WEST INDIANS IN EASTON: A STUDY

OF THEIR SOCIAL ORGANISATION WITH PARTICULAR

REFERENCE TO PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSOCIATIONS

(Thesis presented to the University of Leicester
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.)

David G. Pearson

July, 1974
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been completed without the assistance of my teachers, friends and colleagues in the Departments of Sociology at the University of Leicester and the University of Exeter. In particular, I am indebted to Professor Ilya Neustadt for his constant encouragement, to Clive Ashworth for his ever receptive ear and, above all, to Eric Dunning for his conscientious supervision.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to my parents and to my wife, Suzette, who accepted the role of 'research widow' for many months with great understanding.

I should also like to thank Iris Sanders for typing the thesis.

Finally, no list of acknowledgements would be complete without mentioning all those individuals who must remain unnamed in the following pages. My warmest gratitude is extended to the many people in Easton who offered me their assistance, hospitality and friendship during the course of the present study.

David G. Pearson
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>COMMUNITY ORGANISATION IN WEST INDIAN SOCIETIES</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>WEST INDIANS IN EASTON</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>WEST INDIAN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN EASTON</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>FAMILY AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION AMONG WEST INDIANS IN EASTON</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
<td>RELIGION: WEST INDIAN MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN EASTON</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six</td>
<td>THE DYNAMICS OF WEST INDIAN ACTIVISM IN EASTON</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RESEARCH APPENDIX</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The present study is a modest empirical investigation of the social organisation of a West Indian settlement in an urban area of Britain. It is concerned, in particular, with participation in formal and informal voluntary associations within that settlement. It seeks to explain the dearth of communal associations - especially the paucity and ephemeral nature of political associations of a formal character - among West Indians. Its findings are used as a basis for suggesting possible directions which research in this area might fruitfully take in the future. Before elaborating on the aims of the research, a few comments will be addressed to some of the theoretical presuppositions which underpin it.

The study of race and/or ethnic relations in Britain has produced a considerable literature in recent years which has embraced a number of different theoretical and methodological perspectives. The present study is more concerned with the internal social dynamics of a particular migrant settlement than with a wider appraisal of 'race relations' in Britain. However, the need to relate the social situation of 'coloured immigrants' to a much broader intra- and inter-societal perspective is recognised and this will be stressed throughout the study. Hence, the appropriateness of the following outline of previous studies of coloured minorities in Britain.

A number of these studies have been concerned with an examination of all the major coloured immigrant groupings in Britain.¹

They have sought to describe the nature of the West Indian, Indian and Pakistani migrations, the cultural and social organisation of these migrant groups, their settlement patterns in Britain and the 'problems' which they meet in the host society. Most of these studies have placed all these groups under such common rubrics as 'coloured immigrants', 'ethnic and/or racial minorities', or some combination of these and similar terms. Within this perspective there has been an emphasis on host-migrant relationships and the concepts of 'accommodation', 'integration' and 'assimilation'.

This approach led to a concern with colour prejudice and discrimination in Britain and the 'racial problems' associated with it. Several studies adopted an attitudinal perspective and attempted to 'measure' the levels of prejudice and discrimination based on the beliefs attached to cultural and phenotypical differentiation. Sometimes they were focussed on the entire host society but more often they selected those urban areas in which coloured immigrants are most heavily concentrated.


In addition to such attitudinal surveys and those studies which examined race relations at the macro-level, a number of community studies have been carried out which have described the social situation of coloured migrants in particular British cities. The early studies conducted in the late 1940's and early 1950's were usually confined to African and West Indian settlements because the immigration of Asian migrants did not reach a significant level until the 1960's. The most notable 'pioneering studies' of this type included Kenneth Little's study of 'Bute Town' in Cardiff, Michael Banton's study in Stepney, London, and the Liverpool community study carried out by Anthony Richmond. All these studies were primarily concerned with negro populations established since the beginning of the twentieth century in British seaports.

With the entry of substantial numbers of West Indian and Asian migrants in the 1950's and 1960's, other community studies followed. Many of them were based in the London area and were still centred on West Indian settlements. Sheila Patterson's study of Jamaicans in Brixton, Ruth Glass's survey of black


7. Patterson, op. cit.
'newcomers'\textsuperscript{8} and R. B. Davison's study of the 'Black British'\textsuperscript{9} are perhaps the best known\textsuperscript{10}.

The setting up of the Survey of Race Relations by the Institute of Race Relations in 1963 prompted the voluminous Colour and Citizenship Report\textsuperscript{11} and a number of community studies which were concerned with several provincial cities as well as the Metropolis. Apart from those studies which were concerned with particular aspects of race relations in Britain, for example, housing and employment\textsuperscript{12}, the most notable study to emerge from the 'survey' was the study of Sparkbrook, Birmingham by John Rex and Robert Moore\textsuperscript{13}. A survey of Bristol by Anthony Richmond and Michael Lyon which was initiated at the same time has also been recently published\textsuperscript{14}. These studies, and a number of others not so well

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Rose et al, \textit{op. cit.}, see also Nicholas Deakin, \textit{Colour, Citizenship and British Society}, (London, Panther, 1970).
\end{itemize}
known, have provided a wealth of ethnographic data pertaining to several coloured settlements in Britain.

The above studies, and the previously described work, indicate that the level of colour prejudice and discrimination against coloured groupings in Britain is considerable. This finding prompted the suggestion that coloured immigrants in Britain can be subsumed under a common 'under-class' or 'sub-proletariat' category in the stratificational system of the host society. Thus, it is argued that coloured individuals and groups in Britain are constrained by the prevalence of racial discrimination to occupy 'inferior' positions in the host society compared with the indigenous white population. Due to the negative attributes assigned to colour and/or cultural differences by many members of the host society, coloured immigrants are placed in a disadvantageous position with regard to the acquisition of scarce resources, whether in the field of housing, employment or whatever. Relationships between coloured minorities and the host society are, therefore, perceived by theorists as conflictual and competitive.


16. See Daniel, op. cit. for a useful 'measurement' of colour prejudice and discrimination in Britain.

The present study accepts the validity of this perspective and acknowledges the contribution made by the various approaches previously outlined. However, these approaches appear to have a number of shortcomings. These can be more easily elucidated by placing these studies within three major categories which can be called the "attitudinal", "community" and "stratificational" perspectives respectively.

The attitudinal perspective, whilst providing such valuable data on the prevalence of 'colour prejudice' in Britain, often fails to explore the structural relationships which underly attitude formation. It can be instructive to investigate the presence, or otherwise, of the attitudes which pertain to cultural and/or phenotypical differences as these may shape the beliefs and actions of black and white members of the host society. But it is essential to relate these attitudes to the social contingencies which produced them and which largely determine the meaningfulness of the symbols which actors may attach to 'colour' or 'race'.

Similarly, with many community studies there is a tendency to view coloured settlements in particular cities as social isolates in space and time. There may be a token acknowledgement of the historical factors which help to explain the presence of these immigrant groups in their contemporary metropolitan situation. There may also be an awareness that a specific settlement-area must be seen in relation to the wider structure of the society in which it exists, but often, these wider considerations are not built-in to the study as a central feature. They do not form the basis of the theoretical and methodological framework being used.

Finally, the stratification approaches to race relations, particularly their Marxist variants, overlook or de-emphasise the essential task of separating out the socially and culturally distinct
groupings within a common classification, such as 'immigrant' or 'coloured minority', or within a common 'under-class' or 'sub-proletariat' stratum. These internal distinctions not only apply to the major cultural and geographical divisions between, for example, West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis \(^{18}\) but also to the very important regional, linguistic, religious, political and other differences within these respective groupings. These distinctions are more readily apparent if there is an explicit recognition of the way in which these groups separate themselves into meaningfully distinct groups of communities.

In the present study, the total West Indian population in Easton will be referred to as a settlement whilst the distinctive island divisions within the latter will be called groupings or communities. This use of terminology corresponds to the way in which individuals or groups within the West Indian settlement relate to one another and how they define the closeness or otherwise of the social bonds within these relationships. The term 'West Indian' is acceptable to the researcher as a means of referring to individuals who originate from a common geographical area, namely the Caribbean or the West Indies, but it will remain problematic at this point whether this common geographical background can be directly equated with social propinquity. Hence the term 'West Indian community' will not be used within this study on the grounds that it implies a common, solidaristic social

---

18. 'At least three major Asian collectivities may be discerned in Britain: West Pakistanis ....... Indian Gujaratis who usually focus around the Patidar caste; and Indian Punjabis who centre upon the Sikh community, especially the Jat (farmer) caste.' Michael Lyon, 'Ethnic Minority Problems: an Overview of Some Recent Research', New Community, (Vol. II, Pt. 4, 1973), pp. 329-352, above quote P. 345. Lyon provides an excellent overview of the current literature on the various Asian minorities in Britain.
grouping instead of a collection of distinctive island communities\textsuperscript{19}.

The present study also seeks to apply a historical-developmental approach to the study of West Indian social organisation. It embraces some aspects of the "attitudinal", "community" and "stratificational" perspectives but also attempts to expand and improve upon these perspectives. The theoretical framework used incorporates a number of different analytic levels which are nevertheless inter-penetrative. The levels range from personality formation to inter-societal relationships. Thus, the study will be concerned with examining certain features of 'West Indian' personality formation, with West Indian inter-personal relationships both within and between island communities, and with group relationships between the latter. It will also be concerned with the nature of the relationships between the West Indian settlement and the host community, and with other coloured minorities in the locality.

Reaffirming the belief that all coloured minorities in Britain can be placed objectively within an 'underclass', there will be a concern with the relationships between the 'immigrant settlement' in Easton (which is composed of all coloured groups, both West Indian and Asian, in the city) and the host community. It can be seen that host-migrant relationships at the micro-level must be placed within the wider context of relations between the host and coloured immigrant populations at the national level. Indeed, the meanings with which members of both host and migrant groups impute colour and cultural differences may be dependent on micro- and macro-relations, face-to-face interaction or more indirect influences.

These individual and group relations within and between host and migrant groups must be placed within a theoretical framework which defines the social aspects of contemporary coloured migrant settlement in Britain as a part of an on-going historical process which originated in the earliest colonial links between Britain and the Caribbean. There is, moreover, a fundamental error in assuming a 'cut-off' point when a West Indian's migration to Britain has been accomplished. It is as if a Jamaican or Trinidadian sheds the very substance of his previous existence when the gangplank rattles onto the dock at Southampton.

Those cultural traits of the home island which the West Indian brings with him are often perceived as merely a base for 'role-stripping'. It is assumed that the norms, indigenous to a particular West Indian society, are immediately constrained and a steady process of 'cultural erosion' introduced as soon as the migrant enters the host society. The present study will argue that this is a very static approach. It fails to appreciate the dynamics of the continual inter-penetration which takes place of social factors from both the home and the host society. Migration and settlement must be seen as an on-going process rather than a set of isolated actions. Therefore, the "short-term dynamics" of the migrant's initial contacts with the host society must be seen against the background of the "long-term dynamics" which 'blend' past and present. The influence of a colonial past on West Indian family organisation, religious participation and island insularity

20. See, Patterson, op. cit., chap. 1. However, it should be remembered that this was an early study of the initial period of West Indian settlement and the 'culture shock' and 'stranger' thesis adopted by the author at that time would be more appropriate than for studies of current 'established' settlements. For more recent work by Patterson see, Immigration and Race Relations in Britain 1960-1967, (London, O.U.P./I.R.R., 1969).
in Britain, are only a few examples where these historical aspects (long-term dynamics) are introduced in the study.

Thus, the links, both contemporary and historical, between Britain and the various West Indian societies which the former colonised, need to be examined together with an analysis of the social structure of Caribbean societies. Throughout the present study the social organisation of West Indian island communities in Easton will be compared with the social structure of those Caribbean societies from which these island communities originated.

Most of the previous studies of West Indian settlements in Britain have remarked upon the paucity and ephemerality of West Indian communal associations, particularly those with political aims. This apparent dearth of formal political association is made all the more interesting by the noted presence of such associations within Asian settlements. Thus, the mere fact of being lower class, coloured immigrants does not appear to explain the West Indian pattern. If the latter were the case one would expect to find a similar lack of political organisation within Asian groupings.

Michael Banton remarked on what he called a high level of West Indian 'disorganisation' in his study of coloured immigrants in Stepney. He contrasted this with the more 'organised' Asian communities in the area. Banton attributed the lack of West Indian associations to:

'The extent to which European influences have disrupted the culture of the country of origin, and it appears to relate closely to the attitudes adopted by immigrants after arrival'\(^{22}\). 

Ruth Glass found very few formal associations among the West Indians in her London study. She states that:

'As integration with white British society is no longer expected as a matter of course, integration of the coloured people themselves appears to be the essential first step'\(^{23}\).

Glass argues that there was no reason to expect a high level of West Indian participation in voluntary associations because they were mostly newly settled migrants who were initially separated by island distinctions and so forth\(^{24}\). Sydney Collins, who also found a marked contrast between Asians and West Indians in their levels of associational activity, attributed this disparity to religious differences between the two groups\(^{25}\). He distinguished between 'traditional' associations which were similar to those found in the country of origin, and 'emergent' associations which were set up by immigrants to meet their needs in the host society\(^{26}\). Collins argued that the Asian groupings he studied in Cardiff were united by their Moslem beliefs and the prevalence of 'traditional' associations which were attached to these beliefs. The negroes

\(^{22}\) Banton, *The Coloured Quarter*, op. cit., p. 214

\(^{23}\) Glass, op.cit., p. 211

\(^{24}\) Ibid., pp. 200-201

\(^{25}\) Collins, op. cit.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., p. 20
in Cardiff did not have these strong traditions and hence, Collins argues, they were fragmented.

Sheila Patterson attributes the lack of West Indian associations discovered in her Brixton study to 'culture shock' or 'cultural strangeness' in the initial period of West Indian settlement in Britain. She stresses particularly the difficulties of maintaining solidaristic ties when the West Indian family and household structures are disrupted by migration.

Most of these early studies were concerned with West Indian immigrants who were comparatively new arrivals in Britain. Thus, they could explain the lack of associational activity by pointing to the sometimes acute problems met in 'settling in' within their new surroundings. However, more recent studies of longer settled West Indian groupings have found similar patterns of association. Thus, E. R. Braithwaite in a study which included an examination of West Indian attempts to establish housing societies in London, found that most West Indians 'were very reluctant to take any action themselves to improve their own circumstances'. Braithwaite mentioned island disunity again but also argued that most West Indians, whilst taking a very lively interest in politics in the Caribbean, are more content to be patient and wait and see what the host society has to offer before organising themselves in Britain.

Hylson-Smith, in a comparative study of Cypriots and West Indians in North London, states that:

'With the West Indians there is a less well developed associational life, there is no pronounced geographical concentration of specifically West Indian associations .... this stands in marked contrast to the Cypriot community.'

---

27. See, note 20
28. Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 507
29. Hylson-Smith, op. cit., p. 473
E. J. B. Rose briefly discussed the nature of West Indian associational activity in the Institute of Race Relations Survey previously mentioned. Apart from reiterating the points made by Patterson, he argues that changes in the Caribbean could discourage West Indian organisation in Britain. Rose suggests that many West Indians came to Britain expecting to raise their status from lower class to middle class. However, they encountered unexpectedly high levels of prejudice and discrimination in the host society and this disillusioned them to such an extent that they were unable to organise themselves. Rose also refers to evidence from the Rex and Moore study in Birmingham which confirmed the now familiar pattern among West Indians. Rex and Moore produced yet another 'explanation' for the lack of organisation among the latter:

'The lack of organised impact is due to ...... the absence of institutions of their own which are significantly different from those of their hosts and the other is their affiliation to norms and organisations of the host society.'

Finally, Rose refers to some of the findings of Richmond in Bristol where a number of West Indians living on modern council estates were studied. Richmond, remarking on the reasons for West Indians not joining local associations, says:

'In this they preferred to behave as individuals, exhibiting the traits in their West Indian make-up which prompted emigration and which, given favourable circumstances should equip the West Indian for individual adaptation to an English environment.'

30. Rose, op. cit., p. 423
31. Ibid.
32. Rex and Moore, op. cit., p. 155
33. Ibid., p. 428
The most recently published work on coloured immigrants
or 'black Britons' confirms these earlier findings. For
example, Banton reaffirms his much earlier study when he
states in a recent work that 'West Indians have not so far
been successful in building associations to represent their
shared interests'\(^34\). Sheila Allen adds further confirmation in
another recent book\(^35\). Therefore, it can be seen that the
existing material on West Indians in Britain shows a consistent
pattern of low levels of participation in formal associations.
Moreover, those few formal associations which have been established
are highly ephemeral and prone to fragmentation. This pattern
can be discerned from the earliest period of West Indian
settlement in Britain right through to the present day.

Whilst some attention has been paid to West Indian
associational activity, most of the 'explanations' offered
for the above mentioned pattern have been peripheral statements
in studies which have been concerned with much wider issues.
As yet no detailed study of levels of membership and
participation in voluntary associations among West Indians
exists. Similarly, no previous study has been primarily
concerned with explaining the ephemerality and paucity of West
Indian formal political associations. However, in a recent study
of Ben Heinemann\(^36\), a useful list of propositions which could
explain the latter is presented. These, as yet untested,

\(^34\) Banton, Racial Minorities, op. cit., p. 146
\(^35\) Allen, op.cit.
\(^36\) Benjamin W. Heinemann, Jr., The Politics of the Powerless, (London,
O.U.P./I.R.R., 1972). See also, Neville Maxwell, The Power of
propositions will provide a useful summary of previous work.
The propositions, which Heinemann believes may serve to explain
why 'West Indians have had difficulty in establishing united,
cohesive organisations to help develop their communities in
Britain and to fight discrimination', are as follows:

1. The heterogeneity of West Indians; which is demonstrated
   in terms of island, class, colour and political
   organisational difficulties.

2. The marked concern with individual economic activity,
   high residential mobility and a belief in the temporary
   nature of their migration may have impeded organisation.

3. The historical influences of slavery and colonialism
   have fermented self and group recrimination, possibly
   along class and/or colour lines.

4. The level of discrimination found in Britain may have
   incapacitated West Indians to such an extent that it
   has negated any attempts to organise themselves.

5. The difficulties of evolving a group identity from
   the strands of European and African historical links
   which emphasise fragmentation and marginality.

6. Political experiences in the West Indies may influence
   organisational problems in Britain.

Heinemann goes on to say that:

'The general phenomenon of the West Indians' failure
to organise is extraordinarily complicated both to
describe and to explain in depth, requiring tools
from a multiplicity of disciplines - history, economics,
sociology, anthropology, political science and
literature. A cross-cultural framework embracing the
West Indies, Africa and Britain is needed.'

The exploratory nature of the present study, together with
its deliberate focus on a specific urban location, negates any
pretentions to present a complete explanation of the above
phenomenon. The aim of the thesis is to look at a particular
West Indian settlement with this problem as a central feature and

37. Ibid., p. 76
38. Ibid., pp. 76-77
39. Ibid., p. 76
to try and relate the nature of West Indian organisation, both in Britain and the Caribbean, to the observed pattern of formal and informal associational activity. Thus, the study is not only concerned with explaining why a particularly low level of associational activity is apparent in this settlement but also with an attempt to establish how some of the explanatory factors are produced and how they relate to one another.

It should be stressed at this point that the study started with the expectation that relatively low levels of participation in voluntary associations among West Indians would be found. This was due, not only to the evidence drawn from previous studies of West Indians in Britain, which contributed to this expectation, but also to the nature of present data on voluntary association membership and participation in general, drawn from data drawn from studies of many different societies. These data show that, in most societies, high levels of voluntary association membership tend to be found mainly among the middle and upper classes, that is among those in higher socio-economic status positions as measured by income, occupation, home ownership, education and so forth. They also tend to be higher in urban rather than rural areas and among white rather than black groups.

40. There is a sizeable literature on voluntary association membership and the above social variables. The best overview at present is Constance Smith and Anne Freedman, *Voluntary Associations: Perspectives on the Literature,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard U.P., 1972) see also Murray Hausknecht, *The Joiners,* (New York, The Bedminster Press, 1962) and David Horton Smith, Richard D. Reddy, and Burt R. Baldwin, *Voluntary Action Research,* (Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1972). The above works demonstrate that an extensive number of studies confirm that high membership rates in voluntary associations are more commonly found among the middle class than working class and so forth.
The material on voluntary association membership in Britain (that is to say white membership) is extremely limited but it does appear to indicate that the level of voluntary association membership among the white working class in Britain is lower than for the middle class. Therefore, the above evidence suggests that the majority of West Indians in Britain, who are predominantly black, working class, often not highly educated individuals, who come from societies which are not heavily urbanised and industrialised, are not likely to establish and participate in a great many voluntary associations. However, this is to overlook the powerless situation of West Indians and other coloured minorities in the host society.

