*, explained one woman.

However, and perhaps because of their own experiences, a significant minority (30%) showed a distinct preference for educating girls over boys so as to enhance the girls career options:

"...women find life harder without education..."

" ...men could...always follow a trade and get on well."

"Men tend to be able to do things without education. The daughter if she is not married, needs her education rather than taking to the street."

"Girls get held down young by a family, and I would like her to get an education to give her that motivation, get a career an not be tied down."

Some of the women also felt that girls would be more grateful and in any case are more dependable and would remember their mother:

"The girl will give something, even an old dress to wear."

"...you educate a son, he gone to some other woman, a daughter 'member you."

Most of women's opinions in this regard were summed up quite neatly by one older woman who said: *"In society nowadays a woman needs high education so that she can get a good job and help herself better. She won't have to depend on anyone and she can be independent."*

These women's inability to create avenues for their own upward mobility informed their attempts to help their children succeed. As one older respondent clearly stated:

"...I wouldn't like to have my daughter do housekeeping..."

However while aspiring to higher educational achievements for all their children, the careers they wished their children to pursue were informed by cultural stereotypes and reinforced traditional male (trade skills) and female (teaching, nursing) career avenues. One 63 year old home-maker said that she firmly believed that: *"...girls should learn shorthand, and boys carpentry and electrician work."* Many of these women saw their daughters as future nurses, teachers or secretarial staff.

As Cole (1982:1) notes, education or more specifically formal schooling not only has a major responsibility for identity formation of young women and men, but is responsible for preparing them for their future adult roles in society. From the viewpoints of these respondents, it would appear that the educational system in Antigua plays a major part in inculcating traditional social and cultural values and norms in both parents and children regarding the subordinated role that women should play in national development. The following chapter looks more closely at the link between educational choices and employment prospects.

CHAPTER 6

Dependents and Independence: Women's Roles and Occupational Activity

High female educational attainment rates have not translated into equitable labour force participation rates. While the number of women as a proportion of the labour force has risen substantially over the past thirty years, from 37% in 1960 to 46% in 1991, these rates are still below the current male participation rate of 54%. However, it is not possible to apply a gender neutral comparative analysis of men and women's labour force participation, for women's waged employment is bound by their perceived and actual responsibilities to their household, and their ability to participate is thus different from men.

The literature on Caribbean women is replete with notions of the essentialism of motherhood to perceptions of womanhood, and many women (and men) subscribe to a gender ideology which ascribes to women the dual burden of bearing and rearing children with or without the help of a partner. Durant Gonzalez (1982:1) contends that women's full responsibility for child rearing and caring in the English speaking Caribbean stems from social and economic pressures such as single parenting, male sharing (serial mating), male economic marginality, and the cultural expectations that women should bear children. Middle and upper class women often have the option of being responsible only for the bearing and emotional care of their children, but poor women have no choice but to seek sources of economic livelihood, the notion of man as the main breadwinner being unattainable and unrealistic.

In order to combine their childbearing/rearing and economically productive roles, women have to access varying sources of livelihood.[1] The standard definition of work as, "...the production of goods and services for sale..." used by conventional economic analysts and statisticians does not take account of the range of economic options and formal and informal occupations undertaken by women to maintain their households. To capture all aspects of activities that the women themselves classified as work, the WICP augmented the standard categories of **employed**, **self-employed** and **unemployed** generally applied to those in the labour force. The WICP classification of work also included any **work for family members**, any subsistence agriculture or handicraft activities intended for sale and carried out in/around the home (**home production**), work done for payment-in-kind, and women's domestic duties (**home services**).[2] As well as attempting to bring to light all possible activities and sources of income, the WICP survey included questions on women's perceptions of the nature and status of their work, the importance of their contribution to household management, the effect of inter-generational and life cycle differences in access to job opportunities, the effect of relationships upon labour force participation and the conflict of family responsibilities and work.

6.1: The Nature of Women's Activities

The standard definition of work has come to be associated with waged labour outside the home. However, for many respondents a definition of work included any activity to maintain themselves and their household. In the words of one home-maker:

"All of life is work, except when I sit or eat, bathe, rest or go to church."

TABLE 6.1: Proportional Distribution of Respondents by Current Activity and Union Status

Current Activity	Union Status					Total N =
	Married	Common-law	Visiting	Single	Never in Union	
Not Employed	3.4	7.5	17.8	13.5	33.3	53
Home Services	36.9	39.6	10.4	25.3	8.3	130
Home Production	1.7	3.8	0.7	4.5	-	11
Own Business	13.9	7.5	9.6	15.3	-	59
Work for Family	1.7	1.9	-	0.9	-	5
Employed by Others	42.4	39.7	61.5	40.5	58.4	232
Total %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**490**
Total N =	**(179)**	**(53)**	**(135)**	**(111)**	**(12)**	

Source: WICP database

All those engaged in home services were convinced that their work was hard:

"...any activity that you're not keen on is work - ironing, cleaning."

" Cutting wood...takes more strength."

"Carrying water...washing."

"They all make you sweat."

Women who went to work outside the home were more prone to regard their job outside the home as their occupation and housework as their duty, but even they felt that housework should be classified as work:

"All my work is work. Household chores as well as teaching."

"I do mental work at work and physical work at home to move that broom,

bend to clean under the bed and vocal cords to scream...I don't like domestic work."

Work was, however, differentiated from sources of livelihood, that is the activity that actually brings in the money. Some of those who worked out of the household for money felt that that housework was more arduous than their waged occupations:

"When I'm at home I work hard, for if I went out to work I would get more rest."

"At work I can sit down, at home I on the go all the time."

Washing was the worst chore in the eyes of all the women, especially those who did not have piped water installed in their homes. *"Everything I do is work, but washing is lots of work."* One woman neatly summed up the feeling of most when she said, *"..all of dem is work, it take energy out of you."*

Almost all the women who classified "domestic duties" as their main activity felt that the work they did was work, and agreed with the views. These women did not impute homework with a low status and clearly felt that they were contributing to their families well being. In the words of one:

"We play a leading role in the community. We start at home with the child and family, preparing them for when they go out from home. We have a great responsibility. Much of the preparation for life begins at home."

These women who listed themselves as being engaged solely in home services - that is domestic duties around the home - made up just over a quarter (26.5%) of the sample. As a group they were among the older women in the sample and most (67%) were either married or in common-law relationships. Some of the older women had given up waged employment upon marriage, giving the reason as their partners disapproval:

> *"...my husband would not allow me to do anything outside of the house."*
>
> *"My husband doesn't want me to work...he feel that working would make me too independent."*

Considering that over half of the respondents came from rural areas, a surprisingly small 2.3% of the women listed home production as their main activity. It might have been expected that those women who did not go out to work might have been more able to undertake activities around the house, helping to make financial ends meet. But while many of those who classified themselves as engaged in home services stated that they also carried out other productive activities around the house and kitchen-garden, such as maintaining a garden or sewing or making food items for sale, most of these felt that such work was secondary to their main occupation of caring for family and household.

Few of the women in the sample (10.8%) regarded themselves as not employed in any way, that is engaged neither in the work force nor in any activities around the home. A significant majority of those not employed were younger, single women (60% were

under the age of 30, and 80% were not living with a partner). However, while listing themselves as not employed, some of these respondents resorted to casual labour or worked on a non-cash basis for family members, and others resorted to occasional home production to provide a source of income or goods.

Many of the younger women who designated themselves as not employed may have been out of work due to a lack of jobs commensurate with their academic achievements. One 24 year old blamed the system for her lack of employment. However, although she was technically not employed, she spent her days helping out with domestic chores, baby sitting for her sister and selling her father's fish. Yet, she did not classify herself as working for family as these chores were undertaken as part of her contribution to the household work. It must be pointed out that single women living in a family member's house, such as this young woman, would also have been less than likely to categorise themselves as being involved in "home services", particularly if there was another woman in the home whose main responsibility that was. For younger women this distinction may also have been a point of pride.

The percentage of women owning or operating their own businesses in the formal sector appears to be growing at the national level, particularly in urban areas. As noted in chapter Three, many of those currently entering commerce and setting up small businesses are accessing formal and non-formal education channels now available to enhance their skills in an effort to get into the labour force. This latter group are often supported by national employment directives which encourage the establishment of

cottage industries and small businesses. In fact with relatively low levels of academic achievement and a saturated formal labour market (especially the public sector), this has become the cornerstone of many employment policies in both developed and developing countries.

The Antiguan respondents who designated themselves as own-account self employed workers made up 12% of the sample. Many of the women either had their own business or were in a partnership with spouses or family members. Some followed their family into the business, as in the case of one woman who was a butcher. One of the few agriculturalists had also taken over the farmland of her parents:

"It was my mother own, so I just continue."

The data on these self employed women indicates that as a group they tended to be older (79.6% were over age 35) and less well educated than their co-respondents (most having only a primary education). One such woman found that her primary education was sufficient to help her get started:

"Teachers taught me Handicraft, this is my living now and there is where it started. I have a certificate in Domestic Science and Handicraft."

Another older respondent with only primary education had managed to establish herself as a major provider of cleaning services in the country. From starting the initial business with two staff and her own savings, she reached the stage where she employs twenty-one people and is able to access bank loans for house and business purchases. Self-employed women with secondary or vocational/tertiary education were

able to use their training to set up business, such as the case of a former nurse who had established a private nursing service. The larger more established businesses run by self-employed women in the sample were in commercial areas most favoured by women, such as boutiques, day care centres, hairdressing/beauty clinics, etc. These women had decision-making power and were able to pay themselves full salaries. They mentioned few problems in accessing credit and were able to work in an office away from home.

However, the majority of women who listed themselves as having their own business were not so fortunate. These women often worked in small-scale enterprises in the informal sector as sole traders, often working from home on shoestring budgets, with low profit margins. Their enterprises were generally established in areas where the women could start up with basic skills, and with cash raised through savings or from the informal "throwing box" savings schemes.[3] In only a few cases did these home-based activities rely upon large capital outlays and training. With little marketing or book-keeping know-how, the women often relied upon extended family support for help with domestic duties as well as with aspects of running the business itself. At the time of interviewing there were few courses for women wishing to enter into self-employment, and those that were available were in the capital of St. John's. Some of the women who had heard of such courses could not go because of time constraints and lack of transportation.

The main business operation of these women was small scale dress making (undertaken from home) and roadside snackettes (cafes) or food stalls. An unusual case was of a woman who burned wood to make charcoal for sale. One small sole trader stated: *"I loved sewing from since I was a child. I bought a hand machine and started."* Some of the women explained that they started working from home in order to combine income earning with child care:

> *"I felt that I wanted a sideline. Having a large family, I felt I needed some help with them, financial help."*
>
> *"I didn't have anyone to leave them with so I decide to buy a few things and put them in a tray and sell them and look for them* [the children] *myself."*
>
> *"Well when me leave a morning time fe de coal me can come back fo look after me children. To do out work is 7 to 4 and me can't care dem good."*
>
> *"I used to sew in town, but after my second to last child, I decided to sew for myself, so I got a machine and started."*

Some of the women had entered self-employment after their children had grown up, others felt that they lacked sufficient educational qualifications to get into a job, and some started in self-employment after being laid off waged work. Also, quite a few of the older respondents indicated that their husbands had stopped them from pursuing outside work:

> *"I was a supervisor at a garment factory... a contract was lost - too much supervisors...and they made me redundant."*
>
> *"Well I am not qualified in anything particularly, and my husband didn't want*

me to work in any shops so I decide on sewing."

"Because I did not complete my education and could not get a job, I decided to go into my own business."

"He did not want me to work and I could not go out. He give me the shop, so I could stay at home and be like Cinderella in a shoe."

"He didn't want me to work out until the children grew up."

Others had retired or had quit work in other enterprises to set themselves up:

"After I stopped work, I decided to do something for myself and started selling ice and drinks."

"I use to work out when I was younger but can't bother with that at my age".

"Having worked for others, I realised that the only way to make it is to work for yourself."

And while many women entered into self employment out of economic necessity, they also did it for the freedom that it gave - to work their own hours in their chosen environment - and the independence from other people's influence over their activities. As the charcoal burner explained:

"After my husband left home I don't like people telling me what to do, so I start cutting wood in my spare time."

Although the national female labour force participation rate was 42% in 1983, just over 60% of the survey respondents were recorded as being involved in the labour force.[4] The national data presented in Chapter Three indicated a shift by public and

private sector investment policies and worker choice away from involvement in agriculture to tourism, manufacturing and service related work. The numbers of agricultural workers have declined significantly, while the urban located service sector - especially the tourist industry - has grown at a tremendous rate, as have the numbers of women in light manufacturing industries and government service.

