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FAMILY, SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL POLICY IN
THE WEST INDIES¹

For Europe and North America there is a large literature devoted to the evaluation of social policies; for the Caribbean it is often difficult to find out what the policies are, much less how they are actually implemented. Most social welfare agencies in the Commonwealth West Indies have the shape and direction which they acquired during the colonial period, and in spite of some recent new departures it is to that period we must refer in order to understand the present situation. The last major review of social policy in the West Indies was occasioned by the riots and disturbances of the late 1930s, which led to the appointment of a Royal Commission and the subsequent passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945. Independence from Britain has not generally resulted in a searching examination of social policy, rhetoric to the contrary. The tendency seems to be to try to bring the area into line with a universal "modern" practice, suitable or not, for no politician wishes to appear to be unprogressive.

This paper is not intended as a review of social policy, even in the restricted area of the family. Others will have to undertake that task. Its more modest aim is to re-examine the premises on which the policies of the terminal phase of colonial rule were based, to ask how they appear in the light of more recent work on the family, and then in the final section, and with the greatest hesitation, to suggest some implications of this work for the formulation of policy bearing on the family.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

The first Social Welfare Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, a post created in response to the riots of 1938 and the report of the Royal Commission which investigated their causes, was T.S. SIMEY. An academic sociologist who eventually became Charles Booth Professor of Social Science in the University of Liverpool, he spent the years 1941 to 1945 struggling to understand the nature of West Indian society and devise policies appropriate for it, rather than just importing ready-made schemes from Europe. He believed, ardently, in the possibility of a scientific approach to social engineering.

In the modern history of social policy in this region SIMEY is a particularly strategic figure. Not only did he play a leading part in implementing the new colonial policies but he also absorbed the social ideas of the most progressive elements of the West Indian middle class, and particularly the Jamaican middle class. He taught the first graduates of the new Welfare Training Courses held at Mona, Jamaica in 1943 and 1944, thus helping to set the pattern for future training. Most importantly he embodied his ideas and his experience in a book which is an indispensable guide to the thought of the period. Internally contradictory in many ways, *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies* raises all the important issues, and he regarded it as "the record of the beginning of a fascinating and supremely important experiment in the planning of society and human relationships" (SIMEY 1946: 30).

SIMEY is also relevant to our topic in that he regarded the family as a central institution, with a formative influence on personality, and thus on society as a whole. In this he followed the conventional wisdom of his day and foreshadowed many subsequent interpretations which also found "looseness" of family relations to be a major factor making for persistent poverty (M.G. SMITH 1966; MOYNIHAN 1965).

The bedrock of SIMEY's thinking is a series of ideas which are still with us in the 1980's, the simplest being that the West Indies are impoverished economically, disorganized socially and deficient culturally. "The symptoms of serious disease in the body of

modern society are only too obvious in the Colonies in general, and in the West Indies in particular" (SIMEY 1946: vi). Although his task is to "investigate the causes of the ills which lie behind [the symptoms] and propound a really effective cure" he has decided *a priori* that colonial society is a special kind of problem. "Life in the Colonies is, indeed, lived in a backwater from the main stream of human affairs, at one and the same time in several centuries, the social philosophies, moral values, and customs of which are mingled together in the wildest confusion" (ibid). How this differs from Britain with its ceremonial royalty, vestigial aristocracy, nineteenth century utilitarian economic ethic and the beginnings of a twentieth century welfare state, he does not say.

In the circumstances of the 1940's political independence appeared to be some way off, contingent upon a series of intermediate factors. Self-determination would not be possible without adequate wealth, and that was dependent upon a "social dynamic" powerful enough to drive the economic machine. Modern sociology was to provide both the understanding of the problems and the techniques for solving them; techniques for generating the "social dynamic" that would set the machine of progress in motion. "The work of the academic sociologist is being steadily translated into the language of the administrator, and a new method has been developed whereby social relationships and social problems can be studied objectively" (SIMEY 1946: viii). These are brave words and upon their promise has grown up a veritable industry of survey research, data banks, training programmes in social and political administration, experts, advisers and consultants. Sociology as an academic discipline would have been better served if it had claimed less and had fewer impossible demands placed upon it. It is a pity that SIMEY had not been influenced more by KARL MARX and MAX WEBER who knew, each in their own way, that the naive positivism of a supposedly value-free social science does not provide a set of blueprints for utopia.

In proper scientific manner SIMEY begins with a discussion of the infra-structure, a discussion reminiscent of DURKHEIM. Distances, densities, communications, population characteristics (deploring the lack of adequate statistics), are all dealt with before he

turns to the issue of economic production, housing ("the most striking fact about the West Indian peoples, as exemplified in their houses, is their poverty"), income distribution, nutrition (SIMEY 1946: 11). And thus we come to the family by way of a direct comparison with Britain and America, in spite of the equal value of all ways of life.

In Great Britain and North America nutrition centres on the family, and it is impossible to arrive at a clear understanding of social conditions in the West Indies without some consideration of the problem of family organization. The wages earned in Barbados for example, are insufficient to support family life of the type common in Great Britain; in the West Indies all members of a working-class family have to work if the budget is to be balanced (SIMEY 1946: 14-15).

He goes on to contrast the way in which a common family meal in Britain acts as a prop to family solidarity, whereas in the West Indies because the working classes do not possess the necessary furniture this integrating activity is absent. This kind of crude, and simple-minded, determinism crops up again and again, even though in other places he makes many astute observations which totally contradict the idea that poverty determines all. The crux of the matter for SIMEY is that (1946: 15)

The prevailing type of West Indian family which is encountered over and over again in all the colonies is very loose in organization. It is rarely founded on the ceremony of marriage, and the relationships between its members are often very casual indeed. There is little control over the children, who may receive plenty of maternal affection ... but little in the way of careful general upbringing.

It is fateful for the subsequent argument that poverty becomes the prime factor in shaping family relations. Men cannot discharge those obligations which are accepted without question in Britain and North America. But poverty is only part of a wider condition; along with lack of resources and inadequate nutrition there is a more general "weakness in social organization." Only the church "stands out as a rock round which the welter of disorganized human life surges" (SIMEY 1946: 18). However, the church does not seem to be able to fill the cultural void left by the forcible divorce from African culture and the as yet incomplete possession of the western way of life. Without the binding power of a common culture, and internally divided by racial cleavage, the picture is very like that drawn by J.C. FURNIVALL for the "plural societies"

of the Far East — as we were repeatedly to be reminded by M.G. SMITH during the next two decades. Unlike M.G. SMITH, both SIMEY and FURNIVALL stressed the solvent power of modern capitalism, and both called for cultural renewal or a new form of secular religion, nationalism (See R.T. SMITH 1966 for a discussion).