It has been argued that coloured immigrants, in common with many lower-class, indigenous white groups in Britain, are in relatively powerless positions in the host society. This is to say, many of the 'urban poor' in Britain are not able to exert much control over their life situations in a society which can be perceived as being composed of a number of competing groups who seek to maximise their opportunities in the market for scarce resources. The ability to control one's life situation within this market is governed by the nature of the power relationships between the respective groups and individuals who are competing for the above resources.

---

41. The limited material on voluntary association membership in Britain is reviewed in Raymond N. Morris, 'British and American Research on Voluntary Associations: A Comparison', Sociological Inquiry, No. 35, Spring 1965, pp. 186-200. See also, Tom Bottomore, 'Social Stratification in Voluntary Organizations' in D. V. Glass, ed., Social Mobility in Britain, (Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1954). A number of 'community studies' have included material on - predominantly middle class - voluntary association membership in particular areas in Britain. This material is reviewed in Colin Bell and Howard Newby, Community Studies, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1971), particularly Chaps. 5, 6 and 7, and Ronald Frankenberg, Communities in Britain, (London, Penguin, 1967).
Within this 'conflict model' of society, coloured immigrants, together with other powerless groups, are faced with innumerable constraints in the host society when attempting to acquire, for example, jobs, houses and other resources. These constraints will be partly governed by how ethnic and racial differences influence the relationships of power and control between host and migrant members. These differences must be seen within a system of group interdependencies which are governed by the nature of power relationships and the differing power potentials of the respective groups and individuals in the market.

If relationships between West Indians and other groups in Britain are conflictual and competitive, and if West Indians perceive their relative powerlessness in the host society, the formation of voluntary associations by the latter could be most significant as agencies of political change. That is to say, voluntary associations may be the only means by which West Indian settlements, who are powerless within the formal, institutionalised political structure of the host society, can utilise their power potential in the market and bring about changes in their life situations.

This argument is supported by many studies of negro voluntary associations in the United States. Some early studies, for example, the Drake and Cayton study in Black Metropolis, stressed the 'disorganisation' of the 'black, lower classes'. However, more recent studies have argued that American negroes are more likely to establish and participate in voluntary associations than whites of comparable class levels. Thus, within generally low levels of

associational activity, it is argued that lower class blacks are more active than lower class whites in the United States. The most famous proponent of this view was Gunnar Myrdal, who argued in An American Dilemma\textsuperscript{43} that the 'extensive participation of negroes must be viewed as a compensation for their exclusion from many other aspects of organized life in America\textsuperscript{44}. A number of other studies have supported Myrdal\textsuperscript{45}, although some writers, for example, Marvin Olsen\textsuperscript{46}, argue that the greater prevalence of a 'black consciousness' among American negroes in recent years has further increased their level of associational activity.

In addition to the evidence from the United States and elsewhere which suggests that 'black powerlessness' can be a positive stimulus to political organisation, there is also the nature of Asian associational activity in Britain to consider. Whilst it has been

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Smith and Freedman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 162
\item Marvin E. Olsen, 'Social and Political Participation of Blacks', \textit{American Sociological Review}, (No. 35, August, 1970), pp. 682-697
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
argued that the latter are considerably fragmentalised by factions which form along, for example, regional, religious, economic and political lines; within these lines many permanent political associations have been established\(^{47}\). Therefore, it is suggested that even within the limits of the expected low levels of voluntary association membership for lower-class, powerless groups in Britain, West Indian settlements still appear to have established fewer permanent, formal political associations, than similarly situated migrant groups. The present study will examine this problem in the following chapters.

Before providing a brief outline of the contents of these chapters, a few comments will be addressed to the distinctions which will be made between informal and formal associations and how these relate to primary and secondary relationships\(^{48}\). The study which follows is concerned with both informal and formal associations but there is a greater emphasis on the latter. It is suggested that West Indians may need to establish formally organised political associations if they wish to alter their present life situation in Britain. Whilst informal and formal voluntary associations could be functionally useful within West Indian settlements, those associations which are solely involved with exclusively West Indian activities are likely to remain isolated from the host community. In order for political change to be accomplished by West Indians, some relationships between themselves and external groups, would

---

47. See note 21
48. These terms are loosely defined on p. 23
appear to be necessary. Thus, it is argued that the establishment of formalised political associations would enable West Indians to enter the institutionalised political power structure of the host community. Conversely, the absence of such forms of political organisation would seem to preclude or inhibit a high level of interaction between West Indians and the host community and this in turn would be likely to reinforce the social and political isolation of West Indian settlements in the host society. This argument can also be extended to cover relationships between West Indian groupings and other coloured minorities in Britain. The formation of West Indian 'communal' associations would enable the latter to compete more successfully with, for example, neighbouring Asian groups, who do tend to establish such associations.

The distinction between primary and secondary associations is a subtle one and it is firmly emphasised that these categories are not mutually exclusive. A useful distinction has been made by John Rex between highly intimate and personalised primary relationships and more formalised associations within immigrant settlements. Rex distinguishes between what he calls 'primary communities' and 'associations'. Primary communities are those:

'Groups of individuals who are bound together by intimate personal ties ...... they involve the whole life of an individual ...... they are groups in which men reveal more of themselves, they turn to their fellow-members in times of emergency, they tell secrets about themselves, they share their excitements and joys. They feel able to relax and to let their hair down'.

48A A 'communal association' is an association which represents all island communities within a West Indian settlement. This 'representation' is reflected in the membership and organisation as well as group aims and objectives.

49. John Rex, 'Community and Association amongst Urban Migrants in Race, Colonialism and the City, pp. 15-31

50. Ibid., pp. 15-20
Rex is referring here to the intimacy of the primary relationships to be found in family and kinship relationships, to friendship networks and highly informal, loosely-structured groups who meet in lodging houses, pubs and on street corners.

Associations, for Rex, are groups of individuals who are bound together 'through sharing a common set of cultural meanings, norms and beliefs, which structure the social forms within which they interact'. These groups have a clear purpose and their structure is related to this purpose. Rex suggests that a 'pure' form of association might be found in a trade union, a political party, or an immigrant association. The latter may be functional to their members in a variety of ways. Rex lists four major functions of immigrant associations, namely, overcoming social isolation, affirming cultural beliefs and values, goal attainment and finally, pastoral work.

Particular associations may, manifestly or latently, perform all of these functions or only relate to some of them. However, Rex confirms that coloured minorities, because of the powerlessness and social isolation of their position in the host society, need to develop 'community associations' which incorporate these four possible functions. Thus, he states:

'The community association so formed has four possible functions. It alters the social structure and creates new groupings of people through the group-work which it promotes. It does 'pastoral' work among those who present themselves as clients. It acts as a tension-management system serving to give expression to, but also to channel and manage, the conflicts of interest which do occur. And it is a body which may act as a political pressure group in behalf of the community as a whole.'

51. Ibid., p. 20
52. Ibid., p. 22
53. Ibid., p. 30
The present study will seek to utilise Rex's distinctions between primary communities and associations because it appears more useful to use this type of generalised and flexible perspective rather than to make highly specific and somewhat mechanical distinctions between for example, informal and formal associations. However, within this broad perspective formal associations can be defined as more highly structured than the former. They have elected committees and officials, some semblance of a constitution or at least formalised procedural rules for association members. They may also have prescribed goals and functions which are made explicit to their members.

As such, they stand in contrast to more informal associations which tend to be more loosely-structured groups without elected members or explicitly stated rules and procedures and which may not have overtly expressed aims or functions. However, the distinctions between informal and formal association are left deliberately unspecific and generalised because of the belief of the researcher that the nature of social relationships are not necessarily coherent and clear-cut. There is a danger of over-simplification if such a dichotomy is accepted and utilised in research. What can be suggested is that informal associations are more likely to be akin to 'primary communities' and thus incorporate highly personalised, primary relationships, whilst more formalised associations will be relatively distinct from the latter in the manner which has been described previously in terms of less-personalised, secondary relationships. It should be noted in this connection that implicit in this discussion is the distinction between primary and secondary relationships within formal and informal organisations or associations. The distinctions between primary and secondary rests on the personalisation and intimacy of forms of interaction, whilst the
distinction between formal and informal rest on the degree of impersonality, regularisation of rules and procedures and so forth, of the organisation or association in which that interaction takes place. However, it has been stated that these terms are not mutually exclusive dichotomies, and to treat them in such a way is not considered particularly useful by the present researcher. However, it is felt that in an area where such terms are often never defined, some attempt at a definition, albeit somewhat loose and generalised, would be advantageous for the purposes of the present study.

Nevertheless, it remains problematic whether the study will confirm these distinctions. At present it is merely suggested that if the nature of West Indian political organisation and its relation to the formalised, institutionalised political structure of the host society is a primary focus of the following research, the emphasis on formal voluntary associations within the study would appear to be justified.

It can be seen that the present study is concerned with the social organisation of a West Indian settlement in Britain. More specifically, it examines the nature of primary and secondary relationships within and between particular West Indian groupings and the levels of West Indian membership and participation in both formal and informal voluntary associations. However, there will be a definite emphasis on the existence, or otherwise, of West
Indian formalised political associations\textsuperscript{54}. Furthermore, if it is found that such associations tend to be relatively scarce and ephemeral then the reasons for this phenomenon will be fully examined. Finally, it has been suggested that the present study of these specific problem areas may also demonstrate the utility of a more elaborate and sophisticated historical and developmental approach to an explanation of the social organisation of West Indian settlements in Britain.

The following chapter will briefly outline the structure of British West Indian societies and the nature of the social organisation of various groups within them. Patterns of association will be examined, particularly among the 'lower classes' the social strata from which most West Indian immigrants in Britain originate. Particular emphasis will be placed on the nature of political association and leadership in the Caribbean.

Having provided some comparative material on West Indian societies, Chapter 2 will present a detailed analysis of the data

\textsuperscript{54} A formalised political association can be defined as a formal association which has aims and objectives which are concerned with the utilisation of power for the purposes of promoting changes in the life situation of the members and other groups or individuals which that association purports to represent. Therefore, a political association can be distinguished from a recreational association. The latter is an association which is primarily leisure-orientated and whose functions, aims and objectives are concerned with the provision of supportive, leisure amenities which are not expressly designed to alter the life situations of West Indians in Britain in any fundamental way but merely act as compensations or adjuncts to their present life situations. However, there is no reason why an association cannot be both recreational and political in its functions and objectives. Nor is it suggested that a recreational association cannot be transformed or perceived by its members as a political association or vice versa.
drawn from a sample of West Indian respondents residing in Easton [55], a Midlands city in Britain. This material will relate to numerous facets of the life situation of these respondents in Britain and to their previous situations in their respective island societies in the Caribbean. Particular attention will be paid to their levels of membership and participation in voluntary associations both in the host society and the society of origin. This chapter will provide ethnographic data which can be utilised throughout the study, particularly when examining specific features of West Indian social organisation.

Chapter 3, will be concerned with an examination of those formal associations, recreational and/or non-recreational, which West Indians have established since their settlement in the urban area which was studied. Those associations which were in existence during the period of fieldwork will be described in some detail. Subsequently, chapters 4 and 5 will examine the family and household organisation of the sample, and patterns of religious association among the latter. Thus, in Chapter 4, the nature of West Indian family and household organisation will be related to the establishment and maintenance of West Indian voluntary associations and the links between family structure and political leadership and organisation in West Indian settlements will be examined.

Chapter 5, will explore the connections, between West Indian membership and participation in various forms of religious

55. 'Easton' is the fictitious name which will be used to describe the English city in which field research was carried out. Any connections which may be drawn with areas or places which have a similar or identical name are entirely coincidental and unknown to the researcher.
association and the formation of other types of voluntary association. Comparative material from the Caribbean will be freely used in these chapters and throughout the thesis. Similarly, some attempt to bring in comparative material relating to Asian groupings will also be made.

In Chapter 6, a number of points will be made, based on the preceding data, which will serve to describe the dynamics of West Indian activism in Easton. The nature of West Indian associational activity will be discussed and particular attention will be given to those 'explanations' of the ephemerality and paucity of West Indian formal associations mentioned in this Introduction.

Finally, a brief Conclusion will be presented, concerned with re-assessing some of the problems and intentions which have been described in the preceding pages. In addition, some concluding remarks will be addressed to the possible future nature of West Indian political organisation in Britain and some suggestions for future research will be outlined.
Chapter One

Community Organisation in West Indian Societies

It has already been stressed that it is important not to consider the position of West Indians in Britain as a separate phenomenon. Power relationships between migrant and indigenous groups in the host society must be seen as part of an on-going process of inter-relationships between receiving society and society of origin, coloniser and colonised. If this perspective is adopted, it is necessary to turn one's attention back to the Caribbean in order to understand fully the factors which have contributed to the current position of West Indians in Britain. The present chapter will not be concerned with giving a full appraisal of the historical links which bind certain West Indian societies to Britain. Nor is it intended to discuss extensively the social structure of particular island societies. Both of these tasks would require books in themselves, if not separate shelves of several volumes! However, it will be useful to outline certain features of the social organisation of West Indian societies in order to under-pin the forthcoming appraisal of the social organisation of West Indian settlements in Britain.

The history of the Caribbean is almost unique in many respects for it provides a classic example of a purely colonially created social and cultural area. By this is meant the 'creation' of island

1. There is a fairly extensive literature on the history of the West Indies and a more limited body of work on the contemporary social structure of West Indian societies. The definitive work at the present time, which provides an excellent bibliography for both of these aspects is, David Lowenthal, West Indian Societies, (London, O.U.P./I.R.R., 1972)

2. Philip Mason has argued that, 'There is a sense in which the Caribbean displays the essence of colonialism'. See Philip Mason, Patterns of Dominance, (London, O.U.P./I.R.R., 1970)
societies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through the arrival of European colonisers, who through force of arms and disease, decimated the small indigenous populations of Arawaks and Amerindians found in the Caribbean islands at that time. Today, very few West Indians can be said to be directly related to these indigenous groups. Almost all of them can trace their 'roots' back to the shores of the European and African continents. Over the last four centuries complex societies have been formed in the Caribbean out of these heterogeneous group formations.

The search for the 'New World' in the Americas made the West Indian islands useful stop-over points where, among others, the British, Spanish, French and Dutch settled or moved on. Initially the previous metals of South America were the prizes sought by the Western powers but soon the value of the Caribbean islands themselves was recognised and the lure of 'King Sugar' and other cultivated products proved irresistible. Some islands were settled by one nation and remained under one rule throughout their history. Barbados under the British is a notable example. However, most of the islands displayed the complexity of societies which were treated like trading stations, where different rulers passed and re-passed, sometimes with the tide. Thus, many West Indian societies can trace their lineage to a mixture of colonial influences. With the onset of slavery and, later, indentured labour, an imported proletariat was placed within these societies to form a black mass dominated by their white or lighter skinned masters. Thus developed the plantation culture which is representative of much of the Caribbean and the surrounding areas of
Plantation 'culture spheres' can be said to have certain basic features which are best described in the form of a typology. Charles Wagley, for example, has constructed such a typology which he believes incorporates the most important features of social organisation in the coastal regions of Brazil and Central America, the Caribbean and parts of the southern United States. These features are:

1. A Plantation system and Monocrop culture.
2. Rigid class lines.
3. Multi-racial societies.
4. Weak community structure.
5. Peasants.
6. Family - matrifocal type.

In a very general sense this is a fairly useful typology but it would be a mistake to view each of these features as present in each island in the Caribbean. It is important to distinguish between varying types of classificatory systems which cover the various islands in that area.

3. For analyses of the Caribbean as a collection of plantation societies which both historically and in the contemporary situation are viewed as 'dependent economies' as far as their relationships with past and present colonisers are concerned, see, Lloyd Best, 'Outlines of a Model of Pure Plantation Economy', Social and Economic Studies, (Vol. 17, No. 3, September, 1968), pp. 283–326; George L. Beckford, Persistent Poverty, (New York, O.U.P., 1972); Norman Girvan, 'Foreign Capital and Economic Underdevelopment in Jamaica', Institute of Social and Economic Research, (University of the West Indies, 1971), and Pan American Union, Plantation Systems of the New World, (New York, Pan American Union, 1959)

A more elaborate typology has been constructed by Sidney Mintz who argues that the Caribbean exhibits a wealth of cultural variation which defies easy classification. However, he agrees with Wagley that the 'Caribbean' can be seen as a social area (Mintz calls it a 'societal area') which has certain uniformities. The latter are expressed in a list of 'regional commonalities' which Mintz has constructed. These are as follows:

1. Lowland, subtropical, insular ecology

2. The swift extirpation of native populations

3. The early definition of the islands as a sphere of European overseas agricultural capitalism, based primarily on the sugar-cane, African slaves, and the plantation system.

4. The concomitant development of insular social structures in which internally differentiated local community organization was slight, and national class groupings usually took on a bipolar form, sustained by overseas domination, sharply differentiated access to land, wealth and political power, and the use of physical differences as status markers.

5. The continuous interplay of plantations and small-scale yeoman agriculture, with accompanying social structural effects.

6. The successive introduction of massive new "foreign" populations into the lower sectors of insular social structures, under conditions of extremely restricted opportunities for upward economic, social, or political mobility.

7. The prevailing absence of any ideology of national identity that could serve as a goal for mass acculturation.

8. The persistence of colonialism and of the colonial ambiance, longer than in any other area outside Western Europe.

9. A high degree of individualization — particularly economic individualization — as an aspect of Caribbean social organization.

The above features provide a useful appraisal of the social structure of West Indian societies and very adequately convey the complexity of attempting to demonstrate their common features. For example, if one looks at the social stratification of these societies the complexity of cross-cutting class and colour gradations is readily apparent\(^6\). David Lowenthal\(^7\) has distinguished between five types of West Indian society with different types of stratification systems.

1. Homogeneous societies without distinctions of colour or class.
2. Societies differentiated by colour but not stratified by class.
3. Societies stratified by colour and class.
4. Societies stratified by colour and class but with white Creole élites absent or insignificant.
5. Societies stratified by colour and class and containing sizeable ethnic groups in large measure outside the colour-class hierarchy.

Lowenthal\(^8\) argues that islands which are illustrative of these types are as follows:

1. Barbuda, the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos
2. Anguilla, Cayman Islands
3. Antigua, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Barbados

---


7. Lowenthal, op. cit., pp. 76-87

8. Ibid., pp. 78-79
4. Dominica, Grenada, Nevis, St. Lucia, Montserrat

5. Trinidad, Guyana

The above typologies demonstrate the intricacies of inter-island differentiation in the Caribbean and the dangers of highly generalised statements which purport to embrace all aspects of West Indian societies. Nevertheless, it can be said that most British West Indian islands are largely agrarian societies based on plantation economies. They contain stratification systems cut by continuous class and colour lines, a heterogeneity of ethnic and racial sub-types, loose and fragmented forms of association, a mass black proletariat/peasantry and distinctive types of family organisation.

Certain aspects of this classification have changed with the introduction of newer industries into some societies, for example, bauxite mining in Jamaica and oil extraction in Trinidad. There have also been changes in some societies from a three-tiered colour/class stratification system to a two-tiered model of middle class coloured and black masses. These changes are most apparent in some of those West Indian societies which have been granted independence since the early 1960's. Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados come into this category. However, these recent changes have not erased certain historical features connected with colonisation. These still dominate and largely explain the characteristics of contemporary West Indian societies. Gordon Lewis has stated that:

'The Caribbean economy exhibits, in exaggerated form, all the major properties of the colonial regime — foreign ownership and control in the major sectors of oil, sugar, banking, insurance, mining and manufacturing; external decision making with respect to investment and allocation of resources by the head offices of the big multinational corporations; structural unemployment and underemployment, combined with high salary-wage levels in privileged sectors; separation between local extraction of raw materials and overseas manufacture of the finished product; lack of indigenous technology; and concentration by overseas wealth in capital-orientated industries that do little to absorb the labour surplus inherited from the old plantation economy' 10.

This form of external domination and control has led McDonald to call the Caribbean, 'A beautiful house with an African personality', an outwardly attractive residence whose 'wealth and beauty have been the privilege and property of Europeans and North Americans for over three hundred years' 11.

The main point of this brief introduction has been to express some of the complexity and diffuseness of Caribbean societies. Mono-causal explanations of the nature of West Indian social organisation appear singularly inadequate when confronted with this plethora of historical contingencies. Therefore, those analyses which explain certain features of contemporary West Indian societies solely in historical materialist terms must be treated with some caution 12. Vera Rubin graphically illustrates the deficiencies of such rigid models when examining the social structure of colonial plantation societies. Thus, he states:


12. See, for example, Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944) and 'Race Relations in Caribbean Society', in Rubin, op. cit., pp. 54–60
"The social structure of the colonial plantation extended beyond a simple dichotomy of land-owning aristocracy and a homogeneous mass of slaves. There was considerable differentiation within each segment of the free and slave social groups. The white population comprised estate holders and some smallholders, distinguished by the French as grands and petit blancs. There were also the various professional and managerial classes who performed essential services and stood in a ranked order in the hierarchy of colonial society. They were differentiated primarily by social position, also by creole or metropolitan origin, occupation, education, and other social criteria. For example, the Scots-Irish overseer or book-keeper did not rank as high socially as the absentee English landowner.