TABLE 6.2: Classification of Primary Job by Current Union Status (Per Cent)

Major Job	Current Union Status					Total %
	Married	Common law	Visiting	Single	Never in Union	
Professional/Technical	38.0	-	14.5	30.4	(2)	*24.0*
Administrative/ Executive/managerial	5.1	-	-	2.2	-	*2.5*
Clerical	26.5	22.7	43.4	15.2	(4)	*30.4*
Sales	3.8	9.1	1.2	6.5	-	*3.8*
Services	19.0	63.6	32.5	32.6	-	*30.0*
Agriculture	1.3	-	-	4.3	-	*1.3*
Production Related	6.3	4.5	8.4	8.7	(1)	*7.6*
Unstated	-	-	-	-	-	*0.4*
Total %	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***
N=	**(79)**	**(22)**	**(83)**	**(46)**	**(7)**	**237**

Source: WICP database

Table 6.3: Number of Respondents Employed by Others by Occupation

Occupation	Number	Per Cent
PROFESSIONAL	**57**	*24%*
Agronomist	1	
Nurses and Medical Officers	12	
Teachers	41	
Auditors	1	
Air Traffic Controller	1	
Other professional	1	
ADMINISTRATORS	**6**	*2.53%*
Administrative officials	3	
Director and manager	2	
Government executive	1	
CLERICAL	**72**	*30.4%*
Stenographer/typist	25	
Receptionist/clerks	5	
Bookkeepers/cashiers	18	
Computer clerks	3	
Mail distribution clerks	2	
General clerks	18	
Telephone operator	1	
SALES	**9**	*3.8%*
Sales supervisor	1	
Sales clerks	8	
AGRICULTURE	**3**	*1.3%*
Agricultural labourers	3	
SERVICES	**71**	*29.95%*
General housekeeper	11	
Cook (private)	2	
Cleaners	8	
Nursemaids	4	
Supervisors (services)	1	
Hairdresser	1	
Cook (commercial)	8	
waitresses/bartenders	13	
Maids (commercial)	10	
Cleaners (commercial)	9	
Other services	4	
PRODUCTION RELATED	**18**	*7.6%*
Supervisors	4	
Garment makers	9	
Other related workers	5	
Not stated	1	*0.42%*
TOTAL N =	**237**	*100*

Source: Bernal and Jackson 1982a:37

For many women working in agriculture was what they had aspired to get away from, caught up as it is in images of slavery, estate labour, and drudgery. The sector was perceived to be low-paid, hard work and was universally held in low esteem. Only 1.3% of the respondents worked in agriculture:

> *"Before time the kind of work my grandmother used to do, we not doing now, like field work. We reaching and pushing harder now. We earning more money too. Better jobs available."*

Those women (3) who listed agriculture as their main occupation were, like their counterparts at the national level, of a higher median age than the rest of our sample, all being over the age of 35.

In fact, most of the respondents followed the national occupational orientation towards the service sector and work in government service. The occupational categories of the women who worked for others were mainly distributed between the service and sales sector (34%), professionals who worked mostly for the government (24%), and the clerical categories (30.4%). As illustrated in the previous chapter women's labour force participation and the type of occupation sought is mediated to a large extent by age and level of educational achievement. Older respondents with primary level education working in the formal labour force were mostly involved in service sector or production-related manufacturing. This group also contained slightly more than half of those with their own business, perhaps due to factors of age, experience (of working in other enterprises) and the necessary resources to start up. Few of the older women listed themselves as not employed.

Age was certainly not a constraining factor in women's desire to be in paid work and over 40% of those working for others were over the age of thirty five. There was a generational difference in terms of activity patterns, with younger women concentrated in the 'feminized' modern sector (teaching, nursing, sales and clerical work), and older women continuing to hold onto the older female occupations (commercial and domestic service work). There has been a shift, however, in the spatial location of the service work being done by women, with most women now working in shops or hotels as opposed to working in people's homes. This represents a movement away from an area of work (domestic service) which facilitated the entry of many of the older women of lower educational status into the labour market.

There was a distinct difference in the quality of education achieved by younger women and the occupational opportunities available to them, a perception shared by the older respondents:

> *"It change up, women more brighter now, dem getting more job and so. Before time is mostly only field work and so they could get, but not any more."*
>
> *"Before time woman was more or less a housewife. Today women are not that, they go out and work and bring in money."*
>
> *"...in my early years, the role of the woman was only of becoming a wife. If I had the opportunities available today presented to me back then I would have been better off."*

Still, most of the respondents, whether younger or older, had aspired to traditional "female" employment areas of their period, and in fact almost all were working as

teachers, nurses, typists, waitresses, clerks, domestics and maids. The nature of women's labour force participation is indicative of the gender segmentation of the labour market. As one respondent said: *"..the average woman seems to choose a vocation which is woman oriented."*

Outside those who owned their own business, few respondents (5%) were in a position of authority at their work place. While almost 30% of the women worked in the service industry, only one indicated that she worked at a supervisory level, as did one of the 3.8% who worked in sales and 4 of the 7.1% working in production. Overall, only the 2.5% working as administrators appeared to have senior level posts.

Those with secondary education (mainly younger women) were over half of those in waged employment and were generally engaged in clerical work. Few respondents with post-secondary level education were not employed, and almost all of this group (79.4%) were employed at the professional and managerial rung of the occupational ladder - overwhelmingly in the 'female' areas of teaching, nursing and the civil service. Among respondents it would appear that women with higher levels of education were entering the formal labour market in greater numbers. However, those at the median level with general secondary education and no specific vocational qualification appeared to face higher levels of unemployment due to the shortage of available and desirable career options. It is also probable that women in this category would be less likely to indicate home services as their primary employment, or enter into low paying service jobs as they strive to utilize their education. Women's

educational level thus determines the type of employment which they can or wish to aim for.

TABLE 6.4: Proportional Distribution of Length of Time in Job by Occupational Category (Respondents Employed by Others)

Major Job Category	Time in Job							Total N =
	<1.yr	1-2	3-4	5-9	10-19	20+	N.S	
Prof./Technical	7.0	7.0	7.0	28.0	36.8	12.5	1.7	**57**
Administration	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	**6**
Clerical	13.7	21.9	20.5	24.6	16.5	2.7	0.0	**72**
Sales	33.3	11.1	22.2	11.1	22.2	0.0	0.0	**9**
Service	28.2	15.5	22.4	17.0	15.5	1.4	0.0	**71**
Agriculture	0.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	**3**
Production	41.2	41.2	5.9	0.0	11.7	0.0	0.0	**18**
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	**1**
Total N =	**44**	**40**	**39**	**51**	**49**	**12**	**2**	**237**

Source: WICP Database

Most of the respondents who worked were in full time employment, and many had worked in their jobs for a significant period of time. Some of those in professional, technical and administrative posts had been in their jobs between five and nineteen years. The respondents in the sales, service and manufacturing sectors did not display such longevity in post, their median length of time in the job being between five and nine years. The difference is perhaps due to the fact that these latter jobs were in areas which see a rapid turnover of personnel due to the low skilled, low paid nature of the work, and in sectors which are more rapidly affected by downturns in the economy.

International moves towards the casualization of the labour force through global restructuring and fragmentation of the labour process (and the growth of part-time work) are not yet evident in the English-speaking Caribbean (Mitter 1987). In Europe and North America some women welcome part-time work and job sharing options as a way of meeting their familial responsibilities and needs for additional household income. In the Caribbean, however, with a high proportion of female headed lone parent families and no state supported child benefit schemes, women's contribution to household income is critical. Even women who were living with a partner were major contributors to their household's standard of living and quality of life.

Almost all women expressed the critical importance of independent income for the support of themselves and their family. One older woman insisted:

> *" ..when you sit and wait on men, they hand go in their pocket, but it can't come out."*

Another aptly pointed out that:

> *"...obligate is the worst gate to go through, even though its the biggest gate in the world."*

For most women, having their own money meant independence to buy when they liked and what they liked without recourse to sanction from others, particularly partners. Asked it she felt good about earning her own income one woman replied:

> *"A wha joke is dis! If me feel good? Nobody can cut style on me. Me won't stop work till me dead, even if me cripple me have to find something to do!"*

Most others agreed with that view:

> *"If I had to depend on the man money, me could not open me mouth, I am independent."*
>
> *"You na have to bother with nobody."*
>
> *"I feel happy because anything I want I just buy it. I don't have to ask him."*
>
> *"I would grieve if I had to rely on my children to support me altogether."*
>
> *"If you na have your own money, dog buss ya head and ratta nyam off you supper* [ie. people can take advantage of you]."

The general feeling was that:

> *"Anything better than when you have your own money? When you have your own money you are a Queen."*

6.2: Factors Affecting Women's Labour Force Participation

Caribbean women's perception of their worth and self esteem are often structured by their ability to have and raise a family, and a woman's decision over whether to work for wages outside the home is closely bound to her role as a mother. Women's decision to work is affected by two interlinked considerations. First, is the type and conditions of work on offer, and their age, qualifications and experience. Second, however, for women who have families and partners, factors such as time availability, household and child care duties as well as the attitude of partners to women working, and the job security and wage level of their partner are also significant determinants in the cost-benefit analysis women use when deciding about the type of employment to engage in, if any.

According to Barrow (1986b:137), a stereotypical portrayal of the female economic participation cycle is closely bound up with their reproductive cycle. After completing school, most working class young women continue to live at home and engage in waged work until they have a child. Many of these women continue to live with their parent(s) and work, accessing supplementary financial support from the child's father and child care from a family member. Another child with the same person often signals the setting up of an independent domestic unit, and the woman becomes financially dependent upon that partner. As the children get older the woman may re-enter waged work depending upon the level of her partner's support. When the children themselves start earning they may support her, and if she has girl children the cycle starts again. This portrayal did not represent the complexity of the lives and the choices of the Antiguan respondents, as will be demonstrated.

Barrow's model is correct however, in the emphasis placed upon the importance of parental and union status in determining whether and how women enter the labour force. One respondent asserted:

> *"...When you are a woman, all the family work is on you, while the man is free to do as he please..."*

Some of the older respondents had stopped work outside the home after starting to live with a partner, their partners having refused them permission to continue. One older respondent who had worked as a domestic prior to her marriage was refused permission by her husband to continue. Instead, after marriage she worked on the family land. These women, who were mostly engaged in home services, often

performed tasks for their kin - like washing, cooking and caring for small children, sometimes for payment in cash and sometimes in kind. Most, however, relied upon their husband/partners income for their primary economic support. Satisfaction with this arrangement ran the gamut of feelings, with some women happy with the arrangement and others constrained by the feeling of dependency, as the following comments illustrate:

> *"My husband gives me and...I run the money in this house, paying bills, shopping and so."*
>
> *"If I ask my husband he wants to know what I do with the money he give me, so I keep a book and record every cent I use."*
>
> *"He so botheration...when he does come he put on the radio and say he don't know what stupidness we a watch, and he have electricity bill to pay."*

Other women, especially those in low pay and low status jobs, would have been glad to be in such a position and indicated that they would withdraw from the labour force if they could find someone to support them and their families adequately.

The notion of a male breadwinner informed the aspirations of many of those who wanted to stay at home:

> *"Men are to feed the family, they are the one to support the family."*

A 41 year old woman who had worked in a series of low income jobs in order to raise her seven children did not enjoy her lone parent status at all and wished for a husband to ease her economic burden. For her:

> *"...women were made to be housewives and should not be out working. A*

mother's place is in her home with her children... for men are supposed to secure wives in a house and give her money for her children."

However, this idealized picture did not conform to the reality of many of these Antiguan women's lives. Male economic support was not guaranteed and some of the women, especially those without partners, carried the full burden of their families economic needs:

"... there is a lot of pressure on women to support their children, especially as the cost of living is so high. Women need to cut and contrive to make do."

"Women always have the headache of trying to make ends meet."

And they make ends meet from a variety of sources, including their own income (if working) or from other domestic and extra-domestic sources, including cash support from partners, children, welfare payments and remittances, as well as non-cash gifts (or work done in kind) from extended family and friendship networks. For many women stretching their income was necessary in order to meet the rising cost of living:

"...when me a pay $184 for the light bill, me can't save nothing, me have to sell ice and frozen joy to bring up the money."

"They say these times better off than before, but I don't think so, man and woman have to work harder as cost of living so high you can hardly manage."

Almost half the women indicated that they provided the main source of their household's income and, as expected, these were the women either in waged

employment, working for others or working for themselves. Women living with partners and engaged in home services or home production were more reliant on their partner's wages, as were those who were not employed. Only 8% of the women were reliant upon their children or on remittances for their main income (eg. mainly older women in cohabiting relationships not working out of the home).