SIMEY's treatment of religion runs curiously parallel to his discussion of the family. In neither case are African forms suitable for life in the West Indies. Some aspects of African religion persist in the form of superstitions embodied in sects which he dismisses contemptuously as sapping the energies of the people and undermining their economic life. Similarly sexual activity filled a need for self-expression and gratification among slaves, and like superstition it continues to function in the same way in the present. From the baseline of the slave plantation one can follow the functional adaptation of behaviour right up to the present. If Haitian peasants have several wives it is because they need them to work their holdings; similarly Jamaican farmers must have the right to chop and change among partners in the interest of keeping up production. Migration within a particular territory, or to find work outside, leads "naturally" to the creation of several families and the man has to stop sending support payments to the previous partner. So, economic factors account for "the prevalence of the maternal family," but not totally; the patriarchal nature of the "true peasant family" (described in almost the same terms as were used subsequently by HENRIQUES 1953: 109), tends to prejudice "the vast majority of young women against marriage as such" (SIMEY 1946: 87). Indeed he recognises that in the towns, where prosperity is greatest, one finds the least marital stability.

When we have peeled back all the layers of SIMEY's discussion we come to a series of ideas about personality which, while not unique to him, have a decided effect upon his policy proposals. Juvenile delinquency is widespread he says — without offering any evidence for the assertion — and he follows this surprising observation with some speculations about child care and discipline. Children grow up without "that close association between father and child" which is taken for granted in Great Britain and North America. Children are allowed to run wild outside but are

harshly disciplined at home. Adults, not being "schooled in self-control" cause children to grow up suffering from "excessive anxiety and feelings of insecurity" (SIMEY 1946: 90). Add onto this the frustration engendered by racial discrimination and what do you get? Aggression, often disguised as unreliability, laziness, sensitivity to insult and even physical hostility.² The middle classes are subject to even more stress than the lower class; efforts to dissociate themselves from the masses, combined with the excessive individualism and competitiveness of modern life, creates hostility, a domineering attitude to the lower class and a "profound spiritual *malaise*" (ibid: 104). This is all the more significant for SIMEY since middle class patterns of behaviour have to be adopted by the whole society. "There is no going back, no possibility of founding a new culture on working class society alone" (SIMEY 1946: 103).

Recognising that the West Indies cannot divorce itself from the rest of the world, and contending that things are getting worse rather than better, he calls for a total reorientation of administrative thinking. Recruitment of a better type of colonial administrator, efficient, selected by modern methods of psychological testing, open to scientific knowledge and dependent upon the dispassionate views of sociologists and anthropologists to guide the West Indian peoples toward self-determination via community organisation and group therapy. All that nasty aggression, laziness and sexual self-indulgence must be treated by methods developed for dealing with disturbed ex-prisoners of war. Through group therapy they have been restored to normalcy without any recourse to moralising. Ultimately SIMEY's vision is a polity ruled by an élite, a specifically West Indian élite to be sure, guided by cadres of social researchers providing blue-prints for middle class leaders.

A specifically West Indian plan of action must be adopted, and the preparation of the essential blue-print is the task facing the sociologist (SIMEY 1946: 239). From the West Indian point of view, the future lies with the middle classes. Given a collaboration between them and their friends in Great Britain, progress towards the building up of a mass political movement of which they will become the leaders should be steady and secure (ibid: 258).

And who is to say that it has not been steady and secure? It is true

that he regarded BUSTAMANTE with apprehension, but he would surely have approved of SIR ALEXANDER BUSTAMANTE. The West Indies now have an abundance of planners, blue-print makers, analysts of social ills and fabricators of new cultural orientations — frequently disguised as discovered “roots.” And there is no doubt that things are better in many ways now than they were in 1945. There is more education, better health and nutrition, better housing, people are better clothed, and there is even better public transportation, water supplies and power. To what extent these things are the result of careful planning and not just a shrewd political response to widespread public demand, a response made possible only because of a period of world-wide economic growth, is an interesting question — which I do not intend to pursue. What is interesting though is that *there seems to have been very little change in family structure.*

SIMEY had one flash of insight. He failed to follow it up but it does provide me with a convenient lead into the next section, which is an examination of West Indian kinship in the light of some recent research.³

WEST INDIAN KINSHIP AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

The exploitation of the women of the masses by the men of the upper classes has brought with it a general lowering of standards of behaviour which is now a part of a West Indian culture common to people of all races. The upper classes have set a bad example which it will take many generations to efface, and it is by no means certain that as middle class standards become more widespread in the population the situation will show any tendency towards improvement (SIMEY 1946: 100–101).

Here we are suddenly spirited away from all that poverty and lack of furniture and absence of a common meal, into a far different realm; a realm of power and exploitation — words which SIMEY uses quite rarely. SIMEY has hit upon a most important truth, though he does not pursue it very far. In order to understand West Indian kinship it must be seen in the context of class, and classes are not discrete, separate groups, each with its own culture and way of life; they are entities in relationship with each other. The fate of one is intimately bound up with the fate of the other.

SIMEY's idea of "a bad example" is silly, as though West Indians were children. This is a system of social relations and a structure of ideological concepts which were in place almost from the beginning of settlement in the West Indies.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRUCTURE AND ITS TRANSFORMATIONS

The early settlements on St. Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua and Barbados came closest in form to those established on the North American mainland. RICHARD DUNN (1972: 18) says that "Until the 1640's the Barbadians formed a simple community of peasant farmers".

By 1640 the population of Barbados was about the same as that of Virginia, but its tobacco exports were considered to be inferior to those of the mainland colonies. The tobacco period, from 1627 to about 1640, was one of rapid population increase but it was not an economically successful period, nor did it produce a family based society; the settlers were mainly young and there was a chronic shortage of females. The growth of sugar cultivation between 1640 and 1660, accompanied by the importation of African slaves, ensured that Barbados would not follow colonies such as Massachusetts in creating a family system close to that of England. Henceforward slavery impressed its mark upon all social institutions, including kinship and the family, though not quite in the way it has generally been suggested. Barbados was not unique; it was merely a forerunner of developments in all the West Indian territories.