There was also considerable differentiation within the slave class on the basis of origin, occupation, skin colour and acculturation to European norms. Social strata among the slaves were defined by creole versus African origins by skilled versus unskilled, domestic versus field labour, and by the extent of the adoption of external symbols of European dress, speech and manners, which became significant status symbols in colonial society. The third major stratum of colonial society were the freemen of colour, who emerged even before emancipation."

This description shows that any simple statement about white elite and black masses is, at best, a pale imitation of what really transpired, and, at worst, a serious distortion which de-emphasises intra-class nuances which are vital to a more than partial explanation of West Indian stratification patterns.

Similarly, any attempt to explain contemporary facets of West Indian social organisation solely by 'historical factors', may be mistaken if it adheres rigidly to those colonial or imperialistic influences so beloved by many social commentators. An interesting quote from Conrad Arensberg provides food for thought in this direction. Arensberg argues that:

'A specialist in the culture of the Old World (Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East) is less likely to be sure that Caribbean marriage customs, or colour rankings or matrifocality and grand-mother families are simple responses to colonialism, plantations and slavery.

13. Rubin, op. cit., p. 113
14. See, Williams, op. cit.
Like susu, they may be traits, or re-working of traits, that must be pushed off the base-line which the classification 'Caribbean Culture' gives. Back before the English, the French, the Dutch, the Spanish and the Africans ever sailed the Spanish Main and settled the islands.

Till we know more of the culture of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, we are likely to forget that the islands were peopled and flowered in the Mercantilist Age, before the Puritan and Victorian victories and the Industrial Revolution re-worked England. As Herskovits traced susu to Dahomey; I would trace marriage as property validation and class legitimization of children to Hogarth's London.15.

Here Arensberg is pointing out that care must be taken to be historically specific, that is to say the stage of development of the colonising society at the time of colonisation is significant. In addition, Arensberg is not denying the importance of colonialism and slavery in tracing the development of West Indian societies, a patently false assumption, but pointing out that it is far too easy to hang a whole series of explanations on one hook. Western imperialism becomes in some works, a veritable cloak-room in which all the multi-coloured coats and cloaks of history can be hung.

What would seem to be required is a multi-dimensional approach which manages to embrace the power relations between and within contemporary West Indian societies, the relationships between such societies and those Western industrialised societies with which they are inextricably linked, all set against the back-cloth of history which remains ever present in its influence. The latter point is borne out by Douglas Hall when he argues:

'Discussing our problems of today we too often tilt at the windmills of slavery and the post emancipation period, which lasted until the 1930's, when the style

15. Conrad M. Arensberg, 'Methods of Community Analysis in the Caribbean', in Rubin, op. cit., p. 97
of today's social, political and economic predicaments was fashioned. The main features of the style are the complex human relationships and value judgements which, fashioned by our past, are of high relevance to any plans for the future. Social tensions, opportunism and irrationality in political behaviour and economic poverty constitute not three large problems, but one. 16

The material which has been presented in this chapter so far, has demonstrated some of the general features of contemporary West Indian societies and the nature of their historical development. However, it has also been stressed that the relationships between contemporary West Indian social organisation and the colonial history which shaped it are too complex to be analysed in depth in the present study. The richness of 'West Indian' culture, its complex history and the heterogeneous colour and class gradations which are developed within it are emphasised as apologia for not attempting to 'explain' the social organisation of West Indian societies causally by working through the myriad strands of social development which preceded and thus helped to produce it. Nevertheless, it is necessary to undertake a brief examination of present-day community organisation and activism in West Indian societies in order to provide a basis for comparison with West Indian groupings in Britain.

Before concentrating on localised forms of association in West Indian societies, it is interesting to note that certain characteristics assigned to national political parties and trade unions are paralleled at the local level. The establishment of trade unions and political parties in West Indian societies dates back to the 1930's, although political association as such among

West Indians (that is to say black and coloured West Indians), dates back to the slave rebellions in the earliest days of colonialism. In the late 1930's overpopulation, unemployment and the influx of emigrants from the United States and Latin America who were trying, unsuccessfully, to escape from the throes of the Depression, produced a spate of riots and strikes in the British West Indies which led to the establishment of trade unions and the labour parties. Discussing this period, Jesse Harris Proctor Jr. states that:

'This proved to be much more than merely a blind and ineffective outburst, for there quickly sprang up trade unions and labour parties throughout the area with leaders who articulated the grievances of the masses in such a way as to give the movement a positive content and direction. They pressed the workers' interests through political action as well as trade union activity. The submerged majority was now at last politically activated and mobilised.'

This period before the Second World War proved decisive in loosening, at least in a formal political sense, the bonds of colonial rule. Gordon Lewis divides the history of the British West Indies into three parts: first, the slavery period which ended with Nineteenth century emancipation; second, the period which corresponds with Proctors' analysis, namely the post-emancipation period which ended with the Second World War, and finally, the contemporary period of political independence at least for the larger islands. This broad spectrum of political and social change embraces far more than the formal acquisition of independent legislatures and

enfranchisement. As Lewis argues:

'Whereas in other societies, culture and education, for example, can be left to other institutions, in the newly-found nations they come within the purview of politics. So there is a mixture of politics, art, culture, and education that defies the more conventional rules.'

Bearing this historical legacy in mind, let us briefly examine the work of Knowles on the development of West Indian trade unionism, a process which is inseparable from political party formation. Both forms of organisation are marked by a high level of instability, the importance of personalised, informal relationships and the preponderance of 'charismatic' type leaders often of an autocratic nature. This instability within trades unionism is explained by Knowles by various factors.

The economic base of most islands incorporates wide fluctuations in prices and wages with a high pool of unemployed. As Knowles points out: 'The British West Indies economy is poor and its workers are poor'. With seasonal work, share-the-work schemes and low hourly earnings, many West Indian workers could not afford to pay union dues even if they were so inclined. Only the genuine industrial unions and a few general unions could afford a strike fund or full-time salaried officials. Knowles also argues that many workers in the

19. Ibid., p. 12


21. Ibid., p. 1396
West Indies are used to estate and governmental paternalism. That is to say there is a tradition in many industries, particularly on the plantations, of encouraging informal, paternal relationships between workers and owners rather than any encouragement by the latter of a move towards formal worker/management relationships\textsuperscript{22}.

Traditionally there is a lack of experience in voluntary associations and workers often tend to resort to religion or 'superstition' instead of more vocational forms of collective action\textsuperscript{23}. Knowles also points out that the working class do not generally produce their own leaders. There are low levels of literacy, little respect for members from their own ranks and a general preference for 'educated' middle class leaders. Leaders in the West Indies tend to be drawn from the 'lower middle class' which includes journalists and lawyers. The former, Knowles argues, are more interested in political office than everyday union affairs whilst the latter keep themselves apart from so-called 'local' issues and are more concerned with wider policies like self-government\textsuperscript{24}.

Trade unions in West Indian societies are often closely aligned with political parties as the former are seen as stepping stones towards political office. Union officers are commonly dependent on political offices for their incomes. Furthermore, there is a firm emphasis on trade union legislation introduced at the national level rather than collective bargaining at the local level. On the credit

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 1397


\textsuperscript{24} Knowles, \textit{op. cit.}
side, however, Knowles found that respective governments tended to encourage training courses and trade unionism was supported by some employers but this was mainly due to their preference for formalised union activities as opposed to spontaneous 'rioting' (as they defined it) among the workers. In addition, the external influences of British and American owned industries have raised the level of unionisation, usually on a whole industry basis and there has been a recent tendency for some political parties and trade unions to separate. The middle class nationalists are now withdrawing from the unions entirely to devote all their time to politics.

Ayearst, in his study of West Indian political parties, found similar characteristics in political party membership and leadership. Instability and personalisation were, that is to say, the norm once again. Most West Indian political parties are labour parties which are nationalistic and, in Ayearst's terms, 'pseudo-socialistic'. This is not surprising when it is realised that most parties have to rely on working class support through trade union connections because the middle classes in West Indian societies are not large enough to act as an independent power base for electoral purposes. Hence, Ayearst points out:

'Enfranchisement of the black and coloured majority (in the West Indies) has proceeded rapidly under pressure exerted by local politicians, often identified with labour organisations, and acquiesced to by British governments anxious to avoid political and economic dislocation.'

25. Ibid.


27. Ibid., p. 187
Thus, this confirms Knowles point that most trade unions and political parties are not separate in the West Indies. The labour unions are all-embracing in meeting both political and economic needs. There has been a constant fusion of economic and political interests and this has produced a combination of political parties and unions. Thus, one cannot draw a clear line between the highly organised and formalised political activity of the middle and upper classes in the West Indies and the loosely organised formal associations of the lower class. There are strong similarities between all the classes.

Nevertheless, as has been mentioned, the leadership, particularly of political parties, tends to be concentrated within the middle classes. Furthermore, there have been wide restrictions on the degree of participation of the 'masses' in the political process. Ayearst argues that West Indian political organisations have a demagogic party structure with largely 'paper' constitutions. 'Local party groups are generally few in number and inactive except immediately before elections.' Ayearst's general conclusion, as far as the West Indian worker is concerned, is that: 'His society is conspicuously lacking in community-wide organisations that he can identify with his needs and aspirations.' In part, this is due to the emergence of 'populist-type' parties which, as A. W. Singham has said, 'have been based on what can be characterized as a hero-crowd type of relationship, in which routinization, institutionalization and participation in the political system are minimal'.

28. See, pp. 40-41
29. Ayearst, op. cit., p. 191
30. Ibid., p. 193
'The hero emerges as a leader at a particular stage of colonial evolution, the terminal stage of colonial rule. This period is marked by the advent of universal adult suffrage. It is this sudden emergence of the mass into political life that enables a hero to arise, and which at the same time encourages the caesarist tendencies in this type of leader'.32

Singham goes on to describe the main distinguishing features of contemporary West Indian political leadership, calling in this connection on the distinctions drawn by Lloyd Best between types of "Doctor Politics". Best, according toSingham,

'Distinguishes between three types of 'Doctors': the 'Grammar School Doctor', produced mainly in Trinidad and Guyana, the new Plantation colonies where education rather than property holding has been the medium of advance, and whose prime examples are Williams and Burnham ....... 'Sunday School Doctors', produced in the mature plantation colonies where there was no escape for potential leaders from organizing labour, where the education came chiefly from the Sunday school, and the rhetoric is Biblical, of which Bird of Antigua and Bradshaw of St. Kitts are the best examples; and the 'Public School Doctors', a Jamaican phenomenon, where a local ruling class arose after the end of slavery, with many of the values of their English counterparts (for example, Norman Manley) ...'.33

Irrespective of the type of 'doctor', Best argues, 'the distinguishing feature of Doctor politics is that the Leader is expected to achieve for and on behalf of the population. The community is not expected to contribute much more than crowd support and applause'.34 It has been argued that in many ways this 'populist' type of government also affects the middle class because they occupy a highly ambivalent position between the 'leader' on the one hand and the mass working and/or peasant class on the other. Thus, C. L. R. James has stated that:

---

34. Ibid., p. 280
'In the West Indies some of the politicians have or have had posts in the labour or union movement. But as a class they have no base anywhere. They are professional men, clerical assistants, here and there a small businessman, and of later years administrators, civil servants and professional politicians and, as usual, a few adventurers.'

This 'populism' has been combined with an island nationalism which has further contributed to an 'island parochialism' which the various Western powers have encouraged since the earliest days of colonialism. This parochialism contributed to the downfall of the Leeward Islands Federation in the 1920's and the attempt to establish a wider federation in the 1950's. In 1933, the Closer Union Commission reported that:

'Each (West Indian society) cherishes its own individuality, the product of its history and traditions.... To discover a common denominator is a baffling problem. With these differences in view it is small wonder that each community is interested solely in its own affairs and pays scant attention to those of its neighbour'.

Island nationalism is also reflected in the weakness of local government in West Indian societies. This is particularly true of

35. C. L. R. James, Party Politics in the West Indies, (San Juan, Trinidad, Vedic Enterprises Ltd., 1962), p. 131

36. A number of studies have been concerned with 'populist' leadership and island nationalism in the Caribbean; see, for example, Wendell Bell, The Democratic Revolution in the West Indies, op. cit., and Jamaican Leaders: political attitudes in a new nation, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1964); Charles C. Moskos, Jr., The Sociology of Political Independence: a study of nationalist attitudes among West Indian leaders, (Camb. Mass., Schenksman, 1967); Ivar Oxaal, Black Intellectuals Come to Power, (Camb.Mass., Schenksman, 1968); Curtis A. Wilgus, ed., The Caribbean: its hemispheric role, (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1967). Most of the latter are rather 'paternalistic' in their attitude towards the Caribbean. For a more 'radical' interpretation of United States policies in the area, see Proctor, Szulc, and McDonald, op. cit., also Emanuel De Kadt, ed., Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean (London, O.U.P., 1972)


38. Parliamentary Papers, 1932-33, Cmd. 4383, Report of the Closer Union Commission (Leeward Islands, Windward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago) April, 1933, p. 19
the smaller islands. However, this is due to disparities in power rather than any lack of political interest or acumen on the part of West Indians generally. Lowenthal reinforces this view when he says:

'In the smaller islands, where men of any influence are deeply involved in affairs at the territorial level, there is little impetus to allocate power to local authorities. But a more fundamental reason for the weakness of local government lies in the history of West Indian societies. West Indians have no tradition of self-rule; the drive for suffrage and for political autonomy came from the urban middle classes. It has only begun to percolate down from the territorial level to the localities, where conservatism, authoritarianism and paternalism are still entrenched.'

This quotation highlights one of the problems of presenting material concerned with the social organisation of West Indian societies. Namely, the difficulty of knitting together different types of social organisation, in this case political organisation, in such a way as to allow for national and local differences and rural/urban distinctions. It has been argued that there are distinct differences between the latter two environments which influence, for example, the level of political organisation and the likelihood of particular types of leadership.

Thus, there appears to be a strict separation between the formal political institutions which exist at the national/urban level and the more informal associations which exist at the local/rural level. These distinctions could be important for the examination which follows of West Indian organisation in Britain. If there is a strict separation of the type suggested above it may indicate that leadership patterns in political parties, governmental organisations and trade unions in the

40. See, for example, Lloyd Braithwaits, 'Social and Political Aspects of Rural Development in the West Indies', Social and Economic Studies, (Vol. 17, No. 3, 1968), pp. 264-275
West Indies are not directly relevant to West Indian settlements in the host society. At the national/urban level in West Indian societies, power positions in political organisations are dominated by middle class and upper class activists.

However, with the possible exception of the Metropolitan area in Britain (which the present study is not directly concerned with) with its greater concentration of West Indian intellectuals and professionals, the majority of West Indians in the host society have lower class origins in the Caribbean. Similarly, many of them have come from 'rural' areas in their respective islands. Therefore, one would not expect many of these West Indians to have had direct experience of participation in formal organisations of a political character in the Caribbean.

It will be shown, however, that many of the West Indians in this study were skilled workers who occupied upwardly mobile, lower-class positions in their home islands\(^41\). Furthermore, some of these respondents had prior experience of participation in formal organisations in the Caribbean, although not necessarily in positions of authority\(^42\).

Much of the confusion in this debate may be due to the way in which some commentators have interpreted the supposed distinctions between national/local and urban/rural in the West Indies. Many sociologists in the Caribbean now question the validity of assuming these sharp distinctions. For example, Vera Rubin has argued that this strict separation between each island and between rural and urban intra-island

---

41. See, p. 91
42. See, pp. 109-111
situations is based on erroneous assumptions which assume that the contemporary situation in the Caribbean is comparable to past situations. Hence, Rubin argues that:

'High population densities, inter-island communication increases, considerable migration between islands and elsewhere dispels the notion of insularity of cultural activities ....... on the islands themselves the local markets and itinerant hawkers provide a human and cultural network between the rural peasants and the culture of the cities, i.e. between the urban and 'folk' subcultures. Schools, cinema, radio, roads and buses, improved public health and welfare services bring urban culture within the rural orbit and impinge on folk practices characteristic of isolated cultures. Thus, the urban-rural distinction is less sharp than elsewhere and we find in many areas of the Caribbean that the countryside appears more semi-urban than rural.'

Note that Ruben is not saying that greater levels of inter-island communication have broken down nationalistic, separatist sentiments; nor that the traditional differences between rural and urban dwellers (among West Indians) have been eradicated, but that a form of cultural unification in terms of social activities is apparent. This would seem to indicate that, in examining levels and forms of participation in 'localised' organisations, the rural-urban distinction may be less important than has been previously thought. Certainly, when considering forms of lower class participation this would appear to be so. Thus, there may be some justification for separating the informal, cultural aspects of the social structure of West Indian societies from the formal, political relations within and between them.

The validity of assuming some degree of social uniformity among West Indian societies becomes an important issue when it is

---

43. Rubin, op. cit.
44. Ibid., p. 119
realised that there is very little information on West Indian community organisation in the Caribbean, particularly among the lower classes. There has been a certain amount of work on religious associations and a considerable literature exists on family organisation but little research has been done on voluntary associations and other forms of community organisation. This, in itself, may be an indication of the paucity of this type of organisation among lower class West Indians in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the lack of material means that much of the literature cited in the remainder of this chapter is, perforce, taken from studies of particular islands (indeed, in most cases, particular communities within particular islands) so the degree of generalisation must remain problematic.

Michael G. Smith and G. J. Kruijer have constructed a list of types of organisations which, they believe, exist in both rural and urban communities in the Caribbean. They suggest that urban areas in West Indian societies contain the following forms of organisation:

1. Churches
2. Political and Trade Union groups
3. Friendly Societies
4. Ratepayers Associations
5. Social Welfare Associations
6. Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.
7. Women's Federations

It can be seen that such organisations correspond closely to the forms of organisation with which we are familiar in Britain.

45. See references in Chap. 5
46. See references in Chap. 4
However, West Indian organisations in the Caribbean become more specialised at the rural level, as can be seen below:

1. Boards - industrial. Coconut, coffee, etc.
2. Commodity Associations - Citrus Growers, Rice Growers etc.
3. Authorities - Coconut Control Authority
4. Committees - Farm Improvement Committees etc.
5. Co-operatives - Vegetable Growers etc.
6. Manufacturer's Organisations - Sugar
7. Special Purpose Commodity Organisations - Citrus Loan
8. Credit Organisations

Smith and Kruijer argue that, to some extent, the latter type of organisations are found in both urban and rural areas. In addition, they point to the existence in local communities, both urban and rural, of a variety of informal, mainly recreational associations such as sports clubs and so forth. Smith and Kruijer also list the four types of leader which, they claim, may be found among these various organisations. These are:

(a) Professional leaders - officers of agricultural extension services, ministers of the major religious denominations etc.

(b) Formal or Titular leaders - members of Parish Councils, members of Church Councils, Trade Union leaders etc.

(c) Folk Culture leaders - the leaders of Revivalist sects.

(d) Informal leaders - individuals who are influential in community life but who do not hold any formal office or position.

These types of organisations and leaders are found in both national and local milieux and include all class positions. However, the present study is particularly concerned with lower class associational activity in the Caribbean so that a comparison with similar activities within West Indian settlements in Britain can be made. In one of the few studies of West Indian voluntary associations

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.
in Britain, D. R. Manley distinguishes between West Indian associations which have two types of lower class affiliates:

(a) Associations composed mainly of lower-class members with a proportion of members from higher status levels who hold most of the offices and run the organisations.

(b) Exclusively lower class associations. 50

Manley points out that West Indian communities in the Caribbean have not as yet been studied in great detail from the point of view of community organisation. But he suggests that there are many similarities between lower class West Indian associations in the Caribbean and the West Indian associations he studied in Britain.