Table 6.5: Main Sources of Income by Activity Status (by per cent)

Main Source of Income	Activity Status						Total N =
	Not Employed	Home Services	Home Product'n	Own Business	Employ/ family	Employ/ Others	
No Main Support	9.4	7.7	0.0	5.0	0.0	1.7	**22**
Self	7.5	4.6	27.3	61.0	40.0	78.5	**230**
Partner	45.2	60.0	54.5	20.3	40.0	16.3	**159**
Self & Partner	3.8	1.5	0.0	10.3	20.0	1.4	**14**
Children	7.6	14.6	18.2	1.7	0.0	0.4	**27**
Remittance	1.9	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**6**
Child Support	7.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	**6**
Other	17.0	5.4	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.9	**19**
Don't know	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	**3**
Total N =	**53**	**130**	**11**	**59**	**5**	**228**	**486**

Source : WICP database

However, less than 50% of the sample lived with a partner, and for all of these women the role of breadwinner for their families fell squarely upon their shoulders. As expected, the majority of those in visiting relationships (71%), those who had no partner at the time of the interview (56.7%), and those never in any type of union (58.3%) worked for wages. In contradiction to Barrow's model, even for those living with a partner the changing consumption patterns of the past three decades have

necessitated a greater cash income, and women have had to go out to work to help maintain the household. The labour force participation rates of women did not drop significantly with marriage/consensual union status. In fact the highest proportion of not employed women was among those without partners. And while husbands/partners made the primary monetary contribution to the household, the women in cohabiting relationships were relatively economically independent. Only 54.5% of the married women (39% of the main sample) relied upon their partner's wages as their main income (and 58% of whom worked for wages). Many of these women viewed their income as a help to meet the cost of living, or they viewed all household income as joint and pooled theirs with their husbands. Some men were, however, still resistant to women working in the formal labour force. As graphically pointed out by two respondents:

> *"Some men still don't want women to go out to work - men still feel they are the boss but what they don't know is one finger can find the lice, but one can't take it out."*
>
> *" Things are hard these days, it takes two hands to clap. Women should work."*

Also, in contradiction to popular notions of women's roles in common-law relationships in the Caribbean, proportionately more women in such unions engaged in home services and home production than any other group. Surprisingly also, women in common-law unions (11% of the sample) with no 'legally sanctioned' economic rights from their partner relied more upon their partners wages (66%) than married women. The high level of labour force participation by women living with a partner

highlights two points: the need for cash income in the fast growing consumer society of the Caribbean, and women's recognition of the need to maintain an independent income.

TABLE 6.6: Proportional Distribution of Main Sources of Income by Union Status

Source of Income	Union Status				Total %
	Married	Common-law	Visiting	Single	
Self	31.6	24.5	64.6	60.4	*46.7*
Partner	54.5	66.0	19.5	0.9	*33.5*
Self& Partner	3.9	7.5	0.8	0.9	*2.7*
Children	3.9	-	1.5	16.2	*5.7*
Remittances	0.6	-	0.8	3.6	*1.3*
Child Support	-	1.9	1.5	2.7	*1.3*
Other	1.1	-	6.8	9.9	*4.6*
No Main Support	4.4	-	4.5	5.4	*4.2*
Total%	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	
N=	**(180)**	**(53)**	**(133)**	**(111)**	**477**

Source: Powell 1986: 101

Massiah suggests (1986c:206) that some married women may be fortunate to have partners who do not stymie their work aspirations. I submit, however, that men's attitudes appear to have shifted somewhat with the times because of economic necessity.:

> *"Some of them don't mind the women working, because the strain is off dem."*
>
> *"I believe they even think they were foolish* [for not letting women work]."
>
> *"Men are luckier than before. For they have more to help them - as some women work out, and now even work for more than some* [men]. "

"As far as I can see, the man of today, they don't take up their responsibilities, they leave everything to the woman. As a matter of fact if the women are not working, some don't get married to them. They say they want independent women who can ***help them.***" [my emphasis]

"Men accept and like their wives to work. They are grateful for the financial support, but some still want to be boss."

One of the more cynical women noted:

"some of the men change because before they never want you to work. Dem does say if you go to work is am man you want to see. Now dem a say... gal go come out a me house, go look for work to do."

Some of the women saw this male position as a renunciation of men's rightful duties to support the household. Male attitudes to women working outside the home appeared to be influenced by inter-generational differences, as it was mainly the older married women who indicated partner resistance to waged work:

"Some young men think that women must work, but the older ones think that you should not work."

It seems that men were more willing to support their partners work aspirations depending upon the status of the positions that the women were employed in. Some of the older women said that they had stopped or not engaged in outside work because their partners had not wanted then to go into domestic service or shop work. For women aged over 45 the type of work that they may have been able to find would have been more menial than the choices available to women today. As marriage was

symbolically linked to masculinity and men's ability to support a household, most men would not have wished for their wives to be engaged in menial work in the homes of others. In fact, almost 70% of married respondents in the labour force were in the higher level/better paying professional and technical posts, constituting 43% of those at professional, managerial and administrative level and 26% of those in clerical posts.

Almost all respondents in paid employment outside the home appeared generally able to combine economic and domestic roles. In the main, these women did not see their domestic responsibilities or their relationships as an encumbrance to their employment aspirations:

> *"The freedom is there for women. Those who want to put themselves in bondage do it."*
>
> *"Anything me want to do, nothing keep me back at all, if me put me mind to do it."*
>
> *"If you want to do something, you go do it. Only thing if you are a housewife perhaps, but if this is well organized it should not stop you."*
>
> *"Me do what me want to do. Me kill me king and rule me country. Marriage na keep me back at all from doing nothing."*

This was not the view of the majority who did not go out to work or who started to work later in life. Many of this group felt that they had been kept back from participating in the labour force because of the need to look after their children.

> *"Women without children have more opportunities. Women with children have*

more work. The children are more of a keep back."

"I stop my work to look after my family. After my child grew up I started work again."

"Man better off than woman, they don't have children to delay them. De world we inna today belong to man and woman, only thing woman have children to look after."

"It is a very hard thing on a woman today, because she has to go out to augment the partners income, and it is hard on the children. She is a free woman ... but that freedom is not good because the children suffer."

One of the women's primary concerns was for the welfare of their children. However, motherhood certainly did not prove to be a major deterrent to women's labour force participation. It was more likely to delay participation than block it all together. Less than 11% of the women in the sample gave up work or study to look after their children. This situation was helped by the availability of maternity benefits for those in the formal labour force which allowed them to remain at home for thirteen weeks with an income. However, women who could not access this benefit, and all women who had returned to work, utilised some form of child care facilities while at work.

The availability of day care facilities for their children was a primary concern for women wishing to go out to work and at the time of the survey few existed:

"The only thing that I see keep down a woman is lots of children and nowhere to send them."

TABLE 6.7: Arrangements Made for Care of First and Last Child (by per cent)

Care Arrangements	First Child	Last Child
In Care of Female Relatives	65.1	47.2
In Care of Other Children	-	8.3
In Care of Day Nursery	1.4	2.8
In Care of Friend/Neighbour	8.3	10.0
In Care of Helper	12.8	22.2
Left Him/Her Alone	-	-
Gave up Job/ Studies	10.6	7.8
Other	1.8	1.7
Total	**(218)**	**(180)**

Source: Powell 1986: 119

> *"After I retired, I still wanted to offer help in the community since parents had problems getting to work and caring for their children...I decided to set up a pre-school for children as from three years..."*

Very few of the women interviewed could afford the fees of private day care centres and most continued to use family resources to care for the children when they went out to work, leaving children in the care of female relatives. Only 14.2% of the respondents used private day care centres or paid helpers to look after their first child. However changes in the pattern of using the extended family for child care were indicated by the fact that the number of mothers using helpers/day care centres for their last child almost doubled (to 25%). This may indicate that family help was less forthcoming than before, with older women also needing to go out to work. It may also have reflected the change in women's incomes, with more women now able to pay for child care.

Many women felt constrained by a perceived gender discrimination in terms of the type of work and wages that they could command:

> *"I feel men have an easier time to get jobs. Though things is better, there is space for better conditions for women."*
>
> *"...men have better job opportunities and wider variety."*
>
> *"A man has ... the edge over women, getting a job is more easier."*
>
> *"I wanted to do mechanics but had second thoughts because of being a woman."*
>
> *"Certain job a man can get, like carpenter, mechanic. A woman have to go to factory."*
>
> *"Women have come a long way from the Florence Nightingale days, they smoke and drink, they do the same and even better work, but they are paid even 10 cents less for the same work."*
>
> *"Men stand good, its they that stand good. For some women's days pay is $10.00, while the man's own is $15.50."*
>
> *"Women are not given their rights, even in the job with regard to wages. Men are given priority."*

These women recognised systemic discrimination which not only kept them in certain jobs in the labour market and paid less for their work, but also deigned to impose moral standards on them which affected their earning abilities:

> *"When you are unmarried* [and teaching] *in Primary school and you get pregnant you have to resign for 6 months without pay whereas the man can continue to work."*

"Sometimes on the job, they think that because you are a woman you don't need the extra salary. You don't need extra money. Sometimes they give the men pensions and call it all kinds of things. So their pay level is more than yours."

Most women blamed the patriarchal structuring of the society in which men were able, they felt, to keep them subordinated. In the words of two of the women:

"They [men] *are holding the keys to positions, wages, everything."*

"We have more avenues open to us now in some places, equal job opportunities, more equality where the law is concerned...but they still feel a woman's place is in the home."

6.3: Changing Perceptions of Occupational Status and Social Mobility

Up to the 1950s perceptions of a woman's role was closely bound to her domestic duties. Social behaviour based on ideal notions of middle class family life proved to be a powerful socializing force in men and women's perceptions of women's place in the work force. Married women were expected to remain home and look after their families; the ability of a woman to give up her job upon marriage often raised her status in her community and increased the prestige of her husband. Even people who could perhaps not afford to also followed this pattern, often resulting in such women supplementing their income by engaging in domestic production of some sort to ensure the economic survival of her family. The opening of broad based educational channels radically altered this situation as it gave women from lower class backgrounds access to education which had the potential for leading them into career

avenues other than domestic or agricultural work. It is clear that better educated young women have greater opportunities for waged employment. However, for all women the availability and accessibility of new career opportunities has helped women to alter their perception of themselves and their ability to contribute to the household and national economic development. It also altered their perceptions of their role in terms of the kind of work they can do, and the worth of that work:

> *"Women today are putting themselves out to get equal with men. They no longer want to be seen as inferior, but are trying to get on the same level as men. It is a much better position."*
>
> *"Some women hold high posts - we are beating up the men with work."*

However, despite women's increased labour force participation, low income women still have restricted access to avenues of social mobility. Changes in women's educational achievements and new areas of occupational activity at the national level have not significantly changed women's activity pattern. The survey respondents tended to be concentrated in manual service and light industry occupations - which generally are poorly paid and have few avenues for social or economic mobility. The positions of most of these women was not managerial or supervisory. Despite their educational achievements most women were still bound by the gendered vertical and horizontal segregation of the labour force as well as by social channels which prevent their mobility. Some of the women understood the dynamics of the segregated labour force and lay the blame directly at the door of the men in charge. A few women felt that men were using the women's occupational activities for their own selfish ends,

and that men had managed to find a new angle on the situation of women working which still left them in control. While women were working hard to catch up, men were seen as relaxing and shirking their duties and responsibilities to the home, which women then had to shoulder:

> *"Some men want a woman to go and work so that she can help financially. In fact some of them so lazy that they don't even bother to look for work to do, they leave all the strain on the woman."*
>
> *" Men are not taking their share - some are glad that women are changing the spirit - some may cherish Women's Lib because is less work for them."*

In the eyes of most women, however, men were still reluctant to allow women to catch up:

> *"They are fighting against us because they don't want us to be in the same position as they. They want to be the breadwinner, they hold the money and they give a little bit or hold it and they don't want you to say anything. They want to be in charge. But no way! I feel that woman has the capacity and the ability to work. Throw a fork, start an engine, paint, do puttying, go pasture with animal."*

Despite active involvement in the economy and relative economic autonomy from men, women's economic status has remained circumscribed by their position in the labour force. Women generally occupy the lower paid positions in organisations, and proportionately women's earnings were lower than men's. While many poorer women

may not have had a concept of the importance of their role in national economic development they did know that their work and contribution is essential to the growth and development of their families. Many women participated in the labour force, but the majority of those who did not also contributed by enabling others to work by undertaking their domestic and child care duties. These women recognised this contribution to be one of consequence.

Occupational mobility and career achievements were very rarely seen as a replacement for motherhood and family life, but almost all of the women valued economic independence and the ability to handle their own money, whether it be earnings or savings. This independence was limited, however, by the resources that the women had at their disposal. For those who relied on resources that they did not control, economic independence was the desire not the reality. However, even for those with access to an independent income, economic autonomy did not guarantee social power; these Caribbean women are an apt example of the limitations that culture and ideology place upon access to positions of power and authority. All the women worked hard to be able to care for themselves and their families in the face of social structures and cultural imperatives in Antigua which circumscribed their ambitions and achievements. And although dependents and familial responsibilities were not necessarily a deterrent, they played a significant part in the decisions that women made on whether and how to work outside the home.

1. Sources of livelihood are broadly defined and refer not only to market-oriented waged labour and self-employment, but also sources of support gained from kin and friendship networks.

2.The full WICP classification for "work" was as follows:

Not Employed: No income earning activity and no participation in home services indicated by the respondents.