Britons and Africans together created a creole society. The Britons no more preserved their customs than did the Africans; between them, and out of their hatreds, exploitations, copulations, mutual dependencies and sometimes even love, they created a new social order, an order that has been accorded any social value with only the most grudging reluctance.

The next two centuries saw the growth and spread of plantation agriculture using slave labour, a system which, whatever else it was, represented an advanced form of rational agriculture with careful accounting and calculation at all stages of production,

transport and sale. The slave was property of course, and not all aspects of life were yet "commoditized." Planters made conscious calculations about the relative costs of replacement or reproduction of the labour force. The plantation mode of production had enormous influence upon every aspect of the lives of those involved in it, but it was not the sole, direct determinant of family and kinship relations. Port Royal in the seventeenth century had "yards" with kinship units reminiscent of those of modern Kingston; Belize and the Bahamas had "West Indian kinship" without plantations. The crucial factor seems to have been the establishment of a hierarchical social order in which racial categorization was fundamental, and in which a dual marriage system was institutionalized. Such systems are not unique to the West Indies, or even unusual, but Caribbean kinship has not yet been placed in a full comparative framework (See SMITH 1982).

Recent historical scholarship on the West Indies and North America has begun to establish a series of propositions which reverse prior thinking about the influence of slavery on family structure. GUTMAN (1976), GENOVESE (1972) and FOGEL & ENGERMAN (1974), in their various ways, argue that slave families in North America were far more "normal" than previously had been thought. They attribute the "disorganization" of black families more to the conditions, and especially the economic conditions, which faced freedmen after emancipation, especially with the hardening of racial prejudice which locked them out of economic opportunity. For the British West Indies CRATON has summarised the recent revision of the picture of slave families as follows:

if one took the nuclear two-headed family as the quintessentially modern family form, it was beguilingly easy to propose its different incidence during the registration period as relating to the degree of maturation, creolization, or modernization of each slave unit, and thus to suggest a historical progression from some aboriginal African form of family (CRATON 1979: 25).

the discovery by Higman ... that Africans were at least as likely as Creoles to form nuclear families, modified the original model. This revision ... led Higman to a second developmental model ... the establishment of "elementary nuclear families" was the primary response of the displaced Africans ... A second slave generation began to establish extended families based on the formation of virilocal "yards" within single plantations ... in subsequent generations, kinship networks expanded as slaves increasingly practised exogamy. ... The process

tended toward matrifocality rather than the nuclear family, especially where lack of slave-controlled provision grounds, money, and property deprived slaves of the chance of "marriage strategies" (*ibid.*: 26–27).

CRATON accepts HIGMAN's more differentiated model and elaborates the context of changing plantation organization, increased miscegenation, and the deteriorating quality of slave life. In spite of his tendentious use of such terms as "nuclear family" and his misuse of the concept of matrifocality (he seems to think it means female-headed households), and in spite of his belief in the importance of the "filtering down into the West Indies of evolving concepts of the 'modern' family" (*ibid.*: 28), he recognises, more by a kind of feeling than from any real evidence, the importance of continuing African traditions especially as regards marriage (*ibid.*: 31).

The general direction of CRATON's argument accords with that being presented here, though he appears to underemphasize the importance of creolization. It was not so much the "filtering down" of "concepts of the 'modern' family" as it was the growing involvement of Blacks in the dual marriage system of creole society and in the system of social relations structured by class and colour values. However, he is right to stress the peculiarity of the marriage system of Africans which, to oversimplify, generally makes a sharp separation between sexual relations and the contract of marriage which establishes political rights, rights over the procreative powers of women (regardless of "biology"), and rights of inheritance and succession. Even in some highly patriarchal, patrilineal societies, such as the Nuer, there may be great freedom in making and breaking sexual unions while marriage remains stable. One can speculate that there was a certain compatibility between the freedom to make and break sexual unions, and the developing structure of the dual marriage system of creole, class society. While the two are by no means the same, they could converge. However, speculation is not history, and what is needed is detailed evidence as to the nature of such convergence.

It is proposed here that the different forms of family found in the West Indies are generated by a set of principles which find differential expression in varying social and economic contexts. These principles are not to be found enunciated in oral tradition

or set out in any document; they must be inferred from a wide range of manifestations, both historical and contemporary. Overformalisation of these principles eliminates the ambiguity, uncertainty and contradictions which are an integral part of the system. Unfortunately it is necessary to provide a summary which involves just such overformalisation, but it is hoped that case material will go some way toward restoring the uncertainty of real life.

THE SYSTEM OUTLINED

The West Indian system of kinship, marriage and the family consists in a differentiated series of forms generated by

- 1) a *mating system* which enjoins marriage with status equals and non-legal unions with women of lower status
- 2) a *kinship system* which places a lower priority of solidary emphasis on conjugal than on consanguineal ties
- 3) a *family system* which is matrifocal but not matriarchal
- 4) a *domestic system* which does not confine relations within an easily defined and bounded "household"
- 5) a *system of sex role differentiation* which stresses the segregation of conjugal roles, permits the participation of women in the occupational system, allows men to disperse economic resources, but requires that women concentrate them.
- 6) *cultural assumptions* which assign specific characteristics to "West Indian" sexual and marital patterns.

Unwieldy though this statement is, it has the advantage of bringing together a number of controversial issues which have usually been the subject of quite one-sided arguments. We may take these points one by one.⁴

A mating system which enjoins marriage with status equals and non-legal unions with women of lower status.

SIMEY apparently appreciated the importance of this dual marriage system when he wrote the statement quoted earlier (page 117 above), but he quite failed to follow the origin of this system of hypergamous marriage back to "slavery" as will any middle class

West Indian in discussing the origin of the middle class itself. ALEXANDER (1977: 431) has documented what he terms the myth of origin of the Jamaican middle class; their ideas about the descent of the middle class from “a white planter and a black slave.” The equation of middle class status with mixed racial origin is an interesting aspect of the way in which class is conceptualised, but the myth also encapsulates certain generic ideas about the embeddedness of the “inside/outside” distinction in the marriage system. While there is no formal rule sanctioning “outside” unions — indeed extra-marital sexual relations are formally condemned — it is clear that non-legal unions, whether co-residential or not, are generally accepted. In private conversation a Jamaican Judge pointed out that adultery is almost never advanced as grounds for divorce in Jamaica. A petitioner will usually cite her husband’s taking up with another woman as the beginning of a series of acts of cruelty, or as precipitating desertion. In the case reported in *The Star* on February 10th 1982, the petitioner said that the marriage “went well for the first few years and then they started having very serious problems . . . in June 1976 her husband told her that he was seeing a young lady. She spoke to him and told him to break off his relationship with the young lady, but he told her that he had no intention of so doing.” Eventually he started living with the other woman, while continuing to live with his wife, and she had a child at the end of 1977. However, the petition for divorce was based on numerous assaults and acts of cruelty during the period 1979 to 1981, and not on grounds of adultery.