Manly quotes Smith and Kruijer as saying that:

'In general the organisation (of lower class West Indians) into voluntary associations is so difficult, that at least one manual, for the use of agricultural officers and social workers, directs attention to it as a special problem. 51

In the rural areas, most group activities involving economic objectives or mutual aid tend to be organised informally between relatives and neighbours. As Manley puts it:

'Communities tend to be composed of isolated independent family groups and there are few formal mechanisms for maintaining inter-household discipline and control and for pooling of resources between households or other similar household groups. On the whole the pattern is one of individualism, competitiveness and aggressiveness in inter-personal relationships ...... there is a strong accent on informality in community organization and certain individuals have prestige and exert influence because of the facilities they control.' 52

Thus, the community possesses an organisational pattern of its own, but it depends upon spheres of influence and differences in

51. Ibid., p. 299
52. D. R. Manley, loc. cit.
status rather than upon formal associations. Associations which are formed by lower class West Indians include revivalist sects, friendly societies, sports clubs and informal or semi-formal economic co-operative groups. But nearly all of these groups are small and limited in scope. This informality of organisation means that very few West Indians in the lower classes have experience in voluntary associations. A study by Stycos\(^5^3\) estimates that only 10% of women and 20% of men are participants in such forms of association. These figures were obtained in a rural/urban study of lower class participation in Jamaica. It is interesting to note that, whilst Stycos believes that these are low percentages, the findings in the present study show that within a British urban situation the level of West Indian membership and participation in formal associations is even lower.

One form of association which is prevalent among the lower classes in the Caribbean is the Friendly Society. These societies were established in the Caribbean as early as the 1820's when visiting clergy and missionaries to the islands encouraged their formation. Friendly societies originated in Jamaica and Antigua but spread rapidly to the other islands. These societies are preponderantly negro in their memberships and women tend to outnumber men.

The societies, not surprisingly due to their origins, have strong religious affiliations which follow the major denominations. In St. Lucia, for example, the majority of such societies are connected with the Catholic church which predominates on that island.

In common with their counterparts in Britain, friendly societies in the West Indies are associations originally established for the 'promotion of thrift and self-help'\textsuperscript{54}. They represented an attempt by working men to meet their social and convivial needs as well as to insure against the hazards of sickness and death\textsuperscript{55}. However, these associations were often started by external agencies like the church. They were not, in most cases formed "spontaneously" within the lower class. However, this type of association is certainly one of the commonest among the lower classes in the Caribbean. A. F. and D. Wells found that: 'In the West Indian colonies the Friendly Society idea has a great hold and these associations are prolific.'\textsuperscript{56} With respect to comparisons between the West Indies and Britain, the Wells' commented:

'In England the Friendly society tends to be, naturally enough, rather more an urban than a rural institution. Broadly speaking, the same holds in the West Indies in those colonies where there are large urban areas'.\textsuperscript{57}

The Wells' study was carried out in the early 1950's, so it is likely that the rise, since then, of alternative financial institutions, such as banks, insurance companies and building societies may have made

\textsuperscript{54} For an appraisal of Friendly Societies in Britain see P. H. J. H. Gosden, \textit{Self-Help — Voluntary Associations in the Nineteenth Century}, (London, Batsford, 1973), Chaps. 1-4

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, p. vii

\textsuperscript{56} A. F. and D. Wells, \textit{Friendly Societies in the West Indies}, (London, H.M.S.O., 1953), p. 23

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 27
friendly societies less common. The above studies suggest that the
level of formalised association among the lower or working class in the
West Indies is relatively low. Within this stratum, communal
activity primarily takes place on a household or family basis.
However, there appears to be a greater tendency for participation in
voluntary associations among the upwardly mobile working class in the
Caribbean, particularly in those forms of organisation mentioned in the
list drawn up by Smith and Kruijer.  

Whilst the friendly societies in the Caribbean can be said to
owe their origins to Britain – in the sense that they are a
continuation of their development among the British working class in
the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – other forms of economic
coopération among the West Indian lower classes are said to originate
from Africa. Unlike the more formalised friendly societies and some
American fraternal societies which have been introduced in the West
Indies, the 'rotating credit associations' are informal and almost
exclusively working class in their membership. They have basically
the same system of organisation but go under different names in the
various islands. For example, in Jamaica they are called a 'pardner'
or 'partner-hand'. In Trinidad they are called 'susu', whilst in
Antigua and Montserrat they are commonly known as 'boxes', in Barbados

58. Smith and Kruijer, op. cit.

59. See, S. Ardener, 'The Comparative Study of Rotating Credit
Associations', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,
(Vol. 94, Pt. 2, 1964); Clifford Geertz, 'The Rotating Credit
Association: a Middle Rung in Development', Economic Development
and Cultural Change, (No. 10, 1962), pp. 241-263, for specific
material on West Indian associations of this type see, Stuart B.
Philpott, 'Remittance Obligations, Social Networks and Choice
Among Montserratian Migrants in Britain', Man, New Series, (Vol. 3,
September, 1968), pp. 465-477, West Indian Migration: The
Montserrat Case, London School of Economics Monographs on Social
as 'meetings' and so on.

Basically the idea is for one individual to act as the 'banker'. A group of individuals contributes a set amount of money each week which is held by the banker. It may be as much as ten dollars or a smaller amount. The group may be just a few individuals or run to thirty or forty people. Each week, one individual is entitled to a 'partner-hand' and he collects the total investment of all members for that week. In a hand of thirty members contributing five dollars a hand, each individual will collect 150 dollars when his turn comes round. After each individual has gone through in rotation, the order is reversed. Therefore, once in every thirty hands each member will get the last hand in the last round plus the first hand of the next round. This doubles his share to 300 dollars. This system can give a sizeable sum of money to each member at fairly regular intervals. Often, of course, the 'hands' will be much smaller because the membership is lower or weekly payments less.

This system relies on a high level of mutual trust and, consequently, the banker is usually a person with a high degree of prestige within the household or kinship network. These associations are often restricted to family networks or close friends for this very reason. In village communities, the degree of control over non-payment of contributions, or running off with a 'double-hand' without continuing one's payments, is considerable. However, this is not always the case among West Indians in their urban situation in Britain and considerable friction and mistrust between members is often the result. Rotating credit associations are usually confined to the lower classes in West Indian societies and may be compared with revivalist and sectarian religions as a predominantly lower class form of association. The middle and upper classes in the Caribbean utilise more institutionalised outlets for investment and credit facilitation.
The role of banker is an excellent example of 'informal leadership' within the Smith and Kruijer classification. Here, authority and prestige rest on highly personalised criteria, namely bonds of trust initiated through a family or friendship network. These credit associations are not marked by any level of formalisation in so far as they do not incorporate elected officials or formalised collective procedures. The collection, maintenance and distribution of money rely on personalised and informal social interaction. This latter characteristic introduces the question of leadership in voluntary associations in the West Indies, particularly with regard to working class activism.

Bearing in mind the four-fold classification of leadership presented by Smith and Kruijer, it is apparent that 'professionals' and 'formal' or 'titular' leaders tend to be drawn almost exclusively from the middle class. This is in accordance with the prestige attached to middle class positions in West Indian societies which rests on status attributes like colour, occupation, income and education. Positions of authority are commonly equated with the dominance of European traditions in these societies, a dominance which is demonstrated by the high prestige accorded to a lighter skin colouring and other Caucasian-type phenotypical features. The latter are reinforced by the adoption of 'Euro-normative' standards, for example, in modes of speech, dress and general mannerisms. However, one cannot assume strict distinctions among colour gradations, particularly

60. Smith and Kruijer, op. cit.
61. Ibid.
in recent years when some island societies have become independent. There is still a heavy emphasis on 'Euro-connections' but darker skin colouring may be partially overcome through education and/or wealth. Money 'whitens' in the Caribbean as it does, for example, in certain parts of Brazil. Similarly, with the comparatively recent importation of Black Power ideologies, there have been some attempts, expedient or otherwise, officially to deny the predominant 'Euro-emphasis' in West Indian societies. These ideologies have split middle class leadership along the lines of 'conservatism' and 'radicalism' to use two rather imprecise terms.

An increase in graduates from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and Trinidad has provided an intellectual base for the emergence of new leaders and ideas in the Caribbean which have been very influential in recent years. Parallel to this there have occurred spontaneous 'upheavals' in the larger islands and signs of unrest have appeared elsewhere. The significance which is placed upon these events varies considerably. Political activity which was labelled as 'black power' (by activists and West Indian governments alike) emerged in the early 1960's in Guyana with the formation of the 'New World Group' and the publication of the New World Quarterly. Other groups and publications followed in many of the other islands, apparently demonstrating the emergence of a new radical, intellectual political movement which owed much to the black movement in the United States, but which also combined those unique characteristics of the

65. These included Abeng in Jamaica, Moko and Tapia in Trinidad and Ratoon in Guyana
Caribbean which can be traced back to slave revolt.

This activity prompted many West Indian governments to ban 'black power' organisations and to dissuade or refuse entry to what were called (by these governments) 'black dissidents'. Barbados, Grenada and St. Lucia are only a few examples of islands whose governments banned 'black power' activity in any form. In very recent years, there have been rioting and uprisings in Guyana and Jamaica, culminating in the events in Trinidad where the uprisings in 1970 lasted from February until April. These events have been described by respective West Indian governments as "fringe activities" and "minority dissidence", forms of 'extreme' political behaviour which represent only those 'deviants' who are not prepared to work within the 'democratic' policial institutions provided for them. Nevertheless, those who have taken this line have considered such activities important enough to request foreign aid in terms of arms and naval support and have suppressed freedom of political expression through censorship and the deportation of 'militants'.

An alternative viewpoint sees the upsurge of black power ideologies among some members of the West Indian middle classes as "pure pragmatism" on their part. Moderate leaders are simply extracting the 'human dignity' and majority rule aspects of these ideologies but firmly denounce any signs of disaffection or 'revolutionary change'. Similarly, many so-called 'militants' may be adopting black power slogans as a means to enrol the support of the 'dispossessed' in societies in which the majority are faced with serious economic and social problems. This line of argument is demonstrated by Gordon

Lewis when he writes:

"The enemy in West Indian life is the perpetuation, by the new Middle Class elites of the successor states of empire, of the 'white bias' of society and in English life of a potent negrophobia so ingrained that it produces a 'Left-wing racialism' as easily as Neo-Fascism". 67

However, most commentators on the present political and social structure of West Indian societies view the 'growing pains' of new nations trying to relinquish the old, traditional constraints of their colonial heritage, as a fundamental problem. Thus, Rex Nettleford argues:

"The fact is we (that is to say West Indians) are still enslaved in the social structure born of the plantation system in which things African, including African traits, have been devalued and primacy is still given to European values in the scheme of things. The developments of the Twentieth century are putting pressures on the structure but most people still seem to prefer to remain with the known evil rather than accept the uncertain good'. 68

This continuing reliance on things European still buttresses the authority of the middle classes in the Caribbean and thus they still continue to dominate leadership positions within more formalised organisations. But the phenomena of black power in its many forms may provide a basis for concerted effort incorporating black intellectualism and the strivings of the black proletariat/peasantry. Such a concerted effort is fostered in a world climate where the mass media transmit a world-wide struggle of "oppressed" against "oppressor".

West Indian radical intellectualism and activism have wide historical traditions which extend beyond the struggles which have been brought to the surface by recent upheavals in the Caribbean.


Padmore in West Africa, Garvey and Carmichael in the United States are only a few examples of West Indians who have carried such traditions to other shores. Similarly, some West Indian societies have traditions of rebellion which can be traced back in a similar fashion. Nettleford points out that:

'The tradition of black assertion has never left Jamaican life. There were the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth century slave rebellions, 1865 and Paul Bogle, 1938, and the black working classes, 1960, and the Rastafarians, 1968, and the young sufferers. There are also signs that the more 'esoteric' elements of black power, which base their platform on an ideological rather than a policy orientated plane, are giving way to a concern with the structural problems of their own Caribbean societies rather than preaching the almost metaphysical concept of the 'world brotherhood of black men'.

Hence, Nettleford states that:

'Black is seen by some non-American black intellectuals as merely another form of neo-colonial "Imperialistic temper". The importation of values and ideas which have been formed by the mass media rather than through a common bond of deprivation. Many West Indians and Africans wish to find solutions for themselves.'

This viewpoint still reinforces the role of middle class leaders but undoubtedly in a new vein. Furthermore, it also gives a role to the black proletariat, presumably in viewing the resurgence of spontaneous protest in West Indian societies in recent years as the start of a mass black 'revolution' in the Caribbean. However, one suspects that such optimism may be misplaced with respect to the smaller island societies in the West Indies. Here, a still largely

69. I refer here to George Padmore, Marcus Garvey and Stokely Carmichael respectively

70. Nettleford, op. cit., p. 120

71. Ibid., p. 119
rural, agrarian, social structure has encouraged the continued prestige of still existing white elites or more probably an Anglophile brown middle class, who have merely assumed the political mantle of their European predecessors.

This structure produces a form of autocratic leadership which is based on leader-follower relationships similar to those described previously in this chapter. This means that leadership patterns are still diffuse despite middle class dominance. However, there are certainly signs that political activism in its many forms is volatile in West Indian societies at present, and that international and national issues are becoming more influential at the community level.

Thus, Frank McDonald has argued that:

'Nevertheless, in spite of the pressure from regional governments, the Commonwealth Caribbean radicals have continued to organize. And as in the past, when different conditions required changes in tactics, so now the Caribbean militants (ranging from Marxists to black nationalists) recognize that present circumstances dictate new strategy. So the shift from pure analysis to mass actions, to marches and demonstrations has become a foundation for the more serious work of organizing at community or village level, work that is certainly less dramatic and less obvious, but in the end far more likely to bring effective action'.

This movement towards localised activism illustrates the fluidity of the situation and the diffuseness of leadership patterns. Manley has argued that the continual stress on informality in community organisations means that leadership may come from within proletarian or peasant communities, or from middle or upper-class elite groups. He argues that individual charisma is important within authority relationships and thus a lower status position in a community may be less disadvantageous if certain personal attributes are possessed.

72. See, p. 43
73. McDonald, op. cit., p. 156
and, more importantly, ranked prestigiously by others. Hence, recognised charismatic qualities can overcome the disadvantages of lack of education, income, and a black skin\textsuperscript{74}.

The continued centrality of informality and personalised relationships in associational activity among West Indians appears to indicate the existence of psychological traits which explain such behaviour. These traits may account for the emphasis upon individualism and the separation of personal qualities of leadership from those elements of prestige emanating from formal roles and group affiliations, a tendency which Manley calls 'An important trait in West Indian society'.\textsuperscript{75}

The prevalence of 'individualism' in West Indian societies has been used by several writers to explain the low level of West Indian membership and participation in voluntary associations and formal organisations both in the Caribbean and in Britain.\textsuperscript{76} However, Banton, when discussing West Indian organisation in Britain, describes individualism as an 'evocative and rather dangerously vague' term\textsuperscript{77}. The present writer concurs with this statement because the term 'individualism' has a complicated ancestry as a concept.\textsuperscript{78} It is often dangerously close to psychological and/or physiological connotations with allusions to personality types and so forth. Banton continues his brief discussion of the apparently low level of group activity among West Indians in Britain by suggesting that, 'factors of temperament may well be part of the answer'.\textsuperscript{79}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{74} Manley, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 83
\textsuperscript{76} See, for example, Heinemann, Rose, & Hylsan-Smith, \textit{ops. cit.}
\textsuperscript{77} Banton, \textit{Racial Minorities}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 132
\textsuperscript{78} See, Steven Lukes, \textit{Individualism}, (London, Blackwell, 1973)
\textsuperscript{79} Banton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 146
\end{footnotesize}
There would seem to be some evidence for suggesting that there are certain psychological characteristics which could be labelled as a 'West Indian personality type' but one should hesitate to define such a term in any precise or concrete form. M. G. Smith has argued in relation to psychological types that:

'It would seem that outside of the United States with its formal or informal caste systems, there is little unanimity about the nature and significance of differentiation within the societies examined ....... however, it is interesting to note the agreement in definition of West Indian personality patterns among those students who lay such different stresses on different situations expressive of personality traits'.

These 'traits' include aggressiveness, mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, insecurity and various forms of self-hate. The general tendency is to see an immensely complex personality which displays severe forms of insecurity and self-deprecation whilst at the same time possessing a spontaneity and outwardness with belies any form of introversion. These traits are supposedly demonstrated through various social mechanisms observable in interpersonal relationships. There is a strong competitiveness among individuals, particularly with regard to money and material possessions. A person's wealth is surrounded by secrecy, mistrust, and considerable gossiping. Relationships are marked by anxiety and fear of being disliked but also intense jealousy. Mistrustfulness is paradoxically centred more on those one knows well than on outsiders. A description by Yehudi Cohen of a Jamaican village community illustrates some of these points. Cohen describes the formation of village cricket teams thus:

---

80. M. G. Smith The Plural Society in the British West Indies, op.cit, p. 48
'There are few situations in which spontaneous leadership arises from within the community. When leadership does become apparent, it is only in the person of an individual who was not born in the area. For example, cricket, of which the Rocky Roaders are very fond, requires the formation of teams which must be captained. As a result very little cricket is played. Occasionally, teams will be organized, but they are chosen and coached by someone who is not a Rocky Roader. At the time of our investigation this leadership was in the person of a government employee who came from another region and whose residence in Rocky Roads was temporary. When his leadership was withdrawn the teams dissolved. This leadership is neither recognised nor effective in any sphere other than the one in which it originates. The leadership arises in the context of cricket, for example, and remains there. Furthermore, it is exercised by transient individuals who do not own land in or around Rocky Roads and who are, therefore, outside, the community's system of economic competition. The same structural components could be discerned in other instances of leadership in the community as in the Jamaica Agriculture Society, the Banana Growers' Association, and the like, groups set up by governmental agencies for the marketing of produce in the area. In Rocky Roads true social and political authority can derive solely from economic power'.

Cohen goes on to describe how hostilities between individuals are usually met by stoical silence rather than overt aggression. The only forms of control within the village are internalised control and individual control. Thus, hostilities are limited to aggression, if any, between individuals rather than at a group level. The one form of social control stems from gossip which is highly prevalent. Cohen argues that these forms of interpersonal relations may provoke spontaneous outbreaks of limited hostilities but these are usually ephemeral. Despite these cleavages the relationships at the group level are remarkable for their stability.

This single example from one village in Jamaica cannot be taken as indicative of interpersonal relations at different levels within that particular island society or indeed within the British West Indies

---

as a whole. The relationships so described are not necessarily unique, however: elements of them may be found in all forms of social interaction to some degree. Aggression, materialism, anxiety and so forth may be just as applicable to Western industrialised, urban areas as to Jamaican rural villages. Nevertheless, work which has been done at this level of generality in the Caribbean, tends to substantiate Cohen's findings. For example, T. S. Simey, in his book, Welfare and Planning in the West Indies, includes a quotation from C. V. D. Hadley which seems to endorse Cohen. Hadley states that:

'In the light of psychological theory it is seen to be inevitable that the West Indian should be exceedingly unsure of himself, inclined towards quarrelsomeness, and generally hypersensitive. He is, above all, exceptionally vulnerable to ridicule ....... when the West Indian encounters resistance he is apt to assume an attitude of reserve and withdraw himself into a world of his own, remote from contact with the people or classes with whom he came into collision. Administrative affairs in the West Indies accordingly tend to become submerged in a welter of conflicting personalities, until almost all traces of principles and policies are lost. The collisions between individual and individual, and social frictions generally are so acute that even the most doctrinaire advocate of a competitive economy should be satisfied. The daily round of human existence is made difficult and at times almost intolerable by the struggle of one human being against another to assert himself.'

These studies must be taken as highly generalised and therefore somewhat tenuous attempts to analyse specific personality types.

It must also be noted that they were written some years before independence and other social developments in the last twenty or


83. Simey, op. cit.

thirty years transformed West Indian societies in many ways. However, it is interesting to note the similarities between the studies of Cohen and Simey which were some years apart. In addition, more recent work by Madeline Kerr also confirms many of the findings of these earlier studies. In a follow-up study to Personality and Conflict in Jamaica, Kerr contrasted her earlier findings in the Caribbean with a sample of white working class families in Northern England. Bearing in mind the enormous problems of cross-cultural comparisons of this nature, it can be noted that Kerr found that her West Indian sample of families were more subject to 'forms of psychological deprivation', than the English sample. She argued, somewhat mechanistically, that role deprivation arising from poverty, racial discrimination, and inappropriate forms of education and so forth leads to emotional disturbances among West Indians which in turn affects their social relationships.

The crucial problem in all these studies is how to define precisely the relationships between personality types and the social and cultural environments which may produce them. Thus, can it be said that a particular type of personality produces a given form of social action, or is the reverse true, or is the relationship between them problematic and inter-penetrative? These debates are similar to those surrounding the 'sambo' controversy which still rages between Elkins, Stampp and others, over the nature of the personality types which developed among negroes in the Deep South. This debate centres on the relationship between the social constraints of slavery and the

85. Kerr, op. cit.
degree of autonomy of slaves and how these two factors influenced personality formation over time. Thus, was the apparent docility of negro slaves a product of the harsh social constraints placed upon their life situation (and the degree of harshness is debated at length) or was it a demonstration of the social pragmatism of the slaves who might have exhibited a form of 'role distance' in Goffman's terms? This debate does not appear to have been resolved, nor perhaps is any conclusive, definitive statement likely to appear. The basis of the arguments of all protagonists, perhaps inevitably in terms of the nature of the subject matter, rests on matters of personal belief rather than empirical fact. Bearing in mind the greater depth of knowledge in this area and the greater level of academic scrutiny to which it has been subjected in contrast with the Caribbean, one would be wise to tread somewhat warily along such paths!