Home Services: This category was restricted to those who engaged solely in home-making and child care activities.

Home Production: This category included women who supplemented their home service activities by the production and occasional sale of handicraft or agricultural produce.

Employed in Own Business: This included women who operated their own business with or without paid help.

Employed by Family Member: This category was for those receiving a wage/salary from family enterprise.

Employed by Others: This included women working for a wage from non-family members.

3. These informal credit organisations fulfil some of the savings and loans functions of a bank. Members put in a set amount of money monthly, the whole sum being released to one person in the group by preset order every month. They are prevalent throughout the Caribbean and are often a major source of small scale capital formation indispensable to many low income women. See Barrow (1986a) and Smith and Smith (1986) for a fuller description of the way in which they work.

4. The higher WICP figures may differ from Government surveys because the project sought to capture the micro details of women's lives and businesses which may have been thought too small to report to census enumerators.

Chapter 7

All Work and No Play?:
The Realm of Familial Responsibility

Since the 1940s social science research on the Caribbean has highlighted four fundamental characteristics of African Caribbean women's lives. These are: high levels of economic independence; a prevalence of female headed households in the flexible family forms existing in the Caribbean; the matrifocal nature of many households; and the essentialism of motherhood. The nature of women's familial responsibilities is seen as structuring their social interaction and their ability to engage in activities outside the home. The WICP researchers aimed to assess the importance of these indicators in the lives of contemporary African Caribbean women.

A number of avenues were explored to try to come to an understanding of the link between economic independence, familial responsibilities and the impact of these factors on women's time use. Women were questioned about: the types of relationships and households that they were in; their attitudes to bearing and rearing children and to their domestic responsibilities; the sources of family income; the locus of decision-making in the household; their allocation of time between domestic, occupational and recreational activities, the nature of male involvement in family life and the role of men in the wider society; their perceptions of the impact of societal changes and men's actions both in the household and in the wider society; and finally their perceptions of their own role and status.

To reflect the fluidity of family forms among African-Caribbeans which encompass legally sanctioned marriages, common-law cohabitation and other types of residential and non residential unions, the WICP adopted a five-fold classification of the types of relationships women were or were not involved in. Women who listed themselves as having a partner were differentiated according to whether they were married (common residence - legal sanction) consensually cohabiting (common residence - no legal sanction) or in a visiting relationship (different residence - no legal sanction). Those women who listed themselves as having no current partner were differentiated according to whether or not they had ever been involved in a relationship.

The WICP also adopted an innovative terminology to describe the various types of households that women lived in. Seven different types of households were identified encompassing lone parent, nuclear (either legally sanctioned or common-law), and a variety of types of extended family forms. Within the WICP framework 'vertically extended' was used to refer to a household with two or more generations and 'laterally extended' referred to a household consisting of a woman, her children and her siblings and their children. Multi-generational households of grandparents, parents, siblings and children are encompassed within the 'vertically and laterally' extended household category.

7.1: Union Relationships and Family Formation

Received wisdom holds that African-Caribbean people do not generally live in legally sanctioned nuclear-type families and households but, due to historical antecedents and

common practise, tend to reside either with their extended family or in some form of concubinage. The incidence of common-law relationships is reputedly high in the Caribbean, and laws have been put in place in almost all territories to protect the progeny of such unions and, in some countries, to give legal protection to the women.[1]

However, despite the common observation among academicians that such relationships are more prevalent than marriage among African-Caribbean families, only 11% of our sample were in such unions. In fact almost half of the respondents had been married at some stage, and nearly 40% were still married at the time of interviewing. The majority of those in legally sanctioned relationships were over the age of 35, which would support established opinion about the prevalence of late marriage among African Caribbean couples. Furthermore the majority of those involved in common-law and visiting relationships were younger women, as were almost all of those respondents who had never been in a relationship of any type.

TABLE 7.1: Marital Status of the Survey Population

Marital Status	%
Never Married	51.4
Married	39.9
Widowed	4.3
Divorced/Legal Separation	4.3
Total N= 504	**100**

Source: White 1986: 67

TABLE 7.2: Proportionate Distribution of Union Status by Age

Age Category	Union Status					Total
	Married	Common Law	Visiting	Single	Never in Union	
20-24	4.5	26.4	44.4	10.8	50.0	**100**
25-29	9.0	28.4	21.5	8.1	25.0	**72**
30-34	14.0	18.8	11.8	9.0	8.3	**62**
35-39	22.5	7.5	9.7	10.8	0.0	**69**
40-44	12.3	0.0	3.7	8.1	0.0	**36**
45-49	9.5	9.4	3.7	8.1	8.3	**37**
50-54	10.7	5.6	3.7	9.0	0.0	**37**
55-59	10.1	1.9	0.7	17.1	0.0	**39**
60+	7.3	1.9	0.7	19.0	8.3	**37**
Total %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	
N =	**(178)**	**(53)**	**(135)**	**(111)**	**(12)**	**489**

Source: WICP Database

The symbolic status of marriage among African Caribbean people has been discussed previously, as has the link between marriage and normative notions of masculine identity. Marriage is first and foremost symbolised by the ability of the wife to withdraw from the labour force and for the man to provide a home for his family. These were often prerequisites for marriage to take place, and couples delayed marriage until they could afford to set up a home. As one older women recalled, she and her husband married late (after their fourth child) because:

> *"...he wanted..his own home...because in case of anything (like) sickness...house rent never sick."*

However, some mentioned the other side of this equation whereby men who wanted to escape from marrying used the lack of means as an excuse:

"If you get pregnant and the married thing come up the first thing they say is that they have no house, they can't get married."

The changing nature of Caribbean society and the attitudes of its people towards marriage was perhaps reflected by the fact that over one third (36%) of married respondents were between the ages thirty and forty. One of the causes for this possible trend may have been the fact that many more of the younger women are in the formal labour force, with some in better paying professional occupations. With changing attitudes towards women working after marriage, double income couples may feel that they can afford to marry earlier. Certainly, as already pointed out, a relatively high proportion of married women in the sample were working.

After marriage, the next largest percentage of women were in a visiting union. This type of relationship allows partners a certain amount of flexibility and autonomy, each partner living separately and visiting the other according to mutual agreement and desire:

"I think it is better to stay single and let them visit for men are not much home-makers these days."

"It's not over-demanding and I have the freedom I want...it's mentally stimulating."

While the respondents in this type of union accounted for 27.6% of the sample, 78% of the women in such unions were under the age of 35. Less than a quarter of the respondents were in no type of relationship at the time of the interview (23.2%).

However, many of this group had previously been in cohabiting relationships and were now either separated, divorced or widowed. Only 2.4% of the women had never been in any type of union.

If the data on unions and relationships do not conform to popular perceptions of African Caribbean family structures, then neither did the relationship aspirations of the majority of the women. Marriage was in fact the aspiration of almost all the women who were not already married. Those women cohabiting without legal sanction saw their present status as transitory and expressed the hope that their relationships would develop into something more enduring. Almost all the single women who had not been previously married wanted to be married:

> *"...if I was married I'd feel more comfortable cause I'd know I have somebody to be responsible for me."*
>
> *"I think a man should be in the house."*
>
> *"I don't think that's* [visiting] *good enough, you have to go and come back."*
>
> *"I don't want to live with anyone unless I am married."*
>
> *"I believe marriage is honour. To live with men is sin and I can't tolerate it."*
>
> *"I don't want to have children unless I am married."*
>
> *"Married is the Christian life."*
>
> *"Any young lady a certain age want to get married. See common-law, people look down on you and so."*
>
> *"Common law you don't stand no where."*

Women who were knowingly in a relationship with a man who had other partners realised the tenuousness of their relationship and also wished to be married:

"Me tired seeing him so long, he is not mine alone."

"I want to get married, ...I feel I may be the main one."

"...you feel more secure of the man when you're married."

"I want someone for myself."

"Just a steady friend", was the wish of a woman whose partner was "talking" to another woman. *"I just want to settle down"*, said another. Settling down was the wish of many of the women who had had children with partners outside of marriage:

"....me children getting bigger. I have to show them respect so me a go resign soon [move out of a common law relationship]."

"Its more decent to live with your husband and its more respectable in the eyes of your children."

"I would like my daughter to grow up in the same house as her father. But we must be married, living the ideal life."

Not all agreed with this idealized view of marital bliss, and some of the single women saw marriage as entrapment with no security. Often these were women who had either been married or in common-law relationships previously:

"Men turn...like milk."

"Man is too much bondage."

"I want no burden [men]."

"No man must rule me."

"I am the captain of my ship."

Some women with children and living in their own home felt that the man might not get on with their children or might want to usurp authority in her home.

7.2: Household Headship and Family Finances

As well as emphasizing extra-legal family formation among African Caribbeans, social science research on the African-Caribbean family also highlights the high incidence of female household headship. Due to the lack of detailed census data it is unclear exactly what the average rate of household headship and size of family was in Antigua at the time of the survey. However, a survey of one thousand households was carried out by the Women's Desk in 1981 - the largest of its kind undertaken between 1970 and 1990 - provides the best available information on household composition (Antigua and Barbuda: Women's Desk 1981).

According to this study, women were present in 93% of the households surveyed and the mother was perceived as head in 43% of those homes. Joint headship was listed in 19.7% of the households. And while men were listed as present in 68.5% of homes, the father was perceived as head in only 32.3% of all households. The average number of children per family was 3.76, and children were present in 79.4% of homes. 50% of the families surveyed were single parent families, the majority (47.4%) being constituted of mothers and their children only. Grandparents were present in 8.4% of the households interviewed but were heads of only 3.3%.

The results of the Women's Desk survey were closely mirrored in the WICP study. 50.4% of the 504 households sampled by the WICP were headed by women. While 35% of the women respondents indicated that they headed their own households, a similar proportion (36%) said that their spouse/partner was the head of their household. In fact men were the perceived heads of 45.4% of all households sampled. A fifth of respondents said that they were children of the head of household, and only 4.1% said that their household was jointly headed.

Table 7.3: Relationship of Survey Respondents to Household Head*

Relationship	No.	%
Head	176	*34.9*
Spouse/Partner	181	*35.9*
Child of Head	95	*18.8*
Joint Head	22	*4.4*
Other	30	*6.0*
TOTAL	**504**	*100*

*Household Head here refers to the number of respondents who were heads themselves and not to the number of households headed by women or men.

Source: Bernal and Jackson 1982a: 32

Female headed households were more prevalent when no male was present in the household and, despite changes in women's economic status, household headship appears to have been conferred upon men or male partners whenever they were present in the home. This situation is made clearer if the results are differentiated by union category.

TABLE 7.4: Proportional Distribution of Household Headship by Union Status of Respondents

Union Status	Female Head	Male Head	Joint Head	Total N =
Married	13.5	79.2	7.3	**178**
Common-law	30.1	66.0	3.8	**53**
Visiting	79.1	18.6	2.2	**134**
Single	84.4	13.8	1.8	**109**
Never in Union	58.3	41.7	-	**12**
Total N =	**245**	**221**	**20**	**486**

Source: WICP Database

Differentiating by union category shows that the vast majority (79%) of married women indicated that their households were headed by men. However, more married women claimed that their household was headed by a woman (13.5%) than those who claimed that their households were jointly headed. (7.3%). Again, while two thirds of women in common-law relationships indicated that their households were headed by men (66%), a large proportion indicated that they lived in extended households headed by women (30.3%). These latter households were all headed by other family or kin members. The majority of women in visiting relationships also lived in households headed by women (79.1%), as did single women (84.4%). Female heads were more prevalent in multiple family households, especially in those which were vertically extended (that is in multi-generational grandparent households).

TABLE 7.5: Proportional Distribution by Household Type and Union Status

Household Type	Union Status					Total N =
	Married	Common law	Visiting	Single	Never in Union	
Woman Alone	9.0	0.0	63.6	27.3	0.0	22
Woman, child & Partner	76.5	23.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	145
Vertically Extended	33.9	7.5	16.0	40.6	1.9	106
Laterally Extended	23.7	7.9	44.7	18.4	5.3	38
Vert. & Later. Extended	3.6	3.6	63.8	20.5	8.4	83
Woman & Child	11.9	0.0	44.0	44.0	0.0	59
Other Household Type	30.3	15.1	21.2	30.3	3.0	33
Total N =	**178**	**53**	**134**	**109**	**12**	**486**

Source: WICP Database

Just over a quarter of the married respondents lived with elder kinfolk or with siblings in vertically and laterally extended households, while single women were generally living either in vertically extended households, with older kinfolk or in lone parent households with their children. Many of the women in visiting relationships also lived in lone parent households or in large multi-generational households with older kinfolk and siblings and their own and their siblings' children. Multiple family households (vertically and laterally extended) contained the largest number of persons. As women were prevalent as the heads of this type of household, the logical conclusion is that women head larger households, which were also more than likely to be poorer households.