The origin of the dual marriage system lies in the formative period of West Indian society, when customs common in Europe acquired an intensification and special quality when practised in a slave based society. Whatever the origin of the system, contemporary research shows that it is deeply embedded in the fabric of West Indian life (see AUSTIN 1974; DEVEER 1979; ALEXANDER 1977; R.T. SMITH 1978, 1982). ALEXANDER’s discussion of the “myth of origin” of the Jamaican middle class, especially the “established” middle class or people born to middle class status, was referred to earlier. To find the same kind of concept in working class areas was quite surprising. DIANE AUSTIN, on the

basis of field research in a working class neighbourhood in Kingston, reports as follows (1979: 500).

I found that many working-class informants claimed descent from a European, generally a planter, whether or not they could establish the genealogical links. So common was this claim, that where at the outset I had pursued diligently any suggestion of a European relation, I came to treat such claims as fictive. They represented first and foremost a mythic statement of identity in colour-class terms.

AUSTIN (1979: 500) provides a full discussion of the genealogy of a Mrs. Mills, a "near black" woman from the rural parish of St. Mary, now married to a welder. Mrs. Mills gave this account of her background.

My father's father, he is an Englishman for the mother of my grandfather was a fair woman, and the father was an Englishman. I know my grandfather pretty well. He has blue eyes and has silky blond hair ... My father is pretty nice looking, Indian looking man.

It turned out that Mrs. Mills is indeed the outside child of an outside child, and does have a whole collection of fair-skinned relatives in high status occupations — as AUSTIN was able to observe at the funeral of Mrs. Mills' great-aunt. Mrs. Mills is unusual only in that she has more contact with these relatives than other working class informants who have higher status relatives. However, the point is not that all lower class West Indians have kinship ties with white, fair or high status people — which would be absurd — but that class and status differences are inserted directly into the kinship system by virtue of a dual marriage system which operates at all levels of the society. Nancy Rogers is a hairdresser living in another working class area in Kingston. Previously married, she separated from her husband who later migrated to England and died there. Born in the country, Mrs. Rogers claimed that her father had been a "planter" and not simply a "cultivator." She proclaimed her ambition over and over again and was much preoccupied with questions of colour. In the matter of marriage she proclaimed that

You have to choose a man who can give you children good colour, and make them brighter than you and more upstanding. If you come from black and go

married black again, they no going improve. I not saying you must marry for the sake of colour alone, for there are plenty good black men -teachers and doctors and so on. They have education, so the children born with more sense and refinement.

She herself had two of her three children before she was married. "... when I was sixteen I have Joan ... Is a man name Gordon fall me. He was quite an upstanding man you know." Her special plea to have this man's name omitted from the genealogy, precisely because he was "an upstanding man" is interesting. The name used here is fictitious of course. Mrs. Rogers was very hard on her Aunt Ellie who, she said, was totally lacking in ambition. Aunt Ellie was actually her maternal grandmother.

My granny did have flat mind. She live in the bush there and just like pure black nigger man. So that's why we now don't have better quality. Aunt Ellie did have flat mind man; she just go, go so, with any black man.

Mrs. Rogers, like AUSTIN's informants, has been referred to as "working-class." However, the question of whether one has to draw lines within the lower class is a difficult one. Is there a point in the movement down the status scale where the reference points change? Do we reach a point where there is no question of claiming even mythical descent from a European ancestor? A point where a new stability emerges, unaffected by the dynamics of class interaction though perhaps determined by class position? Is Aunt Ellie's "flat mind" characteristic of a much greater body of people who do not care about status, or if they do are so discouraged that they rest tranquil in a different way of life? The evidence is to the contrary.

AUSTIN (1979: 502) goes quite far in suggesting that "through this class principle in kinship ... life itself is defined by class, and class is legitimated in the process as a universal principle of social organisation — for some families and not others, it is true." She points to the important fact that women constitute almost half the labour force, that forty two per cent of household heads are women — most of them working women — and that female unemployment was running at 35.6% in 1976 in Jamaica (*ibid.*: 502fn4). However, it is not just economic need that induces women to enter into non-legal unions. Where neither property,

status nor economic need are crucial considerations the structure is still operative, generating an array of visiting, common-law and legal marriages as alternatives, and sometimes as alternatives which are taken up sequentially by the same couple over a lifetime.

A kinship system which places lower priority of solidary emphasis on conjugal than on consanguineal ties.

In view of the preceding discussion it is permissible to ask what is meant by "conjugal ties" in this statement. To which part of the dual marriage system does it refer? By "conjugal ties" is meant the relationships which are found in the whole array of types of union. This aspect of West Indian kinship has been particularly well documented, though information on the middle class (or on the upper class if such can be said to exist), is sparse. The statement on priority of solidary emphasis has been carefully formulated and should not be taken to mean more than it says. It does not say that conjugal bonds are weak (though they might well be); it does not say that marriage in the West Indies is unstable (though that can be measured); it does not say that "love" is not an important element in conjugal relations (ALEXANDER 1978 has documented its ideological importance among the Jamaican middle class). It means precisely what it says; there is a relatively greater emphasis upon consanguineal solidarity than on conjugal ties. More careful research will be needed to establish the range and variability in these relationships, and I would be hard pressed to provide a definition of "solidary" that would permit of easy measurement. However, the results of this relative emphasis can be seen, even in the familial relationships of the stably married. This structural principle articulates very closely with the next two.

A family system which is matrifocal but not matriarchal.

Men dominate West Indian society. Sex role differentiation has a definite hierarchical dimension (see p. 129–133 below). But if men are dominant they are also, in their role as husbands and fathers, apt to be marginal to the cluster of familial relations which focus upon women in their role as mothers. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding of the meaning of "matrifocal," deriving in

large part from misuse of the concept (see R.T. SMITH 1956; 1973; 1978b). It has nothing to do with female-headed households, or if it has the two should be treated separately. The matrifocal nature of family relations is a structural principle which combines with the relative lack of emphasis upon the conjugal relationship to produce a distinctive pattern of feeling and action within the family system. There is a close link between this and the dual marriage system, though the link is at the level of structural principle rather than specific events.