Nevertheless, it can be suggested that, despite the paucity and level of generality of the evidence collected for the Caribbean, 'West Indian individualism' should be considered as a social manifestation rather than a psychological one. This is not to deny the validity or the importance of the latter but merely to hold the precise relationship between psychological and social factors in abeyance until further investigation has been carried out. Furthermore, it should be stressed that it is still very likely that psychological and social psychological forms of explanation are extremely important in

89. Erving Goffman, Encounters, (Indianapolis, Bobbs Merrill, 1961)

90. One important and fascinating area is the relationship between colonialism and personality change; see, for example, Franz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, (London, Paladin Books, 1970), Octavio Mannoni, Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonisation, (New York, Fraeger, 1964) and Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1967)
attempting to explain interpersonal relationships within West Indian formal and informal associations. However, for the purposes of the present study such concepts as 'individualism' will be discussed in relation to the social aspects of group relations. Hence, in what follows, 'individualism' will be loosely taken to describe the prevalence of a preference for independent thought and action within many West Indian associations. It could be evaluated as an acute form of egalitarianism, or, conversely, as a very high level of competitiveness and individual aggression. Whichever definition one accepts will depend upon one's viewpoint and the particular contingencies surrounding a particular group situation.

Viewing individualism as a social phenomenon, one could trace the development of various institutions in the Caribbean from the days of slavery to the present day and observe the degree of 'fragmentation' at the group level. This could be studied by examining, for example, family and household patterns, systems of land tenure, forms of social, economic and political control and so forth. Thus, one might be able to suggest that if slavery was the crucial period for personality formation in the Caribbean, the particular level and form of constraint placed upon slaves in that period, produced a society in which individual rather than group actions were predominant. This could be illustrated by studying the constraints placed upon inter-marriage, the sub-division of land-holdings, the social distance encouraged between field and house slaves and so on. Above all, it may be demonstrated through the degree of differentiation along class and colour lines which emanated from wide ranging miscegenation and the gradual formation of complex
forms of stratification based upon the perception of more phenotypical attributes than simply skin colour. Such a process could be termed a form of 'creolization' or 'West Indianisation' which would describe what Edward Braithwaite has called, 'an inter-meshing of Euro. and Afro. both master and slave adapted to a new situation to produce a creole society'.

This originally produced a unique blend of European and African social and cultural mannerisms which left few 'pure' types (if one can talk in such terms) with the upper and middle classes owing more to their European ancestry whilst the black majority were predominantly African in origin. Thus, it could be said that contemporary West Indian social organisation depicts a form of cultural and biological inter-mixing which, whilst not unique to the Caribbean, is perhaps best illustrated there. As Rex Nettleford suggests:

'What is remarkable about the West Indian is a sense of subtle links, the series of subtle and nebulous links which are latent within him, the latent ground of old and new personalities'.

Therefore, it is suggested that there may be a characteristic form of West Indian social organisation within which West Indians demonstrate a type of individualism which is a product of their colonial history as the result of a consistent pattern of oppression and their reaction to oppression. This is demonstrated in the informality and competitiveness of West Indian interpersonal relationships and their concern with material stability. In group relations, it may produce

92. Nettleford, Mirror, Mirror, op. cit., p. 155
fragmentation and ephemeral authority relationships which are easily altered by changes in individual loyalties. At the societal level, it is shown in an insularity and an island parochialism which was largely produced by an education system which gives many a West Indian child a knowledge of English kings and queens and the coalfields of Britain but little about other Caribbean islands, in some cases a few miles distant. It was also fostered by colonial policies of divide and rule which encouraged such insularity so that any thoughts of federation were thought impractical by the islands concerned.

This chapter can be concluded by a brief reiteration of the main points considered in this examination of the forms of community organisation in the West Indies. Formal associations predominate amongst the upper and middle classes but all levels of organisation are characterised by a high degree of informality and personalisation of authority relationships. This is particularly true of leadership patterns which are dominated by such characteristics. However, this emphasis on individual attributes renders the placement of leadership roles in class terms problematic. One cannot assume a sharp delineation between middle and lower class leadership potentialities, although it is recognised that the former group have a higher potential because of their greater economic stability, which provides a likely basis for prestige within a given community. Nevertheless, at a high level of generality one can discern certain class differences with respect to types of leadership.

Middle class leadership in the West Indies tends towards the formal and bureaucratic and is relatively stabilised, whilst lower class leadership tends to be charismatic and more ephemeral. However, all forms of organisation and association are prone to ephemerality and

93. See, Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 118
dissolution depending on their level of institutionalisation. The latter is influenced by the social structure of the given island society which, in turn, relates to stratification patterns, the level of economic 'viability', the political relationship with a coloniser or previous coloniser, and many other factors.

At the lower class level, with which the present study is primarily concerned, organisational patterns tend to be even more personalised and informal, based upon household or family networks rather than formalised economic or political institutions. Forms of association may be more related to alternative forms of association to those incorporated within the centralised, societal institutions. These may take the form of cultist or sectarian as opposed to denominational religions, individualised economic associations (rotating credit associations) as opposed to centralised financial systems and so forth. Such forms of organisation may provide the basis for initially spontaneous political action, as may be demonstrated by various forms of 'militant' action, action which have been circumscribed by the label 'black power' and religio-politico groups like the Rastafarians in Jamaica. In general, there is a high degree of differentiation at all levels.

This suggests that one can only talk about the 'West Indies' or the 'Caribbean' in very general terms. It remains highly problematic whether one can talk of a specific socio-cultural area. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to particular societal contingencies when comparing different islands and to particular localised contingencies within a given West Indian society. This chapter has provided some general ethnographic, social and

94. For discussion of Rastafarians, see Chap. 5
cultural background material on West Indian societies. It has also attempted to bring together the limited data on West Indian community organisation, in particular the nature of political organisation, particularly among the lower classes at the localised level. This, albeit brief, description of these aspects of West Indian societies will be useful as a background for comparison with the nature of West Indian social organisation in a British, urban setting which will be examined in the following chapters.
Chapter Two

West Indians in Easton

In the previous chapter, we outlined briefly some aspects of the social structure of West Indian societies and described certain features of their social organization, both at the micro- and macro-level. At this juncture, we will be concerned with the social organization of West Indian groupings in a British context, namely Easton, a medium-sized city in the East Midlands. The material presented will illustrate the geographical and social milieux in which West Indians are placed and will form a descriptive base for the more detailed analysis of Caribbean groupings in Britain which is to follow.

The arrival of immigrants from the Caribbean has been a fairly recent experience for Easton. Unlike many other major cities in Britain, particularly those with a history as seaports, Easton experienced few early periods of settlement by sizeable immigrant populations. The city has long enjoyed an affluence based on prosperous hosiery and other light industries, avoiding the grime and vibrancy of the heavy industrial forces of iron, steel and textiles. The mill and furnace do not feature prominently on the landscape. However, Easton's affluence eventually attracted immigrant workers in the Twentieth Century, most of whom, initially came from Eastern and Western Europe. Latvians and Poles settled with French, Germans

1. The population of Easton was approximately 280,000 at the time of fieldwork. That is to say between November, 1971 until May, 1973.

2. Those cities which did experience an early history of settlement by coloured peoples include Cardiff, Liverpool, Bristol, London and Newcastle.
and many other nationalities. They settled in areas of cheaper housing close to the city centre. These central districts of large Victorian terraced houses were occupied by wealthy families of commerce in the mid- and late Nineteenth Century but have fallen into semi-decay since their original occupants moved to more recently established and more highly esteemed residential suburbs.

One of these central districts, which we will name Lowdale, will be the main focus for the present study. Lying adjacent to the centre of Easton, Lowdale can be described as a 'twilight zone'. It was, and still is, an area of shifting populations, living in multi-occupation until sufficient wealth can be accumulated to enable its residents to leave for better pastures. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, small numbers of West Indian ex-servicemen, most of them Jamaicans and Barbadians, entered a community which was already highly cosmopolitan. During the late 1950's and the 1960's, they were joined by larger numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean. Most of them settled with comparative ease, as jobs were plentiful and small 'three up - three down' terraced houses could be purchased cheaply.

In the late 1960's, the black population of Easton was further increased by the arrival of increasing numbers of Indians and Pakistanis. This pattern has continued until the present day, when

---

Easton can be said to have a substantial black population. A high proportion of this group moved into Lowdale but, at least in the early years of settlement, geographical dispersal was a prominent feature of the housing patterns of such immigrants. The business acumen of the Asians is demonstrated by the spread of Indian and Pakistani retail and commercial outlets in many parts of the city.

Despite this dispersal, the majority of West Indians reside within Lowdale or residential areas immediately adjacent to it. These districts in Easton contain the greatest concentration of black people in the city. The West Indian groupings in this area were our main concern and some attempt to describe their life situation in Lowdale was made by constructing a sample of respondents which would be representative of West Indians in Easton generally. The data present in the remainder of this chapter were drawn from this sample, composed of 146 respondents within 68 residential units. The following table shows the composition of these residential units:

---

4. The problems connected with the representativeness of the sample will be discussed in the Research Appendix. It should be noted that the sample included West Indians who lived both within and outside of the immediate vicinity of Lowdale. Because of the paucity of figures on the total numbers of West Indians in Easton, let along specific areas within it, the sample cannot be said to be numerically proportional to actual numbers of West Indians in particular residential areas. Suffice to say that Lowdale accounted for the great majority of respondents and the sample does reflect the fact that most West Indians in Easton reside within this small area.
Table 1
Residential Units of West Indian Respondents in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Unit</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>4 (7.7)</td>
<td>5 (8.9)</td>
<td>9 (8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (both partners respondent)</td>
<td>31 (59.6)</td>
<td>31 (55.4)</td>
<td>62 (57.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (one partner respondent)</td>
<td>12 (23.1)</td>
<td>16 (28.6)</td>
<td>28 (25.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (living within a married unit above)</td>
<td>5 (9.6)</td>
<td>4 (7.1)</td>
<td>9 (8.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals (Respondents) N = 52  N = 56  N = 108

Total no. of units in sample = 68

The data obtained from the above respondents were collected for purposes of a cross-cultural comparison between life situations in Britain and the West Indies. One of the features of this comparison was the weight given to inter-island distinctions. The relative insularity and heterogeneity of West Indian societies demonstrated in the previous chapter underlines how essential it is to consider West Indian island groupings in Britain as distinct from one another in many ways. It therefore remains problematic whether certain forms of social organization both within and between island delineations are similar or not. Whilst the precise numbers of West Indians in particular island groupings in Easton was not known, the sample was constructed with these island divisions in mind. By relating to previous experience of Lowdale, questioning the inhabitants and observing them before the sample was constructed, rough approximations of relative

---

5. See p. 44
island sizes of population represented in Easton could be made. The following table shows the island of origin of respondents and the numbers within the sample of each island grouping represented:

Table 2
Island of origin of West Indian respondents in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antigua</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(25.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(18.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(13.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(7.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbuda</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Kitts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 108

An interesting feature of the above figures is the wide spread of islands represented in Easton. Previous studies have shown that West Indians in the urban areas in Britain tend to congregate in separate island communities. Often, particular cities, or parts of cities, display residential settlement patterns along island lines. Hence, certain provincial cities or London boroughs are noted for the preponderance of a particular island grouping. Easton is perhaps atypical because a large number of West Indian societies are represented in a not insubstantial but fairly small West Indian population.

The Antiguans form the largest group, with Jamaicans and Barbadians also well represented. In addition many smaller island groups are present in Easton, for example, from Nevis, St. Kitts and Montserrat. The Barbudan community, whilst remaining comparatively small in relation to other West Indian groupings in Easton, represents the largest settlement from that island in Britain. There are very few Guyanese, Trinidadians or Dominicans in Easton. Nevertheless, whilst individuals from these societies were present and indeed composed a small part of the sample of West Indian respondents, they were relatively insignificant in Easton compared with other West Indian groupings in the area.

The presence of so many island groupings in Easton would appear to be largely fortuitous. Settlement patterns have been influenced by patterns of employment, the previous existence of relatives or friends already residing in the area and so forth.

The sample was composed of 56 females and 52 males. The high proportion of women is due to the construction of the sample on the basis of household units. It thus reflects relationships of cohabitation. In addition, questionnaire responses were obtained from a slightly higher proportion of women than men respondents, there being a higher rate of refusal from the latter. Finally, the

---

7. This outline of proportionate sizes of West Indian island groupings in Easton refers to the actual numbers rather than the representativeness of the sample. However, as stated in the text, the sample was constructed with these island sizes in mind. Whilst one could not talk of island groups with any degree of numerical accuracy one could discern relative differences in size from observation and questioning.

8. See Table 4, p. 80
pattern of West Indian migration to Britain generally has been shown
to be composed of roughly comparable groups of male and female
migrants. This is in sharp contrast to Asian migrants where, at
least in the initial years of their migration to Britain, male migrants
were heavily represented.

With respect to the age ranges within the sample, the highest
proportion of respondents were aged between 26 and 50 years, 88% of
the total sample falling within this category. A significant group
(62%) were between the ages of 36 and 50, with the majority within
these ages in their late 30's and early 40's. Only two respondents
were over the age of 50 years. None of the sample were over 65
years of age. Table 3, given below, shows the age profile of West
Indians in the Easton sample.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 - above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals N= 52 N= 56 N= 108

With very few exceptions, most respondents had migrated directly
from their island of birth in the Caribbean to Britain. Out of 108
respondents, only 10 West Indians claimed to have migrated from
places of residence different from their home island. Six respondents

9. See Ceri Peach, West Indian Migration to Britain, (London, O.U.P.
1968); David Eversley and Fred Sukdeo, The Dependents of the
Coloured Commonwealth Population of England and Wales, (London,
T.R.R., 1969); also R. B. Davison, West Indian Migrants, (London,
O.U.P., 1962)
migrated from a different island in the Caribbean, the remainder from the United States. In all cases, this reflected a transitory migration in search of employment. None of these respondents had resided for more than two years in countries other than Britain or their birthplace.

The sample were asked to mention whether they had lived in a town or village for most of their lives in the West Indies. Nearly half of the respondents (46%) had spent all or most of their lives before arriving in Britain in the capital of their respective West Indian society. A further 17, (16%), originated from towns other than the capital, whilst 41 respondents (38%) had rural backgrounds. There are, of course, innumerable problems in defining the meaning of 'rural' and 'urban', hence these figures only give a very rough guide to the residential background of respondents in the Caribbean. The differences between the sizes of West Indian societies and corresponding 'urban areas', is a case in point. Claiming residence in Kingston, Jamaica has vastly different connotations to past residence in Codrington, Barbuda! However, it is interesting to note that a majority of respondents did reside in what one can describe as a 'less-rural' setting within the context of their particular West Indian society. It will be useful to return to this question when describing the occupational background of respondents in the Caribbean.

10. There is a huge literature on this subject and little will be gained by cataloguing a massive bibliography. A very erudite discussion of 'rural-urban' distinctions can be found in R. E. Pahl, op. cit., pp. 263-306

11. See footnote 10; in this context 'less-rural' is very roughly equated with villages or towns which are not purely agrarian in character.
The reasons for migration, not unsurprisingly, centred around the quest for better opportunities, however these might be expressed. The following table indicates the reasons for migration from the Caribbean to Britain given by our respondents:

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Migration</th>
<th>No. of Respondents mentioning it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>36 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join family and/or friends</td>
<td>38 (35.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and desire for change</td>
<td>16 (14.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better future</td>
<td>6 (5.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5 (4.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Service</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>6 (5.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from those who were unsure of their reasons or who arrived, rather fortuitously, by the fact of their war service, the two main reasons given for migration to Britain were the desire for better employment and the wish to join relatives or friends already settled in this country. A common pattern was for a husband to send for his wife after establishing himself in a job in Britain. Most West Indians (63%) settled in Easton immediately on arrival in Britain, or settled there after short periods of residence in other cities, Birmingham and London being mentioned most often. This suggests some stability in the pattern of geographical mobility which the length of residence of respondents

12. See Peach, op. cit.
in Easton tends to support. This can be seen in Table 5, below:

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of years</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(11.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>(52.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - above</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(23.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 108

The above figures indicate that the length of residence varied from 6 to 21 years, with the majority of respondents resident in Easton for more than 10 years. Over 75% of respondents had lived in the area for at least 12 years. These figures, coupled with those pertaining to geographical mobility since arrival in Britain, suggest a settled community of some standing in relation to length of residence. This would tend to detract from the argument that problems of 'culture shock' are a crucial factor in explaining forms of social organization among West Indians in Easton. Whilst such a phenomenon could be important when analysing the initial reactions of migrants to their immediate contacts with the host society, it would appear that the majority of West Indians in our sample had resided in Britain for a sufficient period for some adjustments to be made to a new social environment.

The vast majority of West Indians in the sample were married or living within some form of settled union. This result was not unexpected in so far as the sample was constructed on the basis of residential units. Moreover, the age profile of respondents would tend to favour more settled unions. Family sizes ranged from two
to six children, with an average of 3.1 per family unit. A few families had children being looked after by relatives or friends elsewhere in Britain or the West Indies but in the majority of cases all children were living in the household of their parents.

All respondents had attended elementary school in the West Indies, but only 32 (29.6%) had gone on to some form of secondary schooling in the Caribbean. The latter group consisted of 21 men and 11 women. Although the figures for secondary schooling appear low, they reflect in fact a relatively high level of attendance when compared with overall patterns of secondary school attendance in the West Indies. In 1964, it was estimated that only 1 in 6 Windward Island children, 1 in 7 Jamaican and 1 in 10 Leeward Island children attended secondary schools. David Lowenthal stresses that:

"For the West Indian majority, formal education is brief and perfunctory. Primary schooling is mostly free and in theory compulsory, but there are far too few schools and teachers to enforce attendance. Many in the poorer islands have never been to school at all - one out of four St. Lucians, one Dominican in seven, one Montserratian in nine." 14

Despite the possibility that some respondents, both in answering questionnaires and in interviews, might have consistently concealed non-attendance, the general picture still reflects the fact that a high proportion of West Indians in our sample had received a formal

13. It is very important to emphasise that these family sizes are drawn from descriptive statistics within a sample which is not based upon a statistically representative sampling frame. Therefore, these figures in no way provide an indication of the average family size of West Indians in Britain.

education in the West Indies. This has important implications for the measurement of class position and also geographical location within the home island. Secondary education is usually the prerogative of the elite and middle classes in the Caribbean who predominantly reside in urban areas. Rural dwellers are faced with problems of finance and transport which makes attendance of the largely urban based secondary schools difficult, if not impossible. In addition, the life style of rural dwellers in the Caribbean is not conducive to high rates of school attendance or high academic performance. This is illustrated by the following passage taken from a study of a rural village in Jamaica by Allen Ehrlich:

They will sit for the scholarship examinations and fail ....... They will fail them because there is always water to be fetched, chickens to be fed, rice to be dried, and a host of other chores which children are expected to perform once they are home. They will fail them because most parents, though willing, are unable to help their children understand the lessons taught at school. They will fail them because by 6.30 in the evening it is too dark to read a book or do what little homework has been assigned. With no electricity, night effectively envelopes and suffocates school work. In the end the children will fail the examinations because they have had the misfortune to have been born in Canelot (a rural village).\textsuperscript{15}

It is significant that all 32 respondents who claimed to have received secondary schooling in the West Indies resided in the capital or other towns in their respective islands.

When one considers the pattern of secondary schooling in the West Indies, with all its related problems, it is hardly surprising to find that very few lower class West Indians go on to further or higher education. Although only 4 respondents had attended college after secondary schooling in the Caribbean this still reflects a high

\textsuperscript{15} Allen S. Ehrlich, 'East Indian cane workers in Jamaica', Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1969, p. 82
proportion compared with the total numbers of West Indians who reach that rung in the educational ladder. In the sample none of the respondents had attended universities in the West Indies. The 4 respondents with further education had been to technical colleges in their home island.

Finally, with respect to levels of literacy, a very rough guide can be drawn from the number of respondents who were able to fill in the questionnaires administered to them. There were only 9 cases (out of 108) where respondents had to ask another member of the family, or the researcher, to write in replies because of difficulties with reading and/or writing. Admittedly, this is only a very rough indication of literacy levels and it was difficult to ascertain whether proficiency in reading and writing had improved since arrival in Britain. But the general impression given through a variety of social contacts with respondents was not one of illiteracy or difficulty in articulating one's views, either orally or in writing.