In households where the couple were legally married men were expected to fulfil their gendered role as chief breadwinner and, as could be expected, the majority of women in residential unions were dependent upon the income of their partner/spouses as the main source of household finance. Surprisingly however, almost one third of this group (31.6%) indicated that their **own** income was the main source of household finance, and less than 10% indicated that both they and their partners jointly provided the main source of income for the household (see Table 6.6). The fact that many women in residential unions contributed so significantly to household finances and yet designated men as the heads of household illustrates that men's assigned role as head of the household is not linked to being the principal breadwinner/economic provider.

Instead it appears to be fundamentally related to ideal notions of a normative patriarchal structure. In general, these women's perception of marriage and women's role within marriage, especially among the older age cohort was of the wife as mother, home-maker, and help-mate. As one respondent emphatically stated:

> *"I think women are given the opportunity to show their potential, but in case of a home I do not believe they should usurp authority."*

This view was amplified manyfold by the other respondents:

> *"...women as wives and mothers are second to the husband...The man is the head. As a wife and mother I am second. Women have separate responsibilities like preparing meals and clothes."*
>
> *"I think that women has an important role to play safely and be content."*

"I hear say that they want equal right, but I don't think that it is right. God made men the head of the home."

"Women should be subjective to their husbands. Very few fulfil their roles ..to look about husband and children and the home. You have to live up to womanhood."

"I enjoy being a woman.. I love to be feminine ...I enjoy being adored by my husband."

"The Bible say the man is the head of the house."

"You have to obey when you are married."

"To Jehovah god, woman place is in the home but because of some women position women have to work and help finance."

One 32 year old woman who works as a teacher stated:

"men are the breadwinners, decision makers and heads of the households."

Another divorced woman who had entered a series of relationships looking for emotional and economic support said:

"...women were made to be housewives...it is every girl's desire to have children and look after a man and keep him clean. It gives them something to do. "

Some woman were not happy with the changing status of women's roles in the home and the increasing numbers of women going out to work. These women complained:

"...these days men are looking for a workmate and a wife. That is making the

role of the man as husband and father deteriorate rapidly."

"Headship is not the same because of women's lib. There is some kind of jeopardy. The two of them get home tired and are not able to enjoy each other."

Another woman who wanted no change in the traditional order, cynically pointed out why she did not want to be the breadwinner:

"Me cool in me frock. Me can wear pants when me ready but me na wan foo be no man. Me can do what me want and right now a man have to give me. If I was a man I would have to give instead of get."

Practically, less than half of the respondents could rely on male economic support and those women household heads and women in lower income families were more inclined to be in charge of, or an equal contributor to, family finances. In terms of their economic contribution to the family almost half the women in the sample (47%) were self-supporting (Table 6.6). Clearly, single women and women heads of households with no other adult contributing to household income had to find a means of providing for their families, whether by their own labour or accessing income from other sources. As discussed earlier, compared to those women living with a partner, a significant number of single women had to rely upon extra-household sources for familial economic support, including child support, remittances from abroad and savings.

Relatively few women had savings of their own, though some possessed life insurance policies. Many married and unmarried women, whether working or not, used the informal "throwing box" savings schemes. While women employed in professional jobs indicated that they used these groups as a means of acquiring fast savings and cash for large purchases or travelling overseas, for the majority who could manage to put by the amount each month this money was used for emergencies, sickness, medicine, house buying, house repairs and extensions, and their children's education. Some drew off money for basic household expenditure:

"Like me get the box money, dat done so quick - food and clothes again."

"...the box money is used to pay off the bills for the things I credit."

"I started a bank account, but is only in box you can see money. I might spend it on things for the house or the baby."

"...we have to lack a little from our food so we can build a bigger house."

For two of the women their savings were for a rainy day of another type:

" Me no spend what me save in case me and he fall out."

"...that little saving for me in case me and me husband mash up me won't be stranded. Man change overnight."

Some of the women blamed women themselves for this predicament of having to be "mothers who fathered their children" in charge of child bearing, caring and rearing. In their words:

"...women do too much, and allow men to relax and get off light in terms of their responsibilities."

"Women have been doing more than they should. Women should have a limit, they don't really need to do so many things."

Through necessity or choice, the reality is that African-Caribbean women have taken on the role of primary care giver in the household. However, the centrality of women's role in the family, the high incidence of female headship and women's increasing economic power and occupational mobility have not significantly altered notions about the role of women either in the home or the public domain. The contradiction between many of these women's expressed desires to have greater male authority and presence in the household, and their practical responses to the realities of everyday social relationships can only be accounted for by women's feeling that they should conform to patriarchal norms of male dominance. This indicates the operation of a gender ideology which allows women to continue to subordinate their contribution and to view social relationships through a patriarchally gendered lens.

7.3: Child Bearing and Rearing: Motherhood and Women's Familial Role.

Most studies of the Caribbean family emphasize the centrality of motherhood to women's social identity. The Antiguan respondents reflected this perspective by their action: 82% of the women were mothers, regardless of union status. Almost all respondents believed in the centrality of the mothering role, children being seen as women's companions, and the purpose of many of these women's activities and existence.

Table 7.6 Proportion of Women Who Were Mothers by Union Status

Union Status	Proportion of mothers
Married	.945
Common-Law	.963
Visiting	.684
Single	.746
Mean Average	**.820**

Source Powell 1986:112

There were, however, differences in perceptions of the number of children a woman should have, many indicating four as an optimum number. Some, especially older women, used religio-cultural arguments for deciding how many children to have, which meant allowing for divine providence as opposed to individual control over their fertility. One woman with four of her own said:

"...as long as a woman is healthy ... she should breed out her lot."

However, other women felt that for economic reasons women should have only as many as could be afforded. A mother of 14 children cautioned:

"...with the cost of things one ought to be careful and have no more than three or four."

Another woman with no children of her own, but who had adopted four, expressed the opinion:

"...the number of children to have depends upon God and nature, but should only come with marriage."

This view of only bearing children in marriage was the preferable and respectable option. However, no social censure was placed on childbearing outside marriage. In reflection of trends at the national level, marriage was not a precursor to motherhood for most of the women in the sample. Almost all of those who were living with a partner had children, as did 75% of the single women and 68% of those in visiting relationships. Some women had had children by more than one partner, many of these women having entered into serial mating in search of male economic and emotional support for themselves and their children. One respondent scornfully pointed out that: *"... some women got pregnant solely to get a man to keep them."*

As a strategy to hold onto a partner, however, it was not very successful and many women who had children outside of marriage and who were not living with the father of their children (particularly if they had multiple children fathers) often had trouble in maintaining child support from those men:[2]

> *"...after I have these three children he went away and never look back to feed them."*
>
> *"They don't give me any money to feed the children."*
>
> *"When dey give you pickney dey no look back. Some of dem don't even feed the pickney."*
>
> *"Some of the de single men worse...them have children and not supporting them and so. Plenty girlfriend and dat."*
>
> *"A majority of men have an outside home and they may forget the inside home."*

"Men today they have six and ten women. On the whole you can't depend on them, not even your husband."

One married respondent said that she had to take her husband, from whom she was separated, to court to get child support even though he was working. This is not an area of recourse that many Antiguan women pursue because of adverse publicity and the social exprobation meted out to those who follow this course of action:

"Women today life rough, cause men give them children and don't look after them. Some even have to go to court and ***degrade themself*** *for child support and still get no money."*[my emphasis]

Little censure, legal or social, was placed on men who did not pay for their children since societal expectation was that women would make up the shortfall by some means. Motherhood, which was felt by many to be a natural corollary to womanhood, was therefore accompanied by women's tacit acceptance of the responsibility of primary emotional and economic care-giver. The lack of child support and of adequate levels of household maintenance from male partners and children's fathers is therefore integrally linked to the high rate of female labour force participation:

"A man go with a woman and if she tell him she pregnant he just turn his back on her, especially if she is not working."

"Some of dem are son-of-a-bitches. All what dem want is a bellyful, and a wife. When dem done them pull up them trousers without even telling you thanks, dem no member you need soap foo wash off."

TABLE 7.7: Proportion of Children Per Mother and Per Activity Status

Activity Status	Children Per Mother
Not Employed	3.49
Home Services	3.84
Home Production	4.30
Own Business	4.00
Family Member	-
Employed by Others	3.29
Mean Average	**3.64**

Source: Massiah 1986c: 199

While women in home services, home production, and those owning their own business had the highest number of children, respondents generally had a high fertility ratio, with an average of 3.6 children per mother. Rather than being a deterrent to employment, motherhood may in fact be a catalyst, and while many women may have worked for their personal satisfaction, the majority worked out of necessity to fulfil their responsibilities to their families and dependents. Despite the lack of formal day care facilities, few working women indicated that they had had to give up educational or occupational activities due to the birth of their first or last child. Most continued to work, and relied upon informal kin and friendship support networks to enable them to pursue their activities out of the home and juggle their dual roles. [3] Women's economic independence is thus an integral part of the mothering role and while connections are made to African cultural retentions, this tradition among African-Caribbean women has developed out of the objective reality of women's lives.[4]

Almost all the children of these working women were left in the care of 'other-mothers'. Poor working women left their children with female relatives, neighbours or friends who looked after the children on a cash or in-kind basis, while women who could afford it sent their children to private day nurseries or left them with domestic help. Child rearing strategies thus continued to be primarily the responsibility of women, and women remained the main socializing force in young children's lives. As well as inculcating certain values pertaining to the family and women's role and status, their acceptance of full financial, emotional and nurturing roles helped to reconfirm and reconstruct in their children existing gendered practices and values.

7.4: Women's Time Utilization: The Effect of Familial Responsibilities on Recreation and Leisure Activities

While children were not seen as a 'keep back' to women's productive activities, the juggling of reproductive and productive roles left many women severely limited in terms of their ability to participate in extra-domestic activities outside of work, namely in recreation and relaxation. All involve expenditure of time - one of the women's most scarce resources. The WICP attempted to find out how women actually allocated time between their various roles.

To accomplish this task, the WICP methodology included a time-use survey to try to understand how women with differing lifestyles allocated time. Women were asked to detail sequentially all their activities and the time spent on each activity during the 24 hour period preceding the interview. Those designing the research fully understood

that the description of activities carried out in a single day would not depict a pattern of women's regular activities, but hoped that this snapshot of women's lives would highlight tendencies or trends.

TABLE 7.8: Proportionate Mean Time Use of Respondents by Employment Status (over a random 24 hour period)[5]

Activity	Employment Status			
	Unemployed [N =55] %	Home services/ Production [N=136] %	Own Business [N =60] %	Employed by Others [N =235] %
Child care	4.00	3.80	1.90	2.10
Housework	19.50	21.00	13.70	13.60
Other Services	0.95	0.78	0.90	0.70
Food Production	0.15	1.20	0.07	0.13
Animals	0.13	0.22	0.34	0.30
Gardening	-	0.21	0.15	0.01
Marketing	-	0.38	-	-
Craft work	0.11	0.81	0.07	0.50
Job	-	0.17	1.08	16.20
Business	-	0.24	13.70	0.13
Religion	0.22	1.30	1.47	1.10
Organization	-	-	0.43	0.03
Self care	54.20	49.80	42.7	47.50
Recreation	11.10	13.20	11.10	9.70
Leisure Activities	8.10	6.20	3.40	5.70
Travel	1.50	0.60	2.00	2.30
Don't know	-	-	6.90	-
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: WICP database

Table 7.9: Time Use Pattern of Women with Different Employment Status by Minutes Spent on Each Activity

Activity	Unemployed			Home services/Production			Own business			Employed by Others/Family		
	TT	AD	M	TT	AD	M	TT	AD	M	TT	AD	M
Child care	3141	28	112.1	7413	65	114	1710	20	85.5	6925	84	82.4
Housework	15455	48	321.9	41188	126	326.8	11836	52	227.6	46213	213	216.9
Other Services	755	07	107.8	1533	16	95.8	811	08	101.3	2395	21	114
Food Production	120	01	120	2415	11	219.5	60	1	60	480	3	160
Animals	105	01	105	445	7	63.5	295	6	73.7	455	5	91
Gardening	-	-	-	420	4	105	130	4	32.5	50	3	16.6
Marketing	-	-	-	745	4	186.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Craft work	90	01	90	1600	8	200	60	1	60	1770	10	177.0
Job	-	-	-	330	1	330	930	2	465	55013	135	405.5
Business	-	-	-	480	1	480	11865	33	359.5	480	1	480
Religion	180	2	90	2520	15	168	1274	8	159.2	3745	27	1387
Organisation	-	-	-	-	-	-	375	2	187.5	120	1	120
Self Care	37770	51	740.5	86240	124	695.4	36991	56	660.5	149089	225	662.6
Recreation	8845	42	210.5	25862	113	228.8	9610	46	208.9	32783	185	177.5
Leisure	6441	29	222.1	12077	63	191.6	2935	23	127.6	19169	109	175.8
Travel	1166	13	89.6	1220	25	48.8	1762	19	92.7	7975	127	62.7
TOTAL	**74068**	-	-	**184488**	-	-	**80644**	-	-	**326662**	-	-

Key: TT = Total time/minutes spent on the activity AD=No. of women engaged in the activity on the random day sampled M=Mean time
Source: WICP database

If we look at the information for the sample as a whole, the data reveals a bewildering picture. Across all employment categories almost half of the respondents' time was spent in self care, with little time being spent on the activity that women listed as their main activity - whether that was home services or waged employment. The results presented in Table 7.8 are skewed by the fact that the table reports on the aggregated time use of all the respondents in each listed activity over a maximum of 24 hours. However, not all respondents were involved in the particular activity on the day prior to their interview. Table 7.9, which records the time spent by the actual number of respondents engaged in each listed activity on the day in question, shows that those engaged in home services on the days in question spent an average of almost two hours on child care, more than more than five and one-half hours on household duties, and another one and one-half hours in other services. The figures in Table 7.8 are not included to confound, but to demonstrate the difficulties of time-use surveys as well as the difficulty of using information from this WICP experimental approach to time use research.