It has been common to think of the matrifocal family as being a lower class phenomenon produced by poverty, but there is a splendid historical example which shows the importance of power rather than poverty. An almost archetypical case of a matrifocal family is described by MICHAEL CRATON in his book *Searching for the Invisible Man* (1978).

This family was part of a complex network of kin springing from the various unions of white men and Coloured women in the area of Lluidas Vale, Jamaica, occupied by the Worthy Park plantation. One branch of the family stemmed from the various unions of Dr. John Quier, the famous physician; another from the union of Peter Douglas, owner of Point Hill Estate, and Eleanor Price — originally a mulatto slave, but freed by Peter Douglas in 1789, she bore him ten children and lived as the mistress of his house at Point Hill. Before Eleanor Price became the Kept Mistress of Peter Douglas she bore one child, Lizette. The father was probably a white bookkeeper named Nash. Lizette was a quadroon, being the child of a mulatto mother and a white father, and she caught the eye of Rose Price, great-great-grandson of the founder of Worthy Park Estate who was in Jamaica from about 1792 to 1795 putting the source of the family fortune in order.

When Rose Price, then about 24 years old, first took up with Lizette she was a thirteen year old slave girl. Rose Price arranged for her manumission and she bore two children for him. He returned to England, married a woman with aristocratic connections who bore him fourteen legitimate children and helped to him to acquire a baronetcy. Rose Price left Jamaica before the second child, a son, was born, and Lizette went to live with her mother Eleanor Price, in the house of Peter Douglas. All this sounds quite familiar to anyone who has studied modern West Indian kinship. The subsequent development of the family is of great interest.

Rose Price arranged with Peter Douglas that when his outside children reached a suitable age they should travel to Britain for further education. Elizabeth, the daughter, eventually married a Scots clergyman and never returned to Jamaica. John, the son, after studying engineering, returned to Jamaica in 1823 to live with his mother, grandmother, aunts, uncles (the children of Peter Douglas), and his cousins, in what was clearly a matrifocal household even when Peter Douglas was alive. Both his grandmother and his

mother lived to a ripe old age, and in a surviving letter which John Price Nash wrote to his sister in Scotland he speaks of them both with affection and respect.

This case embodies the structural principles of the system in a vivid way, and it also shows the process by which legitimate and illegitimate lines diverge, becoming polarised in class terms. Elizabeth and her descendants disappeared into the Scottish population until CRATON uncovered the Jamaican connection; John and his descendants became part of the Jamaican middle class but as they were absorbed back into the Jamaican population they became progressively darker when declining material fortune made "good" marriages more difficult to achieve. (See CRATON 1978: 331-339 for details).

In our contemporary middle class material we find cases where a husband-father is perceived to be "irresponsible" by virtue of his "outside" activities of drinking and womanizing. But we also find cases where faithful, sober, devoted husbands are concerned about their children's regard for them.

Mr. Benton explained at length the tendency for Jamaican children to disparage and belittle their fathers.

I have found that very often young people tend to have — young people who are progressing toward adulthood, they tend to regard their father as just a convenience... and this kind of general attitude makes it difficult for the father to play his role properly... and it also seems to me this way, that very often, ah women who are grown up in homes where they didn't have a father — I mean they didn't you know receive the care and protection of a father in a definite way — they seem to grow up without understanding the true role of the father in the home and ahm sometimes they tend, I think too, to believe that everything should revolve around them.

Although he and his wife have "worked out a plan" he is always conscious of the tendency toward a matrifocal bias in the internal relationships of the family, a bias which he sees clearly as coming from men ultimately, and their "outside" activities. This is not just the result of Benton's experience; it is an integral part of the culture of the Caribbean, brought to a sharp focus in the consciousness of the upwardly mobile who are striving to live a planned, careful, orderly, clean, religiously informed life as opposed to what our lower class informants (and Professor SIMEY), call the "loose," "dirty," "careless," "up and down" life of common experience.

A domestic system which does not confine relations within an easily defined and bounded "household."

This has been discussed in previous publications (R.T. SMITH 1973; 1978a; 1978b). Activities such as child care the acquisition, cooking and consumption of food, washing, sleeping, sexual relations and other activities generally regarded as "domestic," are not neatly confined within the bounds of a single "household." Still less can we assume that the typical household contains a nuclear family, appearances and survey data notwithstanding. These are complex issues and space does not permit their extended discussion. Our case materials remind us over and over again that although people are quite prepared to play the game into which they have been educated by several generations of census and survey takers, and provide a neat list of household members, further investigation quickly dissolves the image of the isolated nuclear family.

The family of Mr. and Mrs. Black in the village of August Town, Guyana, was listed in 1953 as living on a particular lot in a particular cluster of wooden buildings – two frame houses and a separate kitchen. Mr. Black, a carpenter, already had several outside children, and he owned a house in another village in which he had installed a lady friend and their son. Two of the Black's daughters were living in August Town with spouses, one married and one in a common-law union. As recorded in 1956, these daughters spent a good deal of their time in the family home with their mother and their children (who always called their maternal grandmother "mama"), ate there frequently, played with Mrs. Black's younger children who were about their age, and often slept there. Mr. Black divided his time (somewhat unpredictably) between his two homes. By 1975 things had changed a good deal. Both Mr. and Mrs. Black were dead. The family home, considerably worse for wear, was now occupied by the youngest daughter and her three children (by three different fathers) and a son – now a police constable. The rates on the land were paid by another daughter now living in the United States of America. For periods the policeman would give a weekly allowance to his sister who then cooked and washed his clothes; but at other times he would complain that she was wasting his money and "board" with a married sister in the village – that is pay her a weekly sum to provide food for him. These married sisters had by now their own grown-up children with whom they maintained close interactive relations that can only be described as "domestic" even though the people involved were apparently distributed over a number of "nuclear family" households. This kind of pattern is not peculiar to rural Guyana. There is no need to labour the point but it is necessary to remember that lists of occupants of "households" do not constitute an adequate guide to family and domestic relations.

A system of sex-role differentiation which stresses the segregation of conjugal roles, permits the participation of women in the occupational system; allows men to disperse economic resources, but requires that women concentrate them.

Until recently the significance of sex-role differentiation as an important component of family structure has been underestimated. ELIZABETH BOTT, (1957; 1968) in her pioneering work on English families, did not at first recognise that her "segregated" and "joint" patterns of conjugal role activity were but special instances of differences in sex-roles.