The educational backgrounds of the majority of West Indian respondents, their residence patterns in the Caribbean, together with their levels of literacy all pointed to the fact that our sample in Easton was not drawn solely from West Indians with rural or lower class backgrounds in the Caribbean. This factor will have important implications when patterns of association and rates of membership in voluntary associations are discussed.

Very few West Indians in the sample had received any schooling in Britain. This was due to the fact that most respondents were above the age of schooling when they arrived in this country. Those who were young enough (7 respondents) had usually gone straight into the secondary level in Britain after completing the elementary level in the West Indies. Some respondents had attended or were still attending,
further education establishments in Britain. The latter (16 respondents, 13 of them male) included a Barbadian who had acquired a degree in Social Studies, but the majority (11) were concerned with courses at Further Education Colleges. In all cases individuals were attempting to obtain qualifications connected with their jobs. Finally, 4 respondents were attending Adult Education centres in Easton, all connected with recreational pursuits.

In all, 29 respondents out of 108 possessed some form of school, technical or professional qualification either acquired in the West Indies or since their arrival in Britain. This group was composed mainly of respondents who had completed their secondary (in some cases further) education in the West Indies; and a group of mainly younger men who were studying for qualifications at Technical or Further Education colleges in Easton. Some of the former group had acquired qualifications for particular occupations in the West Indies, for example, nursing, and 15 respondents had passed one or more General School Certificate examinations during their schooling in the Caribbean. The high proportion of women with qualifications is largely explained by the 11 nurses or nursing auxiliaries in the sample. The proportion of women in this occupation among West Indian females in Easton generally is not so high but nursing is well-known as an esteemed occupation for West Indian women both in the Caribbean and in Britain. It is one of the few occupations which allow women free entry and is a common avenue by which women in the Caribbean can raise their status.

A large proportion of women in the sample were in regular employment in Easton. This corresponds with previous studies of
West Indians in Britain and also accords with the pattern of white female employment in Easton. The local hosiery and light engineering factories provide a wide range of employment opportunities for female labour in the locality. The table given below shows the employment pattern of West Indian women respondents in Easton at the time of the study. The Registrar Generals' classification was used to place individuals in occupational categories.

**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(27.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled (Manual)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(32.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled (Non-Manual)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Skilled</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(27.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(7.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 40

* 16 women were not included in this classification because they fell outside of the categories used: eg. they were 'housewives'.

It can be seen from the above figures that none of the West Indian females in the sample were employed in professional occupations. The relatively high figure for intermediate occupations


17. Female labour accounts for 40% of the labour force in Easton. Sunday Times Business News, January 20, 1974
is explained by the large number of nurses in the sample. The
9 nurses fall into this category, the remaining 2 respondents being
a laboratory technician and a qualified cook. The only West
Indian women in skilled non-manual employment were a key punch operator
and a shop assistant. The figures in Table 6 show that the majority
of women were in skilled or unskilled manual work. This
preponderance is partly explained not only by the lack of relevant
qualifications and experience among the West Indian female labour
force in Easton, but also by the pattern of employment opportunities
in the locality for West Indians. Many women were packers,
examiners, and assemblers in the hosiery trade or the local
typewriter factory.

Semi-skilled occupations also reflected a traditional interest
in hospital work. Out of 11 respondents in this category, 8 were
nursing auxiliaries. The remaining 3 women were in domestic work.
A few West Indian women had unskilled jobs as cleaners etc. The
general pattern of female employment is in middle-range skilled
and semi-skilled occupations. There were few unskilled workers
and even fewer highly skilled or professional employees among the
West Indian female labour force in Easton.

The pattern of male employment was similar to that for women in
many respects. Table 7, gives the appropriate figures for West

18. Whilst no studies have been carried out in this area, it is
likely that patterns of employment for West Indian women in
Easton correspond to the employment pattern for the indigenous
white female labour force. However, evidence would suggest
that some West Indian women also face discrimination and do not
acquire jobs compatible with their qualifications. See
footnote 16
Indian men, adopting the same classification as used for female labour:

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled (Manual)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>(69.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled (Non-Manual)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N= 52</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures show that very few West Indian men were employed in professional, intermediate or skilled non-manual work. This corresponds with previous studies which demonstrate that West Indians in Britain are proportionately heavily under-represented in white collar occupations, particularly in the professions. Within our sample, there was only one professional employee, a qualified quality controller in a shoe factory. Intermediate jobs included social workers (2), a male nurse, a telephone engineer and a cabinet maker. There were no West Indian men in skilled non-manual work. During the period of fieldwork, it was evident that very few West Indians, particularly men, had clerical or white-collar jobs.

Three men in the sample had semi-skilled occupations, all being employed as bus conductors. Unskilled employment (5 respondents) was represented by railway porters, labourers etc. A very high proportion of West Indian males were in skilled manual jobs, nearly

19. See footnote 16
70% of the total male sample; in fact. Most of them worked in local factories as drillers, moulders, welders and tool-makers. A variety of industries were mentioned as work-places, including hosiery, boot and shoe, light engineering and rubber moulding. In addition to factory jobs, craft occupations were also common among male workers, for example, electricians, painters, printers and carpenters among others. Only two men were unemployed at the time of questioning.

The following table shows the occupational composition of the total sample, including both male and female respondents:

Table 8

| Occupational categories for total West Indian sample employed in Easton |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Category                    | No.    | %      |
| Professional workers        | 1      | (1.1)  |
| Intermediate               | 16     | (17.4) |
| Skilled (Manual)            | 49     | (53.3) |
| Skilled (Non-Manual)        | 2      | (2.2)  |
| Semi-Skilled               | 14     | (15.2) |
| Unskilled                  | 8      | (8.7)  |
| Unemployed                 | 2      | (2.2)  |

N= 92

The figures in the above table show that the sample was drawn mainly from skilled manual workers, both male and female. Over 70% of the total sample were skilled manual, intermediate or professional workers. Only 15% were unskilled, this figure being less than 10% if only male workers are considered. However, there was a marked lack of West Indian workers employed in white collar jobs.

20. See Tables 10 and 11, p. 92
or occupations demanding high qualifications. Unemployment was extremely low, only 2 men and no women claiming to be unemployed at the time of the survey.

In addition to information about work patterns in Britain, all respondents were asked to give details of their previous employment in the West Indies. Thus some comparison could be made between work patterns in the society of origin and their present employment in Easton. Cross-cultural comparisons are extremely difficult when considering any aspects of the social structure of societies as diverse as Britain and the West Indies. In this respect, employment patterns are no exception. The structure of West Indian societies with large non-industrialised sectors, does not lend itself to a direct comparison with occupational categories constructed for use in Britain, the Registrar Generals' classification included. However, it was felt that some comparison, albeit a somewhat crude one, would be a useful exercise. Whilst accepting the additional difficulties of comparison with other West Indian societies, the occupational classification constructed by G. E. Cumper for Barbados\textsuperscript{21}, was used. Table 9 illustrates the number of West Indian respondents in particular occupational categories in the Caribbean.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Occupational Category & Number of Respondents & Percentage of Total \hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Occupational Categories of West Indian Respondents in the Caribbean}
\end{table}

Table 9
Occupational categories of total West Indian sample in previous employment in the Caribbean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(12.2)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(51.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(32.6)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(6.1 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm manual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(14.3)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(6.1 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(36.8)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(12.1 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(24.2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(4.1 )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N=49 \quad N=33 \]

Occupations represented in the white collar category included nursing, teaching, clerical work and the civil service. The skilled category was centred on craft occupations, including West Indians who had been carpenters, printers, mechanics, a milliner and a mason. Other respondents in this category were, for example, shop workers and factory hands. The latter almost exclusively originated from Jamaica and Barbados where industrial jobs are more common. The non-farm manual workers were fishermen, stevedores, lorry drivers and so forth.

Nearly 37\% of the men and 12\% of the women were employed in some form of agricultural occupation. All but two respondents with agricultural jobs in the West Indies, came from islands other than Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados. This reflects the predominantly agrarian based economies of the smaller West Indian societies. The relatively high percentage of women in domestic work (24\%) is also a feature of female employment in these societies. The low figures for unemployment are not necessarily significant for a variety of reasons. Many West Indians in the Caribbean are self-employed smallholders living on a small piece of land with some poultry and livestock.
Similarly, a high rate of self employment is combined with the seasonal nature of many types of work in the islands. This is particularly so with agricultural workers who are only employed when the crop is at a stage requiring quantities of labour. Very often, smallholding and reliance on seasonal work go together. The general picture of employment patterns in West Indian societies, particularly in those without some form of industry, is highly flexible and therefore difficult to compare with work patterns in industrialised societies.

The following tables give the figures for numbers of respondents claiming to have been unemployed for any period of time in the West Indies and since their arrival in Britain.

**Table 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Unemployment</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six months or less</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(51.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(17.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Given</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Unemployment</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six months or less</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(32.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 52
Only 3 respondents claimed to have been unemployed in the West Indies for more than one period of time, in all three cases for less than six months, with the exception of those in seasonal, agricultural occupations. With regard to the figures for unemployment in Britain, only 4 men referred to unemployment in Easton. Most of the periods of unemployment mentioned were consistent with difficulties encountered acquiring jobs immediately on arrival in Britain.

Since arriving in Easton, only 16 West Indians in the sample had remained in the occupation which they had held in the home island. These respondents included nurses and men who had remained within certain skilled craft occupations, for example, printing and cabinet making. Very few West Indians had moved from a factory job in the Caribbean to factory employment in Britain. The employment pattern for women was relatively more consistent because many West Indian females were still engaged in nursing and domestic work in Easton. However, it should be noted that many West Indian women were in regular employment for the first time in Easton, not having been in the same position before migration.

The pattern of employment for the male labour force reflected a move into skilled manual, often factory-based work in Britain. In many instances, there was a move from agricultural to industrial employment, but this was by no means a predominant feature of changes in employment from the Caribbean to Britain. West Indians who were teachers, clerks and policemen in their home island were now working as welders or lathe operators in Easton factories.
Over 60% of the sample had held more than one job since their arrival in Britain. However, only 6 respondents (all men) reported more than three changes of job during this period. Thus, the West Indian work force in Easton, as demonstrated by our sample, was a relatively stable one not marked by frequent and long periods of unemployment or frequent changes of occupation. In addition, it was significant that the pattern of employment both in the West Indies and in Easton did not demonstrate a preponderance of unskilled, agricultural workers among our respondents. The labour force was fairly diverse, although it would be true to say that very few West Indians had been employed in industrial occupations in the Caribbean.

The pattern of employment in Easton demonstrated that some West Indians had taken jobs which, even allowing for any differentials in skills between the West Indies and Britain, were not comparable to those they had held in their home island. There were schoolteachers in the West Indies now employed as bus conductors, and a civil servant who worked as a machinist in a rubber tyre factory in Easton. Many West Indians with white-collar jobs in the Caribbean had blue-collar jobs in Easton. This demonstrates the already well-documented difficulties of a black, migrant labour force constrained to enter occupations which are labelled suitable for them by the host society, irrespective of previous work experience or qualifications acquired in their societies of origin.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that many West Indian men in particular had experienced a relative drop in work status and restricted job opportunities in Britain, the general picture in Easton was one of stability and limited, but not insignificant, affluence compared with the position of many West Indians in other urban settings in Britain.
Turning to trade union membership, 27 respondents (N=90) belonged to a trade union in their present job in Easton, only one of them female. The level of trade union membership was influenced by a number of factors apart from individual choice. Important among them were the nature of local employment patterns and the level of unionisation in local industries, the degree of choice for individual workers in particular work places, e.g. whether there was a 'closed-shop' in operation and so forth. Local industrial conditions do not, in fact, encourage a high union membership. The hosiery firms in particular have a long history of paternalism and such unionism as does exist is extremely "passive". The history of full employment in Easton is an important factor in explaining low levels of unionisation.

Similar conditions largely explain the level of unionisation in the West Indies. The structure of the island economies detracts from high levels of unionisation, particularly in the smaller islands were the plantation system is still prominent. Unionisation is either discouraged in the agricultural sectors or operates under highly paternalistic conditions. However, this situation is changing somewhat and one can point to a strong trade union tradition in many industries. It was noted in the previous chapter that trade unionism in the British Caribbean has been strongly linked with political development. Nevertheless, industrial unions still tend to be paternalistic.

22. These factors will also influence the level of membership of the indigenous white labour force.

23. See Knowles, op. cit.
Only 18 respondents, all male, had belonged to a trade union at any time during their period of residence in the West Indies. Most of them were in skilled occupations and resided in urban areas. Craftsmen and factory workers predominated. The level of female membership within West Indian or British trade unions was extremely low. The nature of their employment and local work conditions, both in the Caribbean and in Britain, again largely explains this.

When questioned about their attitudes towards trade unionism in Britain and their participation in union affairs, very few respondents expressed any close interest or involvement in union activities in Easton. Those few who did proffer firm opinions saw trade unions as protecting workers' interests but very few West Indians appeared to believe that British trade unions were representative of West Indians' needs in Britain. The majority of respondents viewed themselves as outside any bargaining frame of management and workers. West Indians were seen as forming a separate part of the labour force largely unrepresented by any official

24. Similarly, it has been suggested that many of the white working class are disenchanted with trade unionism in Britain. See Robert McKenzie and Alan Silver, Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England (London, 1968); also John H. Goldthorpe, David Lockwood et al, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, (Cambridge, O.U.P. 1969). It is interesting to note that those workers who are mentioned in the latter are taken from highly paid and upwardly mobile workers. It would appear that many West Indians may have more in common with the middle classes or upwardly mobile working class with respect to trade unionism than with similarly placed white manual workers. Further research into this possibility would appear to be desirable.
body or spokesmen. A Jamaican welder stated that:

"I think that in this society where there is still strong class differences, trade unions go a long way in reducing the differences between the rich and the working man, but we (i.e. West Indians) are outside of all this. The unions should be for black and white."

However, this is a somewhat atypical comment because most respondents answered non-committally or expressed very little interest. Similarly, only one respondent was at all active in union affairs — an Antiguan employed in the building trade who was a shop steward and a regular attender of branch meetings. Only 3 other West Indians in the sample had ever attended a union branch meeting or taken any direct part in union affairs. A large majority of respondents, 76%, explained their membership of a union as an involuntary act, in so far as it was compulsory or the expected thing to do at their present place of employment. This corresponded closely to most West Indians' replies concerning their membership and participation in trade unions in the West Indies.

With respect to qualifications and training programmes connected with employment, the following table shows the number of respondents who were required to undertake a formal training programme or who had embarked on a course of study connected with their job.

---

25. Thus, many West Indians perceived labour relations in local factories as a process involving relations between white management and white workers. Black workers were a special category tangential to the main bargaining framework. This corresponds with the opinions of those writers who suggest that immigrant workers do not share similar market positions with white workers in relation to trade unions and political parties. See for example S. Zubaida, Race and Racism, (London, Tavistock, 1970) p.8, and John Rex, Race Relations in Sociological Theory, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), pp. 108-9
Table 12
West Indian respondents in training programmes or acquiring qualifications in connection with employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed in jobs requiring no qualifications or training programme</td>
<td>12 (24.0)</td>
<td>34 (60.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In jobs with formal training programme</td>
<td>15 (30.0)</td>
<td>5 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With or studying for technical qualifications</td>
<td>19 (38.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With or studying for professional qualifications</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>11 (27.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 50  N= 40

With the exception of some skilled employees, many West Indians stated that their job did not require any formal qualifications or training. Altogether, 20 respondents were in jobs requiring attendance at a formal training programme, whilst many other factory jobs required on-the-job training. Those studying for technical and professional qualifications were invariably in skilled manual jobs, particularly in engineering. The majority were under 35 years of age and represented a significant number of West Indians who saw the attainment of some form of qualification as a means of raising one's status both within the West Indian community and the wider society.

All respondents were asked to compare their present financial position in Easton with their previous standard of living in the West Indies. Allowing for changes in life style, cost of living and their ages, 57% of the total sample claimed that they were better off in money terms in Easton than in the Caribbean. This figure includes a not insubstantial number, 12% of the total, who
stated that they were much better off in Easton. Just over a quarter of respondents, 25.9\%, thought that their present financial position in Britain was about the same as in the West Indies, whilst less than 6% saw their present position as being worse or much worse than in the Caribbean. Eight respondents (11%) did not give replies to this question or stated they did not know whether they were better off or not in their present position. Male and female respondents did not give significantly different answers to this question, although slightly fewer men than women saw their position in Easton as being the same or financially worse than in the home island. The majority of West Indians claimed to have gained from their migration to Britain, in financial terms, but this must be seen in a relative context. Most of them were not claiming that they were as well off (however they defined this) as they could be, when relating their position to other groups in Easton, including other migrants. Similarly, even being better off in financial terms did not necessarily compensate for the other forms of deprivation felt by many respondents. Nor did acceptable levels of wealth and income necessarily provide access to better resources, such as better housing and recreational facilities, which many West Indians expected they would or should do. However, these assessments did indicate a relative level of economic stability which was partly confirmed by the occupational patterns previously described.

26. It was noticeable that there were no significant pattern with regard to age, residence or occupation of respondents claiming to be 'better off' in Britain. It was just as likely for a low paid, poorly housed West Indian to claim that he was better off in Britain, than a West Indian with high wages and residence in a 'better area' of Easton. The question of being financially better-off was a relative factor dependent upon one's previous position in the West Indies compared with the contemporary situation in Britain.
Residence patterns are another useful indicator of the economic position of West Indians in Easton. Table 13 shows the type of housing and accommodation occupied by our sample.

Table 13
Residential patterns of West Indian respondents in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Dwelling</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A house or flat which has been bought</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(10.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A house or flat which is mortgaged</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>(48.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A house, flat or rooms rented privately</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(26.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council housing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing with friends or relatives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 108

It can be seen from the above figures that a very large number of West Indians had bought their own homes or were buying them by means of a mortgage. Nearly 60% of the sample came within these categories. Twenty-nine respondents, 27% of the sample, were living in some form of private rented accommodation. Types of accommodation included houses or flats but usually a number of rooms in the large three-storied terraces common to much of Lowdale. A further 9 respondents (8%) were living in council housing of some kind. Undoubtedly, this is a much inflated figure for West Indian council occupation and not representative of council tenancies for West Indians throughout Easton.

The area of Lowdale is quite diverse as far as housing types are concerned. Victorian property is represented by artisan dwellings...
of the 'three up - three down' terraced type which face directly on the street with small yards at the rear, but also by much larger three-storied properties with imposing frontages and relatively large gardens at the back and front. The latter are usually in multi-occupation, broken into furnished or unfurnished private tenancies. The smaller terraces are mainly in single occupation, and account for the majority of West Indians who own or are buying their own houses. Adjacent to these types of property are more modern early Twentieth century semi-detached residences. More recent still is a newly opened council scheme, which replaced that part of Lowdale which has been re-developed. This consists of a variety of houses and blocks of flats, a shopping precinct and new primary and junior schools. The latter buildings face the older properties and stand in sharp contrast to them - in particular, the large, ugly red-brick secondary school which dominates a corner of Adelaide Street.

Many West Indians had been occupants of the older properties which were demolished to make way for the new council dwellings.

This entitled them to one of the new council flats and therefore explains the number of West Indian respondents in the sample in council housing. However, the number of West Indians occupying similar council properties on estates in other parts of Easton is extremely small. Some of these families are included in the sample or were interviewed through their connection with the West Indian formal associations described in the following chapter. They frequently commented on the dearth of fellow West Indians on the estates and some of the difficulties which this presented. It was noticeable that the council flats adjacent to Lowdale were included within the general stereotype of the area. Thus, occupants of the Lowdale
council flats, both black and white, complained of being grouped
together with residents of the older properties surrounding them,
particularly those facing them across Adelaide Street.

The Lowdale area, often called the 'Khyber Pass' by local whites
because of the predominance of recently arrived Asian immigrants, is
labelled as a district in Easton which contains all that is
undesirable. Thus, many forms of deviant behaviour are accorded to
its inhabitants, ranging from drunken parties, drug addiction and
prostitution to the stereotypes commonly associated with overcrowded,
unsanitary housing conditions. Irrespective of the accuracy of
these descriptions, it is significant that many West Indians within
Lowdale subscribed to such beliefs and therefore sought to move to
other, more desirable areas. This means that very few West Indians
appear to desire council housing because there is a general belief
that West Indians are restricted to those estates in or near Lowdale
and therefore cannot escape from the area through this avenue.

Nevertheless, many West Indians have moved to better
accommodation, often semi-detached property near to their previous
residence. In addition, some West Indians have moved to areas some
distance away from Lowdale, often to districts which are beginning
to decay and are becoming de-populated by local white residents who
are moving to the newer, ever expanding suburbs.