The WICP method aimed to relieve respondents of the burdensome task of completing standard time-use surveys which often require women to keep detailed charts sometimes over a one month period, or throughout out the year, to chart seasonal changes in time-use patterns. However, the WICP method has thrown up other problems which severely restrict the value of the information gained. First, by not choosing the same day for gathering time-use data on each woman, and/or not looking at women of the same occupational areas on the same day makes it impossible to

compare their activity patterns or to generalise about the trends in time use of women engaged in varying activities. This is exemplified by the fact that on the day for which the respondents gave their time use details, one hundred of the two hundred and thirty five women in waged employment were not at work, which suggests that the reported day may have been atypical. This problem also reduced the mean reported time spent at work by the employed respondents, (which was extraordinarily low).

A second discrepancy thrown up by respondents answers is that while the not-employed category was only supposed to include women who did neither waged work or any other type of activity around the home, two of the fifty five women who categorized themselves in this manner recorded themselves as either being at work or on business, and over half of the group were involved in home services and child care duties. One possible problem was that the women did not compartmentalise their activities in the ways that the WICP classificatory system demanded. While these women may have listed their main activity as home services, home production or even as not employed, they may also have performed irregular casual work for their families as recompense for family support or may have called what they did on that day work since it differed so radically from their normal activities.

While the data is not reliable, hindered as it is by such methodological constraints, it does provide an excellent illustration of the range of different activities women were involved in. Content analysis of the qualitative data makes it possible to build on this and to explore the variation in the recreational activities of the respondents as well as

of the factors which they felt limited their participation in extra-domestic activities. For most of the women recreation centred around reading, watching television and listening to the radio. Some visited family, neighbours or friends. A few took part in sporting activities. Some went to Church meetings, Guides, 4-H, and Women's Fellowship meetings. Many simply took walks or did gardening or took the time to rest and sleep:

> *"Me lef work and go by a neighbour and sit down. Other than that me come home in me house and lie down to sleep."*

While many of the younger single women partied and went to the beach or picnics or to the cinema with friends, the older women and those with partners or children stayed closer to home or partook in activities with their family:

> *"All I can do is read and watch TV. Sometimes I sew and write letters. What else can I do with these brats?"*
>
> *"Whenever I go out, I go out with him."*

A third of the women participated in formally organised activities or groups (33%), and of those almost half (41%) belonged to church based groups. Almost the same number of women were active in groups/organisations which offered training in craft or income-generation related activities, such as dressmaking, basket weaving, cake decorating etc. There was also limited membership in credit unions, especially among the younger respondents. However, as noted earlier, many women belonged to informal throwing box savings schemes, organised on the basis of friendship or kinship, in which women did not have to meet rigorous pre-conditions to join.

TABLE 7.10: Proportional Distribution of Respondents by Age and Participation in Organisations

Organisation Type	Age Group 20-34	35-64	Total N =	*Total %*
None	70.7	63.1	**326**	*66.8*
Trade Unions	1.3	2.4	**9**	*1.8*
Political Parties	1.3	1.2	**6**	*1.2*
Church Groups	9.7	17.4	**67**	*13.7*
Women's Organisations	2.1	4.0	**15**	*3.0*
Credit Unions	3.8	1.2	**12**	*2.5*
Other	11.0	10.7	**53**	*10.9*
Total N=	**236**	**252**	**488**	*100*

Source: Bernal and Jackson 1982a:41

Few women showed any proclivity to be involved in women's groups which were not focused on the church or on practical craft or domestic concerns. And besides their vote in national elections, most women also kept well away from political activities (only 3% belonged to political or trade union organisations). As noted in Chapter Three, male leadership in political life is generally accepted by most women. Apart from voting and providing factional support for such organisations, few women are involved in running branches or are on the executives. Women do run the Women's Arms of political parties and the women's caucuses of the unions. However, if the survey respondents are anything to go by, membership turnout must be quite low.

In general the kind of women's organisations that these respondents attended and/or the type of activities favoured appear to reinforce and perpetuate their identification with domestic functions. The orientation of these groups was generally welfarist, and focused upon visiting sick members of the community, fund raising through tea parties and cake sales, or teaching traditional skills. For some these groups were not seen as

functioning either in the interest of women or at their behest. One respondent scathingly dismissed all of the women's organisations stating:

> *"Most of our women's groups are functioning as Tea Party Affairs, even the Church-affiliated and political groups. Major decisions at national level are made without reference to us, even those directly affecting us, and too many groups are accepting secondary rules through frustration."*

The low level of participation in groups which did focus attention on women's issues or political action may have reflected the perspective of many of the women who indicated that their sex was not a deterrent to their aspirations, and that they were more concerned by their low socio-economic status and lack of educational qualifications. Women's participation may also have been circumscribed by the accepted cultural stereotype of greater male assertiveness and effectiveness in associations. However, some women felt that men should still be out front and that rather than go out trying to be leaders and get involved in all kinds of extra-domestic activities, women should be looking after their children. It was generally accepted that the lack of domestic responsibilities freed men to be active in political and formal organisations. According to some respondents:

> *"...men are more suited to be heads - leaders. Men do not have responsibility in the house as a women so that they have more time for outside work."*
>
> *"...you find men more active than women. they don't have babies and housework to do, they can afford to get up and go anytime, any place."*
>
> *"...women are not taking care of their home. They want to go out and do what*

men do and join clubs."

One respondent's husband had stopped her from entering into politics because he saw it as *"too dirty"*. But not for men obviously! While many expressed a reluctance to join political organisations, there were some who agreed wholeheartedly with the views of the following respondents:

"Caribbean women need to be more educated on the true role of women."

"Some women seriously believe that women's role is subordinate to men. That must be changed."

"....some women have leading jobs but I would like to see them take their place in politics."

"...too much men head the government. No woman in our government. I believe that the women should be in everyting."

"...women should be more active in politics. We need more practically minded women. They just sit back and let the men take all the posts. We need more women on the trade unions. Sometimes women put over a better programme than any man can."

"Before women used to feel their place was in the home. Its time for them to take part in more things they expect men alone must do."

These views were somewhat surprising given the low level of participation in political groups. However, the women sampled were strongly favourable to women's involvement in groups and organisations and some wished for new women's

organisations to undertake the following:

> *"...teach women to value themselves and their labour."*
>
> *"...projects for women to be independent."*
>
> *"I would like to see our women put a great value on themselves and not remain forever as chattels to men."*

In general, however, the aims of the respondents were not political and their desires for greater participation in organisations coalesced around certain types of activities. Many women wished for courses related to women's mothering role, such as family life education as well as for adult education. Some also stressed the need for counselling groups for marital problems, and some asked for day nurseries or employment agencies for unemployed women. Some just wanted to meet with other women. Most of the respondents indicated that they favoured participation in order to learn new skills and to improve their education and employment potential. They wished for groups to undertake the following tasks:

> *"...to do what the Women's Auxiliary Group is doing. Equip girls for life, by teaching cookery, typing and sewing."*
>
> *"Teach them handicraft...enabling them to be independent."*
>
> *"Family life...budgeting and economics."*
>
> *"...small business management."*

Some of the women did not participate in established groups because they could not

afford to pay the fees or did not have transportation to attend meetings. However, even if they had wanted to partake, time and domestic responsibilities were seen as the major constraints. For some women their ability to engage in activities outside the home were curtailed by their partner:

> *"I had to do most of the things I wanted to before I got married and now there's nothing I want so badly that I can't forgo."*
>
> *"He allows me to do what I want to do, and go where I want to go. Me just have to tell him before hand."*
>
> *"He don't like me to have to much friends."*
>
> *"It's only my husband that think I can't make my own decision, and because of him I can't go where I like."*
>
> *"I liked playing games, netball hockey, volleyball, but I have not been able to do those or make the friendships I would have liked to make."*
>
> *"When a man is jealous you cannot go where you want. Anybody me want to talk to is a big problem. He just keep you down."*
>
> *"As a woman you have to abide... some women don't always but whatever my husband wants me to do I do. If he does not want me to go some place I don't."*

These were not the opinions of all, however, and quite a few women said that they were able to go and come as they pleased. For many, children were the major constraint and familial responsibilities stopped not only participation in groups but also participation in many kinds of recreational activities:

> *"I never have no time, the children there and I work out. So when you see I*

come home, I have to go straight to stove or the washing."

"Going to classes and meeting...I have been prevented form doing these things. If I did not have a child and a home, I would have more time."

"I never really got involved .. what with the children coming up and so."

"I have little freedom to go out and so but it doesn't put me out. I have small children, so I stay in a lot."

"Sometimes I would even like to go for a walk or so, but because of the children and the housework...it prevent me."

"...the babies came so fast and I didn't want anybody else rearing them and the courses were not available in the island."

"I did a lot of social and church work before I got married, but then I had to stay home and care the children."

"I wanted to continue typing classes, but because me a fuh cook and look after the children me no have time."

"I would like to do a commercial course but I can't find the time to do so, because I have to look after my children."

If I was a man, ah wouldn't have to stay at home, I coulda gone and learn seamstress."

While the women had differences of opinion on how much they felt men deterred them from joining in activities outside the home, most were quick to condemn men for the lack of work they did around the home and the little time they spent with their children. Thus, both by their action and inaction, men were able to curtail and thus

control women's extra-domestic activities. Although the majority said that every person should be assessed on their individual behaviour many found men, including their own partners, to be selfish, uncaring and unhelpful around the home:

"In Antigua very few men settle sown and take on a family, they are irresponsible."

"...they are domineering and lazy."

"...they have the desire to be men, but not the will, someone must do the work for them."

"...ordinary men don't pay attention to the kids...they leave most of the burden to the mother."

"...women have to do everything, them a everything, mother and father."

"...nowadays only a few men act as real fathers. The tendency in the world is to shirk responsibility, the easier you can get things the better."

"Men treat you like permanent fixtures in the home."

"Men are very selfish, they do not accept you for what you are, they feel she is inferior, they feel that under any sort of circumstances rough or smooth she should have children and work in the house as a slave."

"In the West Indies the woman is the burden bearer, men expect too much from women."

"I feel that men could be more considerate and thoughtful with reference to child rearing. I do not think that they appreciate all what [it] *involves ."*

"Sometimes I wish I was a man then I could turn my back on housework."

"Most men as fathers and husbands are not living up to standard. They are

neglectful and mothers have the responsibility of holding the home together."

"Those who are supposed to be husbands don't stand up to their responsibilities."

"Some of them have long eye [like too many women]."

"They terrible as a father cause when they pick up a next woman they done with you."

"They are so selfish..women don't make them that way...they born so."

Not all women shared this point of view and some even felt that women themselves were to blame for the type of men that were around:

"If you make them feel wanted they will treat you right..some problems are where women decide to put on the pants."

"Sometimes you can have a loving husband and a neglectful wife just turn him bad and make him walk about."

"The way they are 99% of the time women are responsible, its the way they were brought up."

"I feel we have to do more with how they are than they do. We accept what they mete out."

"Some women are responsible. I know a woman who don't do anything if her husband don't like it. She won't even walk down the road."

In fact many women did point out that not all men were the same, and many individual women claimed that their husband were good fathers and loving husbands. However, their valedictions were almost always said after the disclaimer: *"I don't*

know about others". Some women did feel that things were qualitatively better than in the past:

> *"We have a little more privilege than before. In some households men are helping in the home."*

The familial role of women which emerges from these Antiguan respondents is one which holds true to the traditional model. All women valued the role of mother - and most of the single women aspired to marriage and a settled family life. Though giving primacy to their role as mothers and their responsibilities for domestic duties, the respondents who wished to and could find work did not allow motherhood or their union status to hinder them. In fact, most of their occupational activities were in pursuance of supporting their family. From the data presented here it appears that many women lacked the resources (financial or time) to cultivate social networks which did not revolve around strategies for economic survival and household maintenance. Women appear to mobilize around their practical needs and they exercised decision-making power in the areas which they had control over, such as their use of personal income. Few of these women used their scarce time and money to participate in groups which did not incorporate an income generating/skill learning component, esoteric discussions on women's status losing out to practical courses on cake making.