Implicit in many historical discussions of the family is the idea that a "normal" family is a nuclear family; this assumption is reflected in the very terminology when reference is made to "denuded" families. Another pervasive assumption is that stable, normal families exist when a male in the position of husband-father is possessed of authority and control over economic resources. In many discussions of the slave family and the transition to free labour, the weakness of the family (or the supposed weakness), is attributed to the insecurity of the husband father because of his inability to command steady and adequate income. The concept of a "normal" family consisting of a man who is active in the politico-jural and economic domains, a wife who has responsibility for the domestic domain, and their children to whom legitimate status is transmitted by virtue of the parents' marriage, is a concept with far-reaching consequences. It is embedded in all English thinking about welfare policy since the beginning of the seventeenth century, and inevitably it has deeply affected West Indian discussion of these issues. Unfortunately it bears little relation to the realities of West Indian working class life, nor to English working class life for that matter (see LAND & PARKER 1978).

Kinship and the organization of work.

THOMAS ROUGHLEY'S *The Jamaica Planter's Guide* (1823), a source mined to exhaustion by writers on slavery; has some interesting things to say about work organization. At this period the slave trade had been abolished for some time and planters were concerned about the reproduction of their labour force since that

seemed to be the only method of replacement. ROUGHLEY had a lot to say about child care, the treatment of pregnant women, the care of the aged and so forth, and all these discussions are clearly and overtly linked to the problem of running the plantation. The "great gang" is composed of the strongest and most skilled men *and* women, attended by a field cook who is to see that they are fed well and on time. The second gang is made up of weakly people, youths, sucking mothers and the aged, attended by nurses who look after the infants while the mother is at work in the fields. Mothers get an occasional break in order to feed their children. (Substitute free labour for slave and a factory for a plantation and all this might sound quite "modern"). The third, or "weeding gang" is composed of children from five to six years and upwards under the direction of a driveress. ROUGHLEY appears to be as solicitous of the welfare of these children as any modern social worker. He (1823: 104) points out these children are

drivers, cattlemen, mulemen, carpenters, coopers, and masons, as it were in embryo . . . Even in common life, throughout civilized Europe, the welfare of the child is the grand object of the parent. The owner and the overseer of those valuable shoots should act the part of a parent, fosterer, and protector, looking on them as the future prop and support of the property.

He details the age at which children should be weaned (12 to 14 months), the desirability of "inoculation for the cow or small-pock," the daily feeding of weaned children with soup, and the monthly dosing with worm medicine and castor oil. By the age of three they graduate to a group supervised by an old woman who keeps them clean, fed and busy, each child aided by a "wineglass of acidulated sugar, and a taste of good rum to each, as an enlivener" (ROUGHLEY 1823: 122). Surely preferable to the laudanam with which the children of the English working classes were rendered tranquil while their mothers laboured in the textile mills of Lancashire.

The old, the sickly and the incapacitated are not neglected. The old "should be allotted to those kinds of occupations which do not bear hard upon them." But, "something they should always have to do, to keep their minds employed, and their bodies in easy activity." Similarly with the invalids, "Though much cannot be

expected of them, yet it is best to keep them at some employment," such as planting and cleaning fences (*ibid.*: 113).

ROUGHLEY's experience was on the large Jamaican sugar estates. Such paternal solicitude and precise management was less likely to be found on small properties, and indeed we do not know to what extent it was actually practised anywhere. We do know that he describes a pattern of labour utilisation which was widespread and continued on plantations using indentured labour after slavery has been abolished. We also know that indentured labour on Guianese plantations received better medical care, crude though it might have been, than did the free labourers who lived in villages. This is reflected in mortality statistics.

This is not the place to review the wide range of economic circumstances which existed after the abolition of slavery. It was unusual for the ex-slaves to be able to constitute themselves into a stable and prosperous "peasantry." Indeed, few of them tried. What they attempted to do was to alter the conditions under which they sold their labour power, and to remove themselves from the control of the plantations. British Guiana saw the most successful movement of slaves into independent villages, but, as WALTER RODNEY (1981) has recently re-emphasized, they did not become "peasants" (see R. T. SMITH 1956, 1962). Like settlements in other parts of the West Indies they were constituted around a christian church with its attendant school, and the villagers, far from withdrawing from creole, colonial society, were drawn ever more closely into it. Legal, christian marriage in the hierarchical system of creole society was a sign of status and it came to be associated with women's cessation from work outside the home. It was a class defined institution, opposed to other forms of union within a system of unions, and so it remains today. Only in this context does "poverty" make any sense as the precipitating cause of non-legal unions.

Of course, women were out of luck in post-emancipation society. They remained actively involved in occupations outside the home, while at the same time losing whatever services were provided by the plantation; services such as day-care for their children, a cook to provide food at work, free medical services and maternity leave. Now they had to work outside *and* take on

domestic responsibilities at home. 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 such domestic activities as cooking, washing and cleaning.

ERNA BRODBER (1975), in her study of Kingston yards, has provided some revealing insights into the way in which quite independent women allow men to dominate them. These women rent rooms in yards, into which they admit boy-friends who may or may not contribute significantly to household expenses. They go out of their way to cook attractive food, keep the men's clothes in order, and generally play the role of obedient wife. If there is a TV set it is the man who chooses the programme, even if the woman is paying the rent; if the man wants to sleep after lunch the children are chased away. Although middle class women have "helpers" to do the dirty work, the kitchen and the house remain their domain. One middle class woman told us that her late husband had never been in the kitchen; with a wife, two daughters and a maid he never even brought himself a glass of water.

Ideologically there is a close association between the "inside" domain and activities of women and the "outside" life of men. Both AUSTIN (1974) and DEVEER (1979), in their work in Kingston and May Pen respectively, have shown how deep-seated and pervasive are these ideas about sex-roles. The aspect to which attention is drawn here is the way in which men tend to use income, be it in cash or in kind, to fulfil obligations which are often dispersed over a number of domestic groups. They may give contributions to their own mothers, the mothers of their children, current girl friends and of course to their own wife or common-law wife. Such material as we have on this question shows that lower or working class men may have a remarkable number of claims on their income. In a study carried out among lower class men in Kingston, ANDERSON PARKS (pers. comm.) describes how a delivery van driver with a steady, but not large, income tends to run up debts for such items as stereo equipment, regularly drops off money to pay the rent of a current girl friend, passes by to leave a contribution to the support of an outside child, visits his mother with a gift and eventually arrives home to his wife with a consider-

ably reduced pay-packet, some of which will be kept back to meet his entertainment expenses.