Because of the wide availability of alternative, cheap housing
for the indigenous (mostly white) residents of Lowdale in other parts
of Easton, particularly during the 1950's and 1960's, immigrants
moving into Lowdale at this time encountered few difficulties in
housing themselves. Only 27 respondents claimed any major difficulty
in acquiring accommodation on arrival in Easton. The reasons given
by those few West Indians who did have problems in housing themselves,
included housing shortages, financial difficulties, and colour discrimination. The latter was mentioned by 15 respondents and was the main reason given for explaining any adversity met in finding accommodation.

It is difficult to estimate the validity of discrimination as an explanation for housing difficulties in Easton. The much greater numbers of West Indian respondents who did not encounter similar problems points toward the need for caution in commenting on the prevalence of housing discrimination against West Indians. However, there is ample evidence to support the notion that discrimination against black people in the housing market is widespread in Britain and there is no reason to think that Easton is a unique case where such difficulties are not encountered by the black groups within its boundaries. The availability of cheap property for West Indians was partly due to the existence of alternative areas of residence for the indigenous white population. Furthermore, despite the relative affluence of many West Indians, coupled with their desire to move out of Lowdale, the continued presence of West Indians in 'the twilight zone' has to be explained by the existence of barriers which restrict the entry of certain groups in Easton to more 'desirable' residential areas. Whilst individual family units among West Indians have succeeded in moving away from Lowdale, their transfer is often to other areas of the city.

28. It would also be influenced by the fact that more white residents would be financially more able to buy houses in 'better areas'. The majority of West Indians, on arrival in Easton, would be limited to low cost housing areas by their lack of finance in addition to other factors, for example their colour. However, financial disparities do not explain why some long standing West Indian residents in Lowdale could not move out, thus pointing more forcibly towards some form of housing discrimination.
which already contain "mixed"populations, i.e. populations which cross ethnic and racial divisions. The appearance of black people in areas of Easton which are predominantly white, may indicate that such areas are entering a transitional period with significant population replacement. Alternatively, some black families may have sufficient economic and/or social status to enable them to separate themselves from the majority of black workers in the city and thus effect a degree of dispersal from the main zone of transition. Whether or not these dispersed families attain some position of mutual acceptability with their predominantly white neighbours appears to be dependent upon the particular contingencies surrounding each case.

Certainly there was a low level of residential mobility within the sample. If there had been a change in residence since arrival in Easton, this was typically from rented to mortgaged property within or around Lowdale. Even the pattern of dispersal was centred on particular areas of Easton which were marked by some or all of the characteristics previously attributed to zones of transition.

In spite of the high level of house purchase and single family occupation, many West Indians said that they would like to move to another area in Easton given the choice, or leave Britain altogether. Just under half of the sample, 49%, expressed a desire to move from their present accommodation. Five respondents were undecided, whilst the remainder indicated that they were satisfied with their present housing position. It was significant that out of those West Indians who did wish to move, only 4 respondents lived outside of the centre of Lowdale. Similarly, out of 50 respondents who had no desire to move, 38 did not live in this immediate area. This appears to suggest that negative evaluations of residence were congruent with the occupation of houses firmly located within the zone of transition.
Whilst some dissatisfaction with the area of residence was indicated among those West Indians living outside of Lowdale, the level of discontent was significantly lower in their case.

When asked where they would like to move to, given the choice, most West Indians did not specify an alternative area or simply answered in terms of anywhere except their present location! This was reasonably widespread among West Indians, but it often took the form of a general feeling of discontent which had not crystallised into firm ideas of more desirable alternatives. Out of 53 respondents only 9 indicated a firm alternative preference when asked to name the residential area they would like to move to. Within the latter group, 4 West Indians mentioned some form of council housing, a further 4 had other cities in Britain in mind, whilst the remaining respondents wished to return to the Caribbean.

It is important to separate the desire to move to another area from the acknowledgement of the possibility of such a change. Thus many West Indians were disillusioned about housing and sought a move to areas with better 'names' or contemplated a move away from Easton, even to the point of returning to the West Indies. Despite these feelings, very few West Indians admitted that such changes were likely in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the acquisition of better housing and jobs was viewed as improbable in the light of contemporary social and economic conditions. Many respondents argued that their present position was largely fortuitous and they had little control over what happened to them in the future. They argue, in effect, that there are particular types of housing and employment which are judged suitable for West Indians by the host society and that once the limited mobility within such areas had been exhausted, it is unrealistic to expect further mobility and the widening of opportunities.
Those West Indians who did succeed were either lucky, or more able than their fellows. Similarly, when contemplating a return to the Caribbean very few West Indians thought this was likely in the near future. Indeed, it was often argued that to return was undesirable because so many West Indians would lose face by going back to their home island without the trappings of wealth which they had set out to find as this was expected by others in the home island.

Furthermore, the recognition of greater material rewards in Britain did compensate to some extent for other forms of deprivation, but this is not to minimise the wide discontent and disillusionment felt among West Indians in Easton which all forms of research revealed.

The following quotes from respondents express such feelings graphically.

An Antiguan nurse, for example, commented:

"Life in this country is quite different from the West Indies. In the West Indies it is warm and you can have quite a good time. Here in Britain life is different altogether for me, it is fight, fight, fight everyday."

A Barbudan factory worker was happier in Easton, but stated:

"I think mainly the changes from the West Indies are as follows — this country is a massive size to those in the West Indies, it is faster, plenty for the young people to enjoy. Plenty of food and meat, lots of sports, plenty of beer. I get more money than I got in the West Indies. For both black and white it should be a great place, but it is not right to feel you want to move on. Its the people, what really gets you — this prejudice to black people it will never stop."

A newly married girl from Barbados wrote:

"Many married women go out to work in Britain, while in the West Indies very few women go out to work after marriage. You have to work much faster here than we do at home for the simple reason it is too hot to do so. Here in Britain it doesn't matter if you don't say hello to your next door neighbour or even care to know their names. While in the West Indies we tend to know everybody, even if you don't make friends with them. Weather conditions tend to make me uninterested in activities outside my work and home while in the West Indies I am always out and about."
Finally, another Barbadian, a man who had been through a variety of jobs until he finally qualified as a social worker, very eloquently stated:

"One is more aware of oneself and one's position when living as an immigrant in England. There is more to your style of life which you take notice of. I have found myself, for instance, trying to be very clear and articulate in shops, because I am aware when I enter that inarticulate behaviour is expected of me. I can no longer walk down a street and forget that I am not like the other people in the street. This consciousness of my difference in colour is with me in every action I undertake. Unconsciously I work harder at trying to have myself accepted in the community. I have to put up with very substandard housing. I am aware that most people to whom I speak find it hard to believe when I say that the standard of housing to which I am accustomed in the West Indies is far superior than anything I have experienced here."

This passage articulates feelings which transcend the material advantages which jobs and houses have provided for many West Indians in Easton. The totality of life encompasses more than material provision and hence one of the most important research tasks was to examine whether such feelings manifested themselves in forms of action designed to alleviate distress and change one's life situation.

A number of questions in the survey were concerned with membership and participation in a variety of associations and activities both in the Caribbean and in Britain. This was in keeping with the attempt to maintain a comparative perspective throughout the research programme.

Membership and participation associated with religious associations will form a separate chapter so a brief appraisal of our findings will suffice at this juncture. The level of membership in religious associations was extremely high in the West Indies. All respondents claimed membership of some church, denomination or sect in the home island and this was matched by similarly high rates of attendance.
However, most people did not take an active part in church affairs in the sense of holding official position within respective denominations.

Substantial numbers of West Indians also belonged to a church, denomination or sect in Britain but there was a marked drop in the regularity of attendance. Similarly, there were very few respondents with official positions within these religious associations. At this point it is sufficient to note that, despite a decrease in membership and attendance in some form of religious association among West Indians in Easton, contrasted with their previous pattern of worship in the Caribbean, this type of membership in a formal association was easily the most common form among respondents in Britain. This becomes evident when levels of membership and attendance in other forms of association are examined.

Only 14 of 108 respondents claimed membership of a voluntary association in Easton. Of these only two respondents belonged to more than one association. The 'joiners' included 3 women who were members of the local Mothers' Union and Women's Guild. Most of the male respondents belonged to recreational associations, usually connected with a sporting activity. Five men belonged to cricket clubs, one to a soccer club, and youth club membership was mentioned by two young men. Three West Indian men belonged to associations established along exclusively island lines, two in the Jamaican association, the other in a similar group established by Barbudans.

---

29. This term describes those respondents who were members of voluntary associations. It is taken from Murray Hausknecht, _The Joiners_, (New York, Bedminster Press, 1962)

30. These island associations are described in Chapter 3
Some associations mentioned were connected with employment. A couple of West Indian men were members of social clubs at the factories where they worked and another belonged to the Easton branch of the British Rail Staff Association. Not surprisingly, given such a low figure for membership of voluntary associations, very few West Indians occupied official positions in an association, or claimed to have done so in the past. Indeed, only 3 respondents, all men, came within this category. One was a past Treasurer of the Jamaican Association, while the other two were actively involved in cricket clubs, one as secretary, the other as team captain. Both clubs were exclusively West Indian.

Most West Indians, 87% of the sample, did not belong to any voluntary associations in Easton. A very small number of women, only 2 respondents, belonged to such associations. These findings indicate that the level of membership of voluntary associations among West Indians in Easton is extremely low. This pattern confirms the limited research which has previously been done in this field.31

The figures for voluntary association membership in Britain did not correspond with the level of membership claimed by respondents for membership in the Caribbean. When asked about the latter, 39 respondents (36% of the total sample) indicated membership of one or more associations in the West Indies. The following table provides an illustration of the type of association mentioned and the number of respondents claiming membership of them.

31. See Introduction, p. 14
Table 14 shows that, whilst recreational pursuits were predominant, there is some evidence of membership of economic and political associations. No West Indians belonged to a political party or financial association in Britain akin to Friendly Societies but a minority did hold memberships of this nature in the Caribbean.³²

Similarly, membership figures for women respondents when resident in the West Indies were lower than for men therefore following the pattern in Easton but the disparity between the sexes was less marked. Out of 39 respondents claiming membership of an association in the West Indies, 17 were women.

The range of memberships was also greater in the West Indies. Whereas most 'joiners' only mentioned one association in Easton, the

³². It is possible that the existence of State social security benefits in Britain as opposed to the lack or restricted nature of these schemes in the West Indies, would be a contributory factor in explaining the low West Indian membership of Friendly Societies in Britain. Similarly, a wide range of alternative financial institutions in Britain would be an additional factor
tendency in the home island was to join two or three different associations. These findings still indicate that the majority of West Indians do not join voluntary associations either in Britain or the Caribbean. This is not surprising when one considers that the majority of West Indians would be placed in the working class both in the Caribbean and in Easton. They therefore follow the pattern of low voluntary association membership attributed to the working classes internationally.\(^{33}\) Certainly the white working class in Britain appear to have similar patterns of membership (or more accurately non-membership). Nevertheless, realising that voluntary association membership is likely to be a minority activity, we are primarily concerned with comparing the relative sizes of low levels of membership both in the West Indies and in Britain. On this basis it can be seen that the level of membership for West Indians in their home islands was significantly higher than their present levels of membership in Easton. Whereas, over a third of the sample belonged to some form of association in the West Indies, only 13% of respondents claimed membership of any association in Britain. This disparity becomes even more interesting when one considers that the age structure of the sample should favour a higher level of membership in Britain.

It has been recognised that the level of voluntary association membership is lower in younger age groups, for example below twenty

---

33. See Introduction, p. 16
years of age. Some of our sample would only have been children in the West Indies and this would have precluded them from joining a variety of associations. The total number of respondents likely to be eligible for membership is therefore greater in Easton. In addition, previous research indicates that children from lower status families are less likely to join youth groups than those from higher status families. This would further reduce the number of respondents claiming membership in this type of association in the Caribbean even though the age structure of the sample would tend to favour higher membership in youth groups.

When age is treated as an independent variable previous research has shown that the young and the old are less active in joining associations than those in 'middle' age groups. Hausknecht argues with respect to age and voluntary association membership:

'There is a steady rise in the number of members (of voluntary associations) to a peak at about 40 years of age, and from then on there is a decline, but it is not as steep as the rise in membership from the age of 20 to 40 and does not return to the same low point. It would seem, then, that as one advances towards middle age there is a tendency to shed one's memberships.'


35. Hausknechty, op. cit. p.34

36. Ibid., p. 33
In so far as the research mentioned above was not based on a West Indian sample, there are obvious difficulties in making cross-cultural comparisons. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that the majority of respondents in the present sample, falling as they do within the middle age ranges, are at an age in Britain when their level of voluntary association membership ought to be at its peak, provided, of course, that one is treating age as an independent variable in relation to levels of membership. It has already been shown that membership levels were higher in the Caribbean than in Britain for the majority of respondents, despite a younger age profile at that time. Therefore, it can be suggested that factors other than age are of importance in explaining this disparity. Some of these additional factors will be discussed in detail later.

Whilst it is not relevant to expand upon the reasons for low membership levels among West Indians in Britain at this point, it can be briefly noted that the comparison between membership figures for the West Indies and Britain would appear to detract from the argument that West Indians are 'non-joiners' as a matter of course. That is to say a pattern of non-joining might be seen as a cultural tendency among West Indians irrespective of their social or geographical location.

In addition to their actual membership of voluntary associations, respondents were asked about their attitudes towards joining local associations. When asked whether there were any associations in Easton which they would like to join, most West Indians (70 respondents) expressed little interest in seeking memberships of this kind. A further 10 respondents were undecided, but 28 West Indians (18 men

37. See Chap. 6
and 10 women) did indicate a wish to join an association in the locality. When asked if they had ever attempted to obtain membership, 23 respondents claimed to have belonged to a local association in the past or to have made enquiries about joining one. Reasons given for not wishing to join an association, or why memberships had relapsed, included lack of time because of work and family commitments, the view that very few associations catered for West Indian tastes in recreation and the prevalence of colour prejudice in local white associations. Many respondents, particularly women, mentioned that bringing up a family and being employed in a part or full-time job did not leave them any free time for associational activity. Respondents complained that many associations, recreational or otherwise, were unlike comparable associations in the Caribbean. Predominantly white associations in Easton were too formal and had a different social atmosphere. Furthermore, many respondents feared rejection if they did apply for membership, for example, of a local sports or social club, because of their colour.

It is important to note that most respondents had not attempted to apply for membership and hence beliefs about colour prejudice were not based upon direct experience of rejection in this particular area. Thus, common beliefs surrounding colour prejudice and discrimination held by West Indian groups appear to have influenced individual actions. One case of rejection could lead to a widespread belief in general patterns of discrimination against West Indians locally.

Apart from asking about membership in existing white or mixed associations, respondents were also questioned about the likelihood of their joining exclusively West Indian associations. Over half
the sample, 58%, expressed considerable interest and stated that they would certainly join such associations if they were established. This revealed an ignorance of West Indian associations which had already been formed in Easton. The distinctiveness of island divisions within West Indians largely explains this. Many of the smaller West Indian associations which tended to be exclusive to one island group were often unknown to West Indians from other island societies. Thus Jamaicans may not have heard about Barbudan or Kittician associations and so on. Complete lack of knowledge was uncommon but very few West Indians had acquired detailed information about associations other than those formed within their own island groupings. It was not unusual, however, for many West Indians to insist that they would not join associations managed by different island groups. For example, West Indian cricket clubs known to be composed of players drawn predominantly or exclusively from one island tended to be categorised with all-white clubs as being outside of those areas of recreation freely open to all West Indians.

It was interesting to note that many West Indians were active in a number of recreational outlets. When asked about a number of activities which they might have taken part in during the period of four weeks previous to being questioned, the following results were obtained:
Table 16

Attendance of West Indian respondents in recreational activities in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- the theatre or cinema</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a sports event</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a night club or discotheque</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a house party</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a political meeting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a dance or social</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a lecture or discussion group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance at any of the above</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures show that many West Indians attended a variety of social events. The most popular activities were dances, 'socials' and house parties. The cinema and sports events were also fairly regularly attended. Not unexpectedly, there was a marked lack of interest in political meetings, lectures or more formal discussion groups. It should be remembered in this respect that certain activities will be more frequent and more readily available to West Indians. Compared with most of the recreational activities listed, political meetings would be comparatively rare events unless respondents belonged to voluntary associations or political parties where this type of social interaction was a frequent occurrence.

Comparatively few West Indians, 21% of the sample, had attended none of the activities given within the specified period of time. When questioned on the regularity of attendance of the activities mentioned, 28% of the sample claimed that they often attended such activities. A larger group, 42% of all respondents, attended sometimes, whilst for 29% of the sample attendance was rare. It was noticeable that West Indian men tended to be far more active than
women when attendance figures were compared. This is partly explained by, for example, the amount of free time for West Indian men and women but their respective patterns of recreational activity in Easton tended to correspond closely to those described in the Caribbean. Therefore, this constituted another example of cultural norms prevalent in the West Indies being retained among West Indians in Britain.

Summarising the pattern of membership and participation in secondary associations, West Indians in Easton revealed a low level of interest and activity in permanent and semi-permanent associations, with the exception of religious worship. A higher proportion of respondents were active in more ephemeral recreational pursuits, the majority of which were organised by and for West Indians themselves. This applied particularly to dances and house parties. This suggests that much of the recreational life of West Indians in Easton takes place within social networks which are ethnically or racially specialised. These networks form a sub-cultural recreational system in the city. This points towards the existence of certain areas of social interaction outside of family and household relationships, which are exclusively West Indian. A further dimension of this exclusivity was examined by briefly studying patterns of friendship along inter- and intra-island lines.

Respondents were asked whether most of their West Indian friends came from their home island, other islands or equally from both. A majority of West Indians, 52% of the sample, indicated that most of their friends were from the same island as themselves. Just under

38. It is important to note that respondents were left to define what they perceived as a 'friendship relationship'. Thus, a 'friend' was subjectively defined by West Indians themselves, not externally defined by the researcher
a third of the sample, 32%, had a more mixed set of friends from a variety of islands but only 9% of our respondents claimed to have more friends from different islands than their own. Further questions were concerned with other aspects of West Indian friendship patterns, in particular with the variety of social situations in which West Indians interact and meet their friends and acquaintances. Table 17 summarises the answers given to this question:

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>No. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At their friends' home</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the pub</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At dances and parties</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In church</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around the shops</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above figures it can be seen that the majority of West Indians meet each other within their own homes or the homes of their friends, sometimes in the pub or at dances and less often at work. In addition, there are less frequent contacts in church or out shopping. Friendship patterns and recreational interests tend to confirm the proposition that many West Indians in Easton are primarily home-centred and familialistic. The general picture of social life among our respondents reveals a lack of interest, or lack of opportunity to develop interests, in activities outside of the immediate household. This seclusion is hardly surprising. It has already been demonstrated that many West Indians find the social climate in Easton, to say nothing of the weather, inhospitable. These external problems are compounded by the day-to-day rigours of
both husband and wife out to work, often on different shifts, the
difficulties of coping with fairly large families and in some
cases sub-standard housing conditions. Nevertheless, one should
remember the high level of recreational activity and the important
distinction between the recreational patterns of West Indian men
and women. The figures suggest that the latter bear the brunt of the
social problems just described.

The differences between recreational patterns in Britain and
the Caribbean rest on different work patterns and social relationships.
Furthermore, in Britain there is restricted access to many places
of entertainment, and there are limitations placed upon social
interaction by housing conditions. The urban setting in Easton is
a far cry from the sun-lit yard life of the West Indies. The huddle
round the fire in a damp English setting stands in stark contrast
to the freedom of movement in the Caribbean obviously relished by
many respondents. In short, inclement weather, limited places for
entertainment where one feels completely comfortable and welcomed,
plus the strictures of family and work commitments, tend to preclude
a high level of social interaction among many West Indians. There
is a marked tendency for West Indians to make their own entertainment
within their own homes or in recreational settings organised amongst
themselves. Family networks are generally viewed as more important
than friendship ones, although within many island communities friendship
networks are highly intimate. Whereas the Jamaicans are divided along
the lines of an urban or rural background in the home island, most
of the smaller island groupings in Easton are very close-knit.
Nevitians, Montserratians and Barbudans, to name only three examples,
commonly come from a small number of villages in the home island and
this produces communities of some intimacy in Britain.
Island affiliation is extremely influential in maintaining communal ties among West Indians. Thus 'close friends', those who are seen most frequently, whom one trusts with confidential information or relies upon for financial assistance are invariably fellow islanders. When situations become less intimate, kin and island affiliations become less important. Therefore, the wider and less intimate the social relationship the greater is the likelihood that island and kin affiliations will be less important in maintaining or furthering the relationship. A Barbadian may not bother about the island affiliations of his West Indian companions if he is involved in a casual conversation in a pub but in other situations their origins in the Caribbean will be important. If a West Indian wishes to borrow money, or if he is asked to lend some, kin and island affiliations will probably have some bearing on the transaction.

One cannot, of course, argue that social relationships between West Indians can be neatly summarised in a few lines. The social networks of family and friendship groups are exceedingly complex among West Indians and unravelling of their intricacies could easily form the basis for a separate research programme.

If there was considerable differentiation within intra- and inter-island groups of West Indians, this tendency was even more marked in relations between West Indians and other groups in Easton. Only 24% of the sample claimed to have any white friends with whom they exchanged home visits. Within this group, very few West Indians had several white friends and could claim close acquaintanceship with them. Many West Indians regretted that relationships with local whites were bounded by social barriers which prohibited all but superficial interaction. Acquaintanceship ended at the factory gates or the pub door and did not cross the threshold of one's home. Those respondents who did claim a number of white
friends were invariably living in higher status residential areas, had skilled occupations, or were active in associations which provided more opportunities for interaction across ethnic lines in more intimate social situations. The rare example of a West Indian with a professional job and a home in the suburbs, who had been completely accepted by his white neighbours is illustrative of the former group. Slightly more common were those West Indian activists who had developed friendships with whites through community relations work or similar activities. But both of these groups were exceptional; most West Indians restricted close friendships to other West Indians, whether by choice or otherwise.

During the follow-up interviews it became clear that ethnic and racial separation was even more entrenched between West Indians and Indians and Pakistanis. There were only three respondents claiming to have any regular acquaintanceship with Asians in Easton. The pattern which emerged was one of suspicion and hostility. Many West Indians resented the fact that Asians were "better organised", "kept themselves to themselves", "didn't try to mix with us because they look down on us", "were too intent on looking after their businesses to care for anyone". A few respondents saw the Asians as blacks in a similar social category to themselves but this was untypical of most respondents. Indeed, many of the comments from West Indians regarding neighbouring Asians were extremely similar to the views expressed by whites about West Indians! This had more than a touch of irony about it! Certainly it firmly belies the notion, widely believed by many whites in Easton, that the local black or coloured population is homogeneous or at least contains
many common ties. It was clear that the lines of conflict between the various ethnically or racially separated groups in Easton were not clearly drawn. It would be erroneous to speak of black and white dichotomies, or black and brown ones for that matter. What emerged clearly from the data drawn from the sample was the complexity of intra- and inter-group relations both within and between West Indian groups, between West Indians and Asians and between black and white. These complexities should be borne in mind when examining the material presented throughout the thesis.

In order to attempt to measure some of the attachments West Indians had maintained with the Caribbean since their arrival in Britain, respondents were asked a number of questions about visits to the West Indies and the maintenance of financial links with kin or friends in their home island. They were also questioned about their reading habits with respect to newspapers produced in the Caribbean or literature produced in Britain specifically designed for West Indians residing here.

39. It was exceedingly common for many whites in Easton, in conversation with the researcher, to talk of West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis under the common rubric of 'coloureds', 'blacks', 'immigrants' or less savoury terms. Letters in the local newspapers also indicated that many whites did not differentiate between the various ethnic and racial groups in Easton.

40. These newspapers included the Jamaica Gleaner, the Trinidad Guardian and the St. Kitts Union-Messenger

41. These publications included the national, West Indian Gazette and two local papers produced by the Jamaican Association and Black Power Group respectively, Contak and Blackchat. Both of the latter had a very restricted circulation and were only produced for a few months. See Chap. 3
Almost three quarters of the sample, 71% read West Indian newspapers sent out from the Caribbean. The following table shows the frequency of their readership:

Table 15

Frequency of readership of West Indian newspapers among respondents in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(22.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(35.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When available</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(10.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(5.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 108

It can be seen from the above figures that the majority of respondents who read newspapers from the West Indies did so fairly frequently, at least within the limits set by availability. In some cases, West Indians had taken out regular subscriptions with Caribbean newspapers but usually family or friends would send them on. West Indian newspapers could also be circulated at house parties or other gatherings of West Indians or simply passed around among family and friends in Easton. An additional source for West Indian men were the 'Barber shops' where the newspapers from the Caribbean were often available.

42. The 'barber shops' were regular meeting places for many West Indian men in Easton. These 'shops' would be a room in a private house which was used as a general meeting place where men could get a haircut, sit and play cards and talk. The 'shops' provided a part-time job for the householder who would have a regular occupation during the day. The 'barber shops' would be open in the early evening and would often continue into the early morning. They are similar to the 'rum shops' which are important foci for male interaction in the West Indies. For a description of the latter see Peter J. Wilson, Crab Antics, (New Haven, Yale U.P., 1973), pp. 166-168.
A large number of respondents, 64% of the sample, were sending money home to kin or friends in the home island. Most West Indians were reticent about disclosing the amounts of money involved or the regularity of payments. However, the general impression given pointed to relatively small sums being involved. Ten pounds a month was the highest figure mentioned but smaller amounts were more usual. The majority of respondents were sending money back to kin remaining in the home island, often parents, grandparents, a sister or sister-in-law who were caring or had cared for their children. Owing to the delicacy of this subject it was found almost impossible to acquire any concrete figures pertaining to the amounts of money involved in these 'transactions'. Similarly, no patterns of transaction along island lines could be discerned, for example, whether respondents from small islands were sending more than those from larger islands. Figures could not be obtained without endangering rapport with members of the sample. Nevertheless, it appeared that financial links were maintained between kin in the Caribbean and in Britain and that this was a common feature of West Indian migration and settlement.

Just over a third of the sample, 36%, had re-visited the Caribbean since settling in Britain. Usually, visits involved individuals rather than complete families. In a number of cases, husbands were unable to leave their employment for any length of time so re-visits by wives were more common. This is reflected in the

43. For a detailed account of financial transactions of this kind, see: Stuart B. Philipott, 'Remittance Obligations, Social Networks and Choice among Montserratian Migrants in Britain', Man, (N.S., Vol. 3, 1968), pp. 465-76. See also D. Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 221

44. This may appear to contradict an earlier statement which demonstrated that many West Indian women were in regular employment. (see p. 85). However, much of this work was on a casual basis, particularly in the hosiery industry. This means that many West Indian women had jobs which were flexible enough to allow periods away on holidays etc.
figures for re-visiting. Out of 39 respondents who had made a return visit to their home island, 24 were women. Very few respondents, hardly surprisingly, failed to express a wish to return to the Caribbean for a visit at some future date.

The frequency of newspaper reading, the levels of financial transaction between kin and the number of re-visits to the West Indies suggests that most West Indians maintained fairly close links with the Caribbean. Typically these links were concentrated on the home island, although newspaper readership demonstrated wider interests in Caribbean affairs. This was in spite of the fact that the majority of West Indians had lived in Britain for some years and ample time had elapsed for links with their Caribbean past to be somewhat 'stretched'. The maintenance of these connections with the Caribbean suggests that social changes in the West Indies directly influence the actions of West Indians in Britain. For example, events which reinforce island insularity in the Caribbean also tend to sharpen the lines separating West Indian island groups in Britain.

This continuation of bonds with the Caribbean may point towards a still remaining wish among West Indians eventually to return permanently to their home island but other factors would appear to deny this. Certainly it reflected the fact that, whilst most West Indians were now established in Easton and recognised that this settlement was likely to be prolonged if not permanent, they still desired to retain their interest in and identity with the Caribbean and maintain close links with family and friends who remained there.

45. See Chap. 1., p. 44
The final area of questioning for respondents was concerned with voting patterns. Again we were concerned with material pertaining not only to West Indians in Easton but also to their voting patterns in the Caribbean. However, there were innumerable difficulties presented in measuring the figures for voting in the West Indies. With such a variety of islands encompassing a number of different electoral requirements for 'local' and 'national' elections, the figures for voting in the Caribbean, given in Table 18 below, should only be seen as a very rough measure of actual voting patterns.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Voters</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last local election</td>
<td>19 (43.1)</td>
<td>10 (23.8)</td>
<td>25 (56.8)</td>
<td>32 (76.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last national election</td>
<td>31 (70.5)</td>
<td>21 (50.0)</td>
<td>13 (29.5)</td>
<td>21 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 44</td>
<td>N= 42</td>
<td>N= 38</td>
<td>N= 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, 86 respondents, 44 men and 42 women, claimed to have been eligible to vote by virtue of registration in their home islands. Table 18 shows that 29 respondents voted in the last local election in their island of origin whilst 52 claimed to have voted in elections at the national level. With all the difficulties surrounding these figures one cannot draw any firm conclusions. Suffice to say that the rate of voting in national elections was higher than in local elections which corresponds to the pattern in

46. These figures are based solely on respondents claims that they had voted at a particular time. There was no way of checking their eligibility without electoral registers from individual West Indian societies.
Britain. The voting figures for men were higher than for women but not dramatically so. Finally, both at local and national elections there was a not inconsiderable number of respondents voting.

The figures for voting in Britain are shown in Table 19, below:

| Table 19 |
| Numbers of West Indian respondents voting in Local and General Elections in Britain |
| Voters | Non-Voters |
| Male % | Female % | Male % | Female % |
| Last local election | 8 (16.6) | 4 (8.6) | 40 (83.3) | 42 (91.3) |
| Last General election | 19 (39.5) | 12 (26.9) | 29 (60.4) | 34 (74.2) |
| N= 48 | N= 46 | N= 69 | N= 76 |

Out of a total voting sample of 94\(^47\), only 12 respondents voted in the last local election in Easton which was held in 1969. The voting figure was higher for what, at the time of the research, was the last General Election which took place in June, 1970. Thirty one respondents turned out and voted on that occasion. Thus, just under a third of the voting sample turned out for the last General Election but only 12.6% of eligible respondents voted at the local level. This represents a high figure for voting in the General Election compared with findings in previous research. However, it was interesting to note that when asked whether they would vote in the next election, 83% of the total sample stated that they would not.

---

\(^{47}\) This figure represents the total number of respondents eligible to vote at the elections mentioned. Figures were checked in relation to the electoral registers for Easton. The number of West Indians on these registers is extremely high and confirms the residential stability of the West Indian population in Easton.
This was often explained by the disillusionment which many West Indians expressed about the intensification of immigration control and the lack of success of the Race Relations Act. The latter piece of legislation was introduced in 1968 and was seen by many West Indians as a possible avenue for their rights to be acknowledged. It also tended to counteract the 1968 Immigration Act which was viewed by West Indians as highly punitive. During the period of research there were rumours about a forthcoming Immigration Act being passed in 1971 of even further severity and this certainly influenced a great many respondents.\(^48\)

A majority of West Indians appeared to take a great interest in national politics, particularly those area of race relation legislation which directly affected them. Local issues were less prominent among their interests but there was widespread concern for educational and housing policies in Easton. When asked about party allegiances it was apparent that most West Indians were Labour Party supporters and had voted this way in the previous General Election.\(^49\) However, very few West Indians attested that they had voted because of any particular party allegiance. In most cases, voting was seen as

\(^48\) A new, highly restrictive, Immigration Act was passed in 1971. It was not well received by West Indians in Britain because it placed very severe restrictions on any further migration from Caribbean.

\(^49\) The number of West Indians voting for the Labour Party was partly due to the Conservatives being unpopular at the time of the 1970 General Election because of recent Immigration legislation. In addition, political parties in the West Indies which have to rely on a largely working class vote, are invariably 'labour' parties. Therefore many West Indians in Britain tend to see the British Labour Party as more akin to those parties they voted for in the Caribbean.
a right to be expressed or a responsibility to be carried out.

When asked whether any of the major political parties were particularly favourable towards West Indians, it soon became apparent that very few respondents thought that any political party directly represented them. Political parties were seen in much the same way as trade unions had been. The former were a necessary and important part of one's life situation but they were exclusively white organisations which did not represent West Indians in any direct sense. Thus, the act of joining a trade union or a political party plus the exercise of one's voting rights was a matter of conforming to local mores or a token indication of one's views.

There was hardly any support for the idea that West Indians could use voting procedures to influence local or national policies. Only 14 respondents, 9 men and 5 women, held converse opinions and actively promoted the policy of direct West Indian participation in party politics both at local and national level.

West Indian perceptions of party politics and the legislative process are extremely important when considering the nature of West Indian political association in Easton. The revelation that the majority of respondents felt separated from the political process and unrepresented by any major party within it, distinguishes them to a considerable extent from the white working class. It would appear that at least some sections of the latter do see political parties

50. This view of political suffrage also accords with West Indian working class attitudes to voting in the Caribbean. It stems from the historical pattern of restricted suffrage in the West Indies and therefore those few working class individuals given the vote viewed it as a great privilege which should be exercised. Universal suffrage is only applicable to the recent political history of the West Indies, certainly post-Second World War. See Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 63
as representing them. Furthermore, significant sections of the white working class see trade unions as suitable vehicles for the expression of their political views either in opposition to a political party or in support of it. If considerable numbers of West Indians in Britain consider themselves unrepresented in the party system or the trade union movement it would point towards the desirability for West Indians to form their own political associations or at least some kind of local organisation which would assist in changing their present life situation.

The remainder of this thesis will seek to examine the patterns of membership and participation of West Indians in a variety of voluntary associations in Easton. In addition certain institutions, for example the family, will be studied in more depth in order to ascertain some of the possible links between them and political association. More immediately, the following chapter will focus on those voluntary associations which have been established in Easton by the various island groups of West Indians in the city.

51. See Chaps. 4 and 5
Chapter Three

West Indian Voluntary Associations in Easton

In the previous chapter, a detailed analysis was undertaken of date drawn from a sample of West Indian respondents who reside in Easton. It was shown that comparatively few West Indians were members of local voluntary associations, particularly those with non-recreational functions. However, many West Indians claimed to have a number of recreational interests and several respondents took an active part in various forms of entertainment. The present chapter will be concerned with an appraisal of those voluntary associations, both recreational and non-recreational, which West Indians had established since their earliest days of settlement in Easton. However, the main emphasis of the chapter will be on those associations which existed during the period of field-work carried out by the researcher during 1972 and 1973.

It has been established that very few West Indians, or any other coloured immigrants for that matter, were resident in Easton directly after the Second World War. The few exceptions were those West Indian ex-servicemen who settled in the locality after being demobbed from the R.A.F. They found suspicion but little antipathy in the city, probably because they were in such small numbers, and members of the host community did not see them as a 'threat'. "L" relates his first impressions of this period:

"When I came to Easton in '49 I must have been the only black face in the whole place. I had joined the RAF from Jamaica and decided to stay in Britain after I was demobbed. I had a mate in the forces who lived in Easton and he suggested I moved up....."

1. See p. 72
I lived in London after leaving the forces you see ......
He said the job situation was pretty good and I could stay
with him and his wife until I found a place of my own. I
married a local girl quite soon after that and we didn't
really encounter any problems apart from curiosity. There
were one or two other Jamaicans in the town by that time,
most of them had been in the services. We used to get
together for a few drinks and talk about back home. We
formed a sort of small social club which met in the ..... 
church hall back rooms .... mind you they stopped us using
them fairly soon after because one or two local people had
complained. But things were very quiet then and most
people were O.K. It was really a case of adjusting to a new
place and surroundings. We were sort of explorers in many
ways because we had no friends or relations in the place.
You had to make your own way and find your own social life.
It wasn't so difficult to make a life later on when you
could depend on a few contacts in this country. Looking
back I often felt very lonely and a bit overawed by
everything but it was good experience. I haven't lost
anything by it."

These sorts of experiences were shared by the small group of
Jamaican artisans who first came to Easton. At the group level,
they did not form a very significant part of the local community.
As individuals, they encountered some difficulties but as one can
see from their own words, it was debatable whether such problems
were due to local prejudice and mistrust or their own isolation in
the earliest years of settlement in the city.

"J" also related his early experiences to the researcher.
He was another Jamaican who had lived in Easton for nearly two
decades. He had established himself as a respected individual in
the local Jamaican community and also in the eyes of many other local
West Indians of his generation. Similarly, he had become accepted
in the host community in his role as headmaster of a junior school in
Lowdale. J. said:

"It's very disheartening in many ways to look back on one's
arrival in the town and see how certain features of our
life situation have deteriorated. I am fortunate in that
my position and my roots in the community have allowed a fair
degree of freedom in how I go about my daily business. I
have many old friends from many nationalities and diverse
ways of life who date back to our first arrival in Easton."
We had a restricted but enjoyable existence in those days. The social club was merely a group of friends with common interests. It gave us a common bond and the chance to develop certain interests like cricket for example. We all used to play for local clubs, the only time we were a West Indian side was when a team was made up to play the local police force in a friendly. One of my earliest friends was in the force and he organised the whole thing. There was no sort of common purpose in trying to solve the difficulties we had because of our colour or the fact that we were Jamaican. In the early days after the war the Poles and other communities used to get all the stick."

By the middle of the 1950's, more and more West Indians had come to settle in Easton and the forms of association among them changed accordingly. Attempts were made to provide social facilities not found in the locality, for example, partèje and dances in the 'West Indian style'. One or two cricket clubs were formed, not always on island lines, and gradually the need for some form of local West Indian organisation became apparent. In 1957, a 'Sports and Social Club' was established by four ex-servicemen who were among the earliest West Indian settlers in Easton. All were Jamaicans. Initially, this club brought together members from different islands and different periods of settlement. The Club was purely recreational and was primarily concerned with providing facilities for cricket, boxing and weightlifting. Local halls and the back rooms in pubs were the venues for their meetings and training sessions.

The Club remained in existence until 1966 in a loose form of association which always remained centred on the original founders of the group. By this time, the West Indian settlement had almost reached its present proportions and formed a recognised minority in the city. The problems which the Club encountered in having to change their premises, and other difficulties, perhaps demonstrated
that relationships between the West Indians and the host community at this time were somewhat conflictual even if the general atmosphere was not one of open hostility. Many of the changes in the Sports and Social Club in the late 1960's were a reflection of changes in the national situation, where the difficulties of coloured immigrants had prompted the establishment of a multi-racial organisation formed to represent the interests of coloured minorities in Britain. The Campaign Against Racial Discrimination\textsuperscript{2} was born in 1964 and by 1966 it was moving towards a policy of directly encouraging 'grass-roots' activity among coloured minorities, particularly those settled in the provinces.

This policy of C.A.R.D. gradually filtered through to Easton and certain members of the Sports and Social Club were prompted by it to seek changes in the aims of their association. A serious split developed between those members of the Club who wanted it to take a more political stance in the community in accordance with the aims of C.A.R.D. and those members (a large majority) who wished to retain it as a purely recreational association. These general policy disagreements and the serious rifts between members which they produced led to the eventual demise of the Club and finally to its complete disbandment. Its demise was compounded by claims of misappropriation of funds on the part of certain members and other personal issues which have influenced the pattern of West Indian associations in Easton until the present day. By the end of 1966, the Sports and Social Club had become a small cricket club for the

\textsuperscript{2} For a detailed analysis of the formation and eventual demise of C.A.R.D. see Banton, \textit{Racial Minorities}, \textit{op. cit.} and Heinemann, \textit{op. cit.}
few members who still remained. The acrimony displayed in its break-up prevented the formation of new associations for some considerable time and certainly affected more recent attempts to form communal\textsuperscript{3} West Indian associations in the city.

The associations which existed within the West Indian settlement during the period of field-work had all been formed since 1969 and they all in some ways reflected the pattern of association established earlier. They also included many West Indians who had been active in the Sports and Social Club. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with a detailed examination of these associations. They can all be loosely defined as formal voluntary associations because they all had elected officials and committees. In addition, most of them followed recognised formal procedures in the day-to-day running of their associations with, for example, committee meetings, formal agendas and so forth. Furthermore, most of the associations had formally stated functions and goals, some of which were included in written constitutions. These associations can, therefore, be distinguished in some ways from the more informal, spontaneous groupings which form in West Indian communities.

The Jamaican Welfare Association

The Jamaican Welfare Association (J.W.A.) was established in 1969 by a nucleus of members who had been active in the Sports and Social Club. In the Autumn of 1969, the Jamaican Deputy High Commissioner visited the West Indian Settlement in Easton to view local conditions

\textsuperscript{3} Communal associations were defined as those West Indian associations which represented the whole settlement rather than particular West Indian groupings, for example, island communities, within the West Indian settlement in Easton.
and to suggest possible ways of forming local associations. The meeting took place in a local school and was attended by most of the Jamaican community along with a number of other West Indians. During this meeting, a group of West Indians, preponderantly Jamaican, agreed to form a new association. The Jamaican High Commission agreed to finance the group provided it came under the auspices of a national Jamaican organisation. This stipulation led to the inclusion of the word 'Jamaican' in the title of the newly formed association, a factor which produced severe difficulties in forming a general base of support among all West Indians