The core of women's self-esteem and valuation of their role appeared to revolve

around family and motherhood and it is this role in the family, and the actions or inaction of men, which helped to determine the activity pattern of women's lives. From the evidence given by the respondents, women restricted themselves to what Durant Gonzalez (1982) calls 'the female realm of responsibility'. This position inhibits women's participation in political organisations, perpetuates their lack of control in the public domain, and maintains the patriarchally structured nature of Antiguan society. Some of these women were aware of their subordinate situation blaming both the system and themselves for allowing the situation to continue:

> *"Don't matter how women excel, the men always believe that the woman is still a foot lower than him. If they find out that you are real good, they try and keep you out."*
>
> *"Women get second preference in everything, we get it from our fore-mothers. They were fooly, they made man do everything. 'Mothers tie the heifer and leggo the bull'.. Now men already have it in them head that they are at the head."*
>
> *"Woman don't stand much good in Antigua today - for in everything she do she always wrong and the man is always on top."*
>
> *" They just want their wife to stay and be a cleaner, mother and maid."*
>
> *"They feel women should stay at home and they go out and society tends to conform to this point of view."*

Generally, however, these women continued to accept their socially ascribed

subordinate role and deferred to male authority. While men were seen to be peripheral to the day to day activities of many of the women and their children, this was not the preferred or desired ideal. Most women wanted to be married and live in a home where the man was head and played a greater part in the rearing of children, and where they could also partake in activities outside the home, in work or recreation. In the words of one woman:

> *"Men should take care of the home and help bring up the children in the proper way, since they are the head."*

The women also appeared to have accepted the gender divisions in the family and in the work force and did not give much import to the way in which patriarchal ideology and gender constructed roles informed their integration into social and economic structures, and generally limited their aspirations and achievements to traditional feminine jobs (which tend to be lower paying and of lower status). The explanatory variable for this paradox is women's gendered role and their internalization of culturally defined norms. However, by acceding to the subordinate status conferred upon them, women also collude in their own subordination.

1. Some countries such as Barbados have legislated that the rights of women and men who live in common-law relationships for five consecutive years or more are the same as married couples, and that the inheritance and family laws that affect married men, women and their children also apply.

2. For instance, the Family court in Jamaica deals with cases involving child maintenance, the status of children, guardianship and married women's property. The major work of the Court is concerned with non-support from fathers (Jackson 1982). Support cases are mainly the problem of single and separated women after the relationship has broken down. Also see Edith Clarke (1957).

3. A point to note here is that the incidence of children being raised by grandmothers appears to be less prevalent than popular perceptions of the Caribbean family would have us believe. This situation may be influenced by the fact that women of grandmother age are also in the work force. In fact, of our sample, 23% of those over 45 were in the work force.

4. Some authors rely on cultural traditions, which may originate in West Africa, as the explanatory variable of women's economic independence (Robertson 1976:127). Massiah notes the centrality of mothers in the kin systems of the West African tribes transported to the New World (Massiah 1982:62).

5. The legend for the type of activities that women were involved in is as follows:

Child Care	:care of babies and small children, supervision of homework, reading to children.
Housework	:preparing meals, cleaning the house, laundry, paying bills, house repairs and outside chores.
Other services	:care of the aged and sick, pets and domestic gardening.
Food production	:growing fruits and vegetables and food processing.
Animals	:care of livestock.
Gardening	:care of plants and flowers and other types of horticulture.
Marketing	:marketing of agri-produce.
Craft work	:needlework, knitting, straw work and pottery, leather work and marketing of handicraft.
Job	:incudes normal work as well as job sponsored training.
Business	:included normal working hours, overtime.
Religion	:attending church and other ceremonies.
Organization	:participation in women's organisations, political groups or other civic activities.
Self care	:personal hygiene and personal services, private devotions, meals, sleep, medical care and other daily activities.
Recreation	:listening to the radio, watching TV, reading, listening to music or pursuing a hobby.
Leisure activities	:attending games, cultural activities, the cinema, going to parties, entertaining.
Travel	:this includes travel for domestic purposes or for work or training.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this thesis has been to identify the factors which influence Antiguan women's social role and status and their participation in socio-economic development processes. The underlying assumption of the work was that the main determining factor defining and influencing women's productive activities and their social interaction is their gendered reproductive role in the household. It was also felt that gender differentials between women and men in Antigua are exacerbated by the male dominated political system put in place in Antigua after the attainment of internal self-government.

In its analysis of women's role and position in Caribbean and Antiguan society, this study focused upon the interrelationship of historical, ideological, economic, social and political factors which have shaped the present Caribbean context. Throughout the study, the cultural and ideological factors which determine women's role and status have been highlighted. Gender theory was used as a conceptual tool to analyze the differential impact of these various factors upon women's integration into socio-economic development, and the cultural definition of the roles ascribed to women. It has been shown that these cultural and ideological factors are premised upon a patriarchal gender ideology which underpins the sexual division of labour in the private and public domains and is an integral part of women's subordination in society.

Using an historical approach, the thesis has looked at the various development 'gender-blind' strategies which the countries in the region generally, and Antigua

specifically, have used. Where possible, the gender differentiated impact of these strategies on male and female behaviour and on gender relations has been examined. One of the benefits of this perspective is that it has been possible to illustrate quite clearly that economic development has not affected women and men equally or equitably. This is not to say that women are always disadvantaged, but that development planning needs to incorporate gender analysis into the mainstream planning process to take account of the different needs of women and men and the different way they are integrated into structures of production and reproduction.

Analysis was hampered by the lack of post-1960 published census data and of good quality household survey information. The results of the 1991 census will help address this problem, but these data are not yet available. However, it has been possible to bring together a wide variety of national data on various aspects of Antiguan socio-economic development and women's participation in that process. This has been augmented by the use of qualitative and quantitative community level survey data detailing the views and perspectives of a large sample of women on their integration in and experiences of national development. Observed national trends have been assessed together with the results of the community survey and in many cases the respondent experiences amplify these national tendencies. Both the research at the national level and the results of the survey point to the need for further research (some of the areas identified are highlighted below).

The thesis has demonstrated that since slavery a peculiarly Caribbean process of social organization has evolved, and gender relations in the Caribbean are primarily affected by three unique traits. First, among African-Caribbean women motherhood or parenthood is still seen as paramount to wifehood. The culturally perceived definitions of women's and men's roles allocate to women the prime responsibility for social reproduction. The impact of this has been a relatively high fertility rate and a low marriage rate. The usual household type is still the vertically or horizontally extended multi-generational family unit, rather than the nucleated family type prevalent in Europe . In addition many of these households are headed by women.

Second, the financial well being of children and the home is viewed as the women's domain. Along with their domestic and reproductive duties of child bearing and caring, women are also expected to be the primary economic providers for children. To do this, it is assumed that women will participate in the income/wage earning activities of the household and/or that they will be able to access other sources of income. Therefore, women are expected to take on a double burden of social reproduction and economic reproduction as part of their role.

Third, and allied to the above point, male economic contribution is not assumed and, due to women's high level of economic activity, Caribbean men are not automatically seen as family breadwinners. The high level of female household headship has imbued Caribbean women with a high degree of autonomy in decision making and economic independence. However, and paradoxically, the underlying gender ideology

assigns to men headship of the household (even in the absence of marriage as the main form of union and in the absence of nucleated households as the main form of household formation) and leadership of society.

Women in the Caribbean have been socialized essentially for parental and domestic roles but historically have been associated with a considerably high level of waged employment. However, for most of these women their ability to take on waged employment involves negotiating what is constantly referred to as their primary role of wife and mother. Any success they have had in manipulating these reproductive and productive roles has in part been related to their level of formal education and vocational training, and the availability of employment opportunities or alternative economic support networks. It has also been related to their ability to access an extended family structure or commercial domestic care services to aid them with their household responsibilities.

As in the rest of the Caribbean, contemporary Antigua has undergone major developmental change in the post colonial era and there have been significant changes in the socio-economic development strategies pursued by government. The introduction of universal adult suffrage, expanded secondary school programmes and work/career opportunities have meant concomitant changes in both women's and men's integration into national economic life. The situation in Antigua reflects that of the wider Caribbean. Women are very much integrated into development and play a pivotal role in all sectors of the economy. Antiguan women are offered a range of

educational and economic possibilities, and the government prides itself on the range of anti-discriminatory/Equal Opportunity legislation it has put in place. Under the influence of the international fervour surrounding the 1975 -1985 United Nations Decade for Women, and pressure from international agencies and national women's organizations, the Antiguan government has incorporated women's issues onto the development agenda. In 1980 the government set up a women's bureau as the organisational focus for concerns regarding the integration of women. In general, legal barriers no longer exist to limit women's involvement in the public sphere.

Many of the survey respondents felt that women had advanced and were better off than in previous times. They cited changes in the education system, the introduction of Equal Opportunity and Social Security legislation, and changes in family law, all of which encouraged women's equitable participation in national development. The respondents positively endorsed the changes and the removal of many of the social restrictions that once limited their participation in extra-domestic activities. At the same time, however, development policies have affected men and women's employment options differentially and women have now moved into many areas of the economy.

Women are prevalent among the secondary educated cadre, but school and college curricula still display a distinct gender bias in terms of the technical education of girls and boys and the tendency to reinforce the gender stereotyping practised by the wider society. Recognising that career attitudes are inculcated in school, initiatives should

be taken to address existing stereotypes within the curriculum. Women's interests and needs should be integrated into the school system as well as in teacher training institutions. Educators need to be sensitized in a manner which would encourage them to become more aware of the gender biases in the present curricula and would involve them in developing appropriate curricula and teaching materials.

As highlighted by some of the respondents from the WICP sample, inter-generational as well as gender differences affect women's integration into the productive sectors. Young women with good secondary qualifications are beginning to occupy middle level administrative/clerical positions, and clerical work and bookkeeping has become 'feminized'. Probably as a reflection of this trend the majority of students enrolled on business and management courses are women (80% attending University Centre courses are female). Older women were primarily exposed to primary education and were concentrated in home services or employed in the less well paying service sector. While total female labour force participation rates are much lower than men's in Antigua, at present there appears to be more work in both the traditional and the new 'feminized' areas of the economy and proportionately female labour force unemployment is lower than men's. However, relatively high participation rates in both the formal (approximately 45%) and informal sectors (about which more information is needed) conceal facts which demonstrate the unequal status of women. Men still dominate privileged positions of power in the labour force, as they do in politics and in society in general.

Despite the high level of general education, little systemic planning appears to have been devoted to developing and deploying all available human resources to fit the employment needs of the country. Women like men have benefitted from increased educational opportunities and this has reflected itself in their demand for white collar professional and technical jobs. Unfortunately the supply of these jobs has not matched demand and much frustration has been generated. Census data is urgently needed here so that the level of unemployment and occupational trends in the country can be identified. It is only with such information that the government can effect human resource development and management. There is an increasing need to provide technical and vocational training which meets the changing needs of the economy and of women.

Apart from the small number of women in positions of seniority, there are very few women who hold senior administrative or managerial positions in either the private or public sector, or positions on the executives of political parties or unions. Females holding roles through which power is exercised are still considered as exercising (symbolic) masculine roles. Women's inclusion into these roles have therefore not transformed the institutions, and women continue to hold such posts on terms designed to meet the needs of men. Women seeking inclusion have had to negotiate the conflicting demands made upon them by their domestic role and are appointed or possibly co-opted on an individual basis (Weedon 1987:2). Most women who enter the professions still bind themselves to areas of traditional female employment such as teaching and nursing. Even so, some are using traditional channels to navigate their

way through system to advance themselves and their families. Some are also entering the new growth areas of finance and banking. However, there is still horizontal and vertical stratification of the labour force and women's economic integration continues to be into lower paid/lower skilled jobs, especially in the service sector. Neither educational achievement nor employment opportunities have released women from subordinate positions in Antiguan society.

New legislation is needed to cover all areas of women and men's employment. In general there is a need to look at labour legislation and occupational health standards to see if the existing laws are effective, and also to see how they affect women and men differentially because of the vertical segregation of the labour force. Minimum wages need to be looked at along with equitable pay structures for all sectors of the economy. The last minimum wage was set in 1977 since when the government has made a number of concessions to entrepreneurs which have discouraged union representation in certain industries. Legislative reform appears to be urgently required in the manufacturing sector where women seem to be actively boycotting work in the established industries because of pay and working conditions. The work of women and men in the informal sector also needs further research. Government needs to be aware of the size and level of this sector's contribution to national development, the occupational areas it is mainly composed of, and the different participation levels of women and men. There is also a need to ensure that the sector is not used by some entrepreneurs in the formal sector as a cheap source of labour, or of avoiding paying proper wages and meeting the demands of organized labour.

It has been shown that women are now integrated into the Antiguan economy at all levels. However, whatever the area of work, whether paid or unpaid, all of the survey respondents - single and married - endorsed the importance of having an independent income. The importance of income to women who head households was illustrated by the fact that over 60% of respondents worked for wages, and over 50% lived in households headed by women. Few women had major savings and their income was the main sources of familial support. However, though women have been drawn into the economy and despite some attitudinal changes regarding women's work outside the home, so-called equality of the sexes and women's high degree of autonomy from male economic control, women were still expected to play the major role in social reproduction.

The WICP data also revealed the contradictions between the perceptions and the lived realities of women in the region. While on the one hand Caribbean women placed a high value on their economic independence and on their ability to provide for their children, at the same time they also appeared to need and desire economic reliance on men. Paradoxically, women's subscription to traditional perceptions of male and female roles continued even in the light of male inability and/or unwillingness to economically maintain a household. All respondents valued the role of mother - and in fact most women were guided in their occupational activities by their socially determined role of 'mother'. Many held very traditional views and, while vouchsafing economic independence, continued to view women's role as essentially that of a mother (and wife). Although many of the younger women in the WICP

sample had taken advantage of the available educational and vocational opportunities, many held onto these stereotyped images of women's role and status. Education was valued more for its role in socializing women into normative behavioural patterns than for vocational guidance.

Many women did not perceive gender as a specific deterrent to their personal development, instead they regarded socio-economic position as a far more detrimental handicap to personal advancement. Most women recognised that their gendered role in the household limited their potential for participation in extra-domestic activities, but few challenged the situation. Overall then women's integration into the economic process has led to little change in ideology with the result that government accords low priority to assisting women with their dual roles. The institutional support necessary to relieve this double burden of responsibility are generally inadequate and in situations of economic crisis such support as does exist is often further withdrawn.

In Antigua prior to 1981, there was little state support, such as nurseries or kindergartens, for women wishing to work outside the home. The family and kin networks of almost all the women surveyed proved to be their major source of support for the care of their children while they sought employment. Some (25%) women went outside this network and used paid helpers or private day care centres to look after their last child, which perhaps indicated both the breakdown of a extended family care network and/or the need for such services to be provided. For women to participate equitably there is a need for day care centres. However, these policies

should not be aimed only at women or work in such a way as to prevent men from playing a fuller role in social reproduction. Rather they need to social reality and encourage and allow for men to take on a greater domestic role, a role which women themselves should demand and support.

Women appear to have more limited opportunities than men for relaxation and participation in formal groups. In terms of formal group activity women were more likely to be involved with the church or service oriented groups. According to the WICP data, women's participation in social or political organisations is not particularly high. In 1980, few survey respondents were involved in such groups and many respondents indicated that the timing of meetings tended to inhibit working women wishing to participate, as did the demands of their dual role in production and social reproduction.

Women in the sample were absent from formal groups but participated in informal kin/friendship savings groups, using these clubs as part of a survival strategy to augment household income. The same can be said of women's participation in non-formal education where many women seem to prefer to use their leisure time to learn new skills for income generation and at the same time get out of the house. Despite their personal lack of participation, almost all women in the sample vouchsafed the importance of organisational participation to enable personal development and allow for socializing with others. Since the original survey was carried out there has been a growth in the provision of, and women's participation in, non-formal education

courses especially in traditional areas such as cake-making and sewing. It appears that the establishment of the Women's Desk in 1980 played a catalytic role in this regard meeting previously unfulfilled needs of Antiguan women for these kind of courses.

Political leadership continues to envision women's roles as traditional and supportive, and women's absence from decision making spheres allows such views to continue. Women are still treated as peripheral to the development planning process and have to access resources through male dominated institutions. In this regard it does not appear that the position of women in Antigua is substantially different from that of women in other Caribbean countries. However, the particular form of government in Antigua promotes a type of clientelism which the Directorate of Women's Affairs has been able to access successfully for a number of years. The data shows that with a very small grant the Directorate has gained access to significant resources which are extremely beneficial to Antiguan women, and has been able to offer extremely popular and informative programmes, courses and services which meet the practical needs of Antiguan women. However, the very nature of the Directorate's relationship with the social structure keeps it and women's concerns at the periphery.

The current interest of the Directorate is to address women's strategic needs, and to integrate women's concerns within national development. *The National Policy document on Women and Development* (Antigua and Barbuda, the Women's Desk 1989a) is the Directorate's latest attempt to build gender concerns into the basic Governmental planning mechanisms. While the document has been passed at Cabinet

level, as of 1992 it was still at the committee stage and had yet to become law. However, mere acceptance of women's issues as policy issues and their translation into plans is insufficient to ensure better lives for women and their families. Implementation is the fundamental basis for change. Therefore the government needs to put this and other documents on Women in Development that it has signed into effect.

The main obstacles to the achievement of gender equity are the culturally imbedded traditional attitudes and beliefs which, as has been illustrated, perpetuate women's inequality and stand in the way of structural and institutional change. Government policies play an important role in effecting such changes because government actions are often a critical influence on the society. As policy maker, employer, purchaser and supplier of goods and services, the government has a far reaching impact on women and men's opportunities. Government acceptance that women's concerns must be incorporated into development planning necessarily involves its acceptance that policies should not be 'gender-blind' and that women's concerns, needs and interests do not necessarily coincide with those of men. If development for women implies the formulation of programmes which are relevant to women's situation and respond to women's real needs, then any policy initiatives made and any programmes developed, should attempt to address the structural and ideological factors which constrain women.

Gender sensitivity in development planning is therefore necessary particularly in the public sector. Policies which continue to focus on women's traditional roles need to be deconstructed, existing assumptions need to be laid bare and future planning needs to reflect the grassroots concerns of men and women. It should not be left to the few women who have managed to access the highest echelons of government to instigate appropriate policies, for these women may themselves reject any policies that are seen to treat women, and by association themselves, as a special case. Sensitization training programmes must therefore target women and men in the public service. By the same token there needs to be sustained educational programmes at community level to build women's confidence in their abilities to challenge the sexual division of labour and to encourage men to play a more active and responsible role in social reproduction. The challenge is to work with women and men to bring about a more equitable society.

In summary, the main areas in which we would point to a need for further research and/or action are as follows:

1. Planners need to incorporate factors such as class, age and gender in the planning mechanisms. Planners also need to integrate the work of Women in Development researchers into planning and to organise training sessions to sensitize middle level male and female managers regarding the gender differentiated impact of economic development policies. More work also needs to be done on recent changes in the law affecting women and its impact on women's lives.

2. The gender bias in school curricula and in non-formal education needs to be addressed and more information on the non-formal education needs of women and men is necessary. Added to this there is a need for effective human resource development, matching curriculum and training programmes to the manpower needs of the country.

3. Up to date data on gender stratification in the labour force and on structural unemployment is necessary to enable a better understanding of the practical employment needs of Antiguans. More research is also necessary on women's life cycle changes and its impact upon their use of time. Research is needed on the impact of changing economic policies upon the livelihoods of women in the agricultural sector. There is also a need to look at the operation of the informal sector, and women's roles therein.

4. The role of familial support networks appears to be changing and more research is necessary on the impact of this upon women and men's role in the family. Along with health data there is a need for more information on the health status of women, with particular attention to teenage pregnancy.

5. Research is needed on women's participation and leadership in the trade unions, and union activities to protect the rights of women workers, especially in the new industrial manufacturing areas. The role of women as proximate decision makers in Parliament also needs to be examined, together with a study of female voting patterns and party membership. The Directorate of Women's Affairs should work with other women's groups to actively lobby to ensure that women are represented at the highest levels of decision making

and that the Directorate itself is represented. There is also a need to examine the representation of women on Statutory Boards, Commissions, Public Corporations and private companies.

6. Changes have occurred in the society, women are moving forward and there needs to be an evaluation of the impact of UN Decade for Women and the programmes of the Women's Directorate on women's activities and perceptions of their role in society.

In conclusion we see that despite new opportunities and different behavioural patterns of both women and men, Antigua is still very much a patriarchal society with power concentrated into the hands of a few men. Women's social interaction continues to be mediated by their ascribed role, and both young and old women conform to traditional gender stereotypes. Women appear to view male performance in personal, private relationships completely differently to how they view male involvement in public affairs. Therefore, while they often did not trust men at the level of interpersonal relationships they still expected and accepted men as natural leaders of society.

" *Well, 90% of men are not good...have children and don't study them. In most cases men make good leaders, but in the home most of them are neglectful.*"

This anomaly can only be explained by an ideology which upholds the idea of male dominance in the public sphere. Women have been integrated into social life in Antigua in a specifically different way to men, a difference that is widely accepted and unquestioned.

The majority of women in the study felt that women had attained an improved status in relation to men as evidenced by greater job and educational opportunities. In general, they looked to inter-generational differences rather than gender inequality as the cause of their lower socio-economic status. However, while these women did not appear to comprehend the extent to which their gendered position affects the roles they play and their contribution to the development of the country, they did understand the importance of that role to their own and their families standard of living.

Women also realized that they had been able to advance in ways not thought possible forty years before and that they were now as central to national development as men. In the words of some of the respondents to the WICP survey:

> *"Women are becoming leaders in every society. No longer are we satisfied with staying at home toiling over pots and pans, baths and buckets. We are utilizing every area you can think of and are...now in the forefront."*
>
> *"Women are like fungi[1] in every dish of pepperpot - them involve in everything."*

As Massiah (1989a:47) succinctly comments, the research shows that Caribbean women are perfectly able to assess their life situation, describe the contextual factors which shape that situation, articulate their needs and prescribe possible solutions. **Planners need to listen to their voices!**

1. A Caribbean starch dish of African origin made out of corn flour and eaten with meat, fish or vegetable stew.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEWS

NOVEMBER 1989

1. Dr. . E. Bird, Head, University Centre - Antigua and Barbuda

2. Mrs. C. Hall, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

3. Mr. K. Smith, General Secretary, Antigua Workers Union, Antigua and Barbuda

4. Mr. N. Thomas-Carrott, General Secretary, Antigua Trade and Labour Union, Antigua and Barbuda

5. Mr. Prince, Labour Commissioner, Ministry of Labour, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

6. Mr. Perry, Statistician, Department of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

7. Mr. C. Edwards, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Planning, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

8. Mrs. A. Derick, President, Co-ordinating Council for Women, antigua and Barbuda

9. Mr. C. Murdock, Senior Foreign Office Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

10. Mr. Weston, Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

JUNE 1990

1. Mr. Theodore, Director of Vocational Training, Ministry of Education, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

2. Mrs. Percival, Chair, Antigua Labour Party, Women's Action Group, Antigua and Barbuda

3. Mrs. G. Benjamin, Chief Establishment Officer, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

4. Mrs. H. Benjamin, Health Officer, Health Education Unit, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

5. Mrs. Lila Simon: President, The Co-ordinating Council of Women and Chair, Antigua Workers Union, Women's Group, Antigua and Barbuda

6. Dr. E.Francis, Vice Principal, Antigua State College, Antigua and Barbuda

7. Mr. D. Michael, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

8. Mr. R. Harris, Minister of Education, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

9. Mrs. G. Tonge, Director, Directorate of Women's Affairs Government of Antigua and Barbuda

10. Mr. Wyre, Director, Human Resources Development Group, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

11. Mrs. Thomas, Principal, Hotel Training Centre, Antigua and Barbuda

WOMEN'S GROUPS IN ANTIGUA - 1990

Name of Groups/Assn./Club etc	President
Bahai Women of Antigua	Ms. Eliabeth Bevan
Women's Missionary Council	Ms. Jeanette Browne
Methodist Women's League	Senator Mildred Bailey
Zion Women's Group	Cicely Jones
Spring Garden's Women Fellowship	Ms. Sybil Martin
Y.W.C.A	Ms. Irene Roberts
Red Cross Association	Mrs. Inez Challenger
Girl's Brigade	Roseta Edwards
Co-ordinating Council of Women	Ms. Lila Simon
Home Economic Association	Ms. Florentine McCoy
Jaycees Association	Miss Judie Labadie
Lion's Club	Women's Committee
Netball Association	c/o The Ministry of Education
Girl Guides Council Association	Ms. O. Swift
AWU Women's Council	Lila Simon
Women's Auxillary AT&LU	Natalie Payne & Mildred Bailey
Women's Action Group	Millicent Perceival
John's Mother's Union	Ms. Arah Derrick
Women's Group, Seventh Day Adventist	Ms. Olive Gardener
Women's Group, Catholic Church	Ms. Doniza Alexander
St. John's Ambulance Brigade	c/o Marie Tomlinson
Planned Parenthood Association	Hazelin Benjamin
Women Acssociation, Anglican Church	Ms. Beatrice Merchant
Partian Methodist Women's Group	c/o The Methodist Manse Ms. E. Imanuel
St. John's Rural South Women's Group	Ms. Daphne Lovell
Adventist Women's Group	Mrs. Delores Gardiner
Church of the Nazarene	Rosa Lee