There is no reliable measure of the extent to which this pattern is general, or the extent to which it is confined to the lower class. As usual there is a great deal of variability and one could point to cases where married middle or working class couples pool their resources for the purchase of a house or the education of children. However, our women informants are quite articulate about the propensity of men to "wander"; field materials, some of them going back as far as 1951, confirm that it is quite common for men to disperse resources while women concentrate them. It is easy to devise functional explanations for this flow of resources; it avoids the reliance of any one domestic unit upon a sole source of income which is apt to be cut off in an unstable labour market. Like all functionalist explanations this one fails to explain why this particular solution should have emerged rather than another.

"I feel a woman can control their nature more than a man. I just have that feeling. I mean, a woman will easier be satisfy with one man when a man can't be satisfy with one woman. Right?" (DeVEER 1979: 108). This statement of a male Jamaican could be regarded as a rationalisation of his own behaviour, or as special pleading. It couches the argument in universalistic, "natural" terms, against which moral arguments carry little weight. But West Indians also claim special characteristics, as though nature had singled them out from the rest of mankind.

Cultural assumptions which assign specific characteristics to "West Indian" ways of behaving.

"Jamaicans love a whole lot of woman, you know. Lot of woman, not just one. They don't stick to one, they must have girls outside, that's just the way . . . They love sport [laugh]. Married men, unmarried men, it don't matter." (DeVEER 1979: 150). This happened to be a working class woman, but much the same sentiment can be found at every level of the society.

West Indians do not have a monopoly on polygynous tendencies, nor is it unusual for men to use positions of power to secure access to women. Many young Africans seethe with resentment at the monopolisation of young women by old men; not necessarily

out of sexual frustration, but because access to women is itself a sign of power, prestige and maturity. Nineteenth century European society had a well-documented under-life. The male members of the British Royal family, or some of them, were renowned for their sexual exploits. Karl Marx fathered a bastard son on his domestic servant and Friedrich Engels had a Kep' Miss from the Lancashire working class; it may have shown a democratic impulse, but of course he did not marry her.

The rising divorce rate and the increase in female-headed households in the United States sometimes appears to indicate that they are following in the wake of the West Indies. The appearance is false. There is no loss of faith in the monogamic ideal in the United States, even among that growing number of people for whom the Census Bureau had to devise a new term, POSSLQ, or Person of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters. The rate of re-marriage is exceedingly high. The West Indies are closer to Victorian England than to the egalitarian customs of the modern youth of North America and Europe with their apparent mastery of the techniques of birth control. Certainly the ideology is different; divorce and re-marriage is really a searching for the one, true, right person and is not based upon a notion that monogamic fidelity is impossible.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Social policies which bear directly upon the family are surprisingly uniform in modern bureaucratic societies, and all states, regardless of their level of economic development or the nature of their political system, tend to adopt similar policies (KAMERMAN & KAHN 1977). Cadres of professional "social workers," "family case workers," "probation officers" and the like are to be found everywhere and are increasing in number. They are an integral, and perhaps inevitable, part of the modern state apparatus; that is, the state apparatus which increasingly regulates the lives of its citizens. MICHEL FOUCAULT and his associates have shown how recent is this development (FOUCAULT 1965, 1970, 1973, 1978a, 1978b; DONZELOT 1979). The invention of modern institutions

such as the prison, lunatic asylum, orphanage and workhouse went hand-in-hand with the growth of that scientific approach to planning which so captivated SIMEY. Poverty, marital stress, child neglect, bastardy, and unemployment came to be seen as aspects of "social pathology" to be studied, regulated and (optimistically) cured by rational intervention on the part of paid servants of the state. The ideology of rational intervention continues to motivate social policy in the face of growing scepticism as to its efficacy. Some students regard this bureaucratic apparatus as a part of the regulatory, or police, function of the state, particularly since its clients are the poor and the unruly. Whatever the truth or otherwise of that idea, it is clear that the general trend toward more social intervention in family life is unlikely to diminish, whatever is said here. However, our previous analysis suggests that there are certain aspects of West Indian family structure which are neither pathological nor amenable to cure by concentrating on the poor.

We must agree with SIMEY (1946: 100-101) in his one flash of insight, that "as middle class standards become more widespread in the population the situation will [not] show any tendency toward improvement" in the exploitation of women, though in the interest of neutrality we might re-phrase it to read, "will [not] show any tendency to change." Far from the system showing "looseness," "disorganization" or "disintegration," it appears to be very stable. The dual marriage system is intact. Illegitimacy rates have not fallen significantly. Whether one likes the pattern of West Indian kinship or not, one cannot realistically say that it is disorganized. West Indians have extensive kinship ties, and at all levels of the society kin tend to be supportive, loving and kind — with occasional lapses of course, and allowing for the divisions created by class. It is not that West Indian kinship is weak; it is that it has distinctive patterns which need to be recognised.

These distinctive patterns are not "caused" in any simple way by "poverty." That is not to say that poverty is not a grave social problem in the West Indies; poverty, along with unemployment, underemployment, lack of opportunity and absence of adequate bases for self-respect, must all be addressed by social policy. But these things are not caused by the family system any more than the

family system is caused by them. They are all part of the structure in place, produced by the political economy of the West Indies, by its historical experience and by the manner in which class has been structured in West Indian society.

In the almost forty years since SIMEY wrote *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies* there has been a great deal of change in this region. Most of that change has been in the direction envisaged and advocated by him. The expansion in the size of the middle class, effected by widening educational opportunity and the increase in bureaucratic, service and sales occupations, has been made possible mainly by increases in the export of bauxite and oil, and by the development of the tourist trade. It would have surprised SIMEY to see how little of this increased prosperity has come through agriculture, but he would have been gratified by the growth in local industry to substitute for imports and to provide housing. As is widely recognised, these changes have not altered the basic structure of dependence of the region on the industrialised countries. With the possible exception of Cuba, and the very peculiar case of Guyana, all these developments have been based squarely upon the expansion of the middle class, and upon the extension of middle class aspirations to an ever-widening circle.

It is difficult to imagine any fundamental change in these trends in the immediate future. Social policy seems to incline toward a local form of welfare capitalism. National Insurance schemes for the employed; generous pension, housing, medical and other perquisites for the upper middle class — be they in business, government service, politics or the military — and for such of the rest of the middle and working classes as can bargain for these perquisites; and very little left for the growing numbers of the poor. High rates of population growth coupled with the closing off of migration outlets and the apparent impossibility of economic growth outpacing population growth, seem to guarantee high levels of unemployment, crime and inadequate social services. Under these circumstances it would be unrealistic to expect any drastic change in family structure. For the lower class it is only the mutuality of kinship and community that keeps the very poor afloat at all, and given the continuation, and even the inten-

sification, of class relations it does not seem likely that the dual marriage system will disappear.

It is tempting to attribute present circumstances to "colonialism" or to "slavery" or "the plantation," and a case can be made for each such attribution. An even better case can be made for explaining much of the present difficulty in economic life to the continuing pattern of relations between the developed and underdeveloped parts of the world. But when it comes to family structure the case is somewhat different. When people declare, with some measure of pride, toleration, or amusement that "Jamaica man can't satisfy with one woman" then it does not seem quite fair to blame it all on people like William Montagu, Viscount Mandeville and 5th Duke of Manchester who, as Governor of Jamaica from 1808 to 1827, left more than place names behind him. According to EDWARD BRATHWAITE he had numerous brown-skinned progeny, and at least five of his illegitimate children were at school in Kingston in the 1830s. However, his wife, Lady Susan, daughter of the Duke of Gordon, a great beauty and a woman of independent spirit, had run off with one of her footmen even before he left for the West Indies. Interesting as these historical events undoubtedly are, we must remember that the present day system is being maintained, being reproduced every day, by the actions of independent West Indians exercising their prerogatives of freedom, privilege, dominance and subordination. It is nonsense to say that West Indians cannot afford to marry, that unstable unions and female headed households are an adaptation to poverty and economic insecurity (why that adaptation and not some other and why did East Indians, who were equally poor, not make that adaptation?), and it is nonsense to say that Jamaican men can't satisfy with one woman and must have outside children. All these things are a part of the system as it developed and as it is being maintained.

Repeated attempts have been made to try to swing this system into conformity with the so-called "nuclear family pattern" or "the christian family." More than one hundred and fifty years of intensive persuasion from the pulpits of the churches has had little discernible effect; perhaps the persuasion was directed at the wrong people. Attempts to enforce the bastardy laws have not

been conspicuously successful, especially when the fathers were respectable members of the middle class. There is often a great deal of confusion about what is being aimed at when policy is discussed. The churches have been trying to alter behaviour by expounding a code of christian morals, but a great deal of social policy and legislation is aimed at something different.

One common approach is to try to solve some of the problems of poverty and excessive population by forcing men, as it is said, to "live up to their responsibilities." But even the early census reports, cited by SIMEY, noted that women in stable unions have more children than those in common-law or visiting unions which are short-term, because they are more constantly exposed to the possibility of pregnancy. Population increase will not be checked by getting all women into stable unions, unless there is also an increased use of contraceptives, freely available abortion, or as in India, a policy of paying people to undergo sterilization procedures. India has a family policy in that sense, just as countries which need population increase sometimes pay child allowances.

The problem of poverty will not be solved by getting everyone into nuclear families, unless there is also a vast increase in available income and employment. To get everyone living in nuclear families might well exacerbate the situation — always a risk with any policy. As it is now the working people share a great deal of their income with the really poor in one way or another, though we do not know just how that is accomplished.

In recent years attempts have been made to alter the existing pattern of family structure by legislating away those features deemed undesirable. The new constitution of Guyana has a clause which says that henceforth there shall be no difference between legitimate and illegitimate children. There is as yet no enabling legislation so we do not know just how this is to be accomplished, but Jamaica has laws with the same intention. However, the father has to make proper recognition of an illegitimate child, and even if he does so there is nothing to prevent discrimination against outside children in bequests. Such laws do have limited use in regularising the position of children in inheritance cases where the father's intention is clear, but they will not change the family system unless they are accompanied by procedures for the

establishment of paternity of a degree of severity which seems unlikely to gain acceptance.

Policies which may do most to bring about change in West Indian family life are those which enhance the status and rights of women, to the point where they are not constrained by traditional concepts of their role. Equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, adequate day care facilities, freely available abortion under safe and hygienic conditions, and all the things which make it possible for people to choose freely how they will manage their affairs. It is not for the state to dictate how people should behave in their private lives, and one may doubt the degree to which professional intervention should be used in family affairs.

If this long discussion has taught us anything it is that a family system such as that of the West Indies arises in a particular kind of class society with particular kinds of sex roles, and it is unlikely to change until the pattern of class relations changes. Even then there is no guarantee that family and sex roles will immediately be transformed. These are what FERDINAND BRAUDEL calls structures of the *longue durée*. As yet the social sciences have very little idea as to how, and at what rate, they change.

NOTES

1. A much shorter version of this paper was presented as a lecture in memory of Professor CHANDRA JAYAWARDENA, delivered at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica on March 15th 1982. Although it does not deal with the joint work we carried out, I am happy to acknowledge how much of my thinking on these matters was influenced by him. I am also grateful to those who attended the lecture for their comments, and to Mrs. D. POWELL and the members of the staff of the Department of Sociology, and to Dr. VAUGHAN LEWIS, Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, for their kind hospitality.

2. These are all ideas which have surfaced in one way or another in the discussion of poverty in the United States. See for example the remarkable paper by WALTER MILLER (1958) which purports to locate the causes of gang activity and crime in the specifics of a lower class culture made possible by personality characteristics very similar to those described by SIMEY.

3. Most of the material cited in this section is drawn from the results of a series of studies carried out during the late 1960's and the 1970's under the direction of the author, and involving the collaboration of the University of the West Indies and the University of Chicago. I am grateful to the National Science Foundation

and to the Lichtstern Research Fund for the financial support which made most of these studies possible. Fuller accounts of this work will be found in R.T. SMITH 1973, 1978a, 1978b; ALEXANDER 1973, 1976, 1977; AUSTIN 1974, 1979; DEVEER 1979; FISCHER 1974.

4. The material on which the following analysis is based consists not only of the by now voluminous body of census and survey materials, but also of many painstakingly collected genealogies and case studies — family histories really. My assumption is that one can only understand family life if one studies what kinship means to people, and if one is able to comprehend the whole range of individuals' experience. In this research the same individual was interviewed many times, sometimes for as much as 100 hours stretching over many months. Quick surveys have their uses but they yield data very different from those reported here. For each person interviewed we constructed a genealogy; some of them are enormous, containing as many as 800 to 1000 individuals. See R.T. SMITH 1978a, 1978b, and ALEXANDER 1976 for further details.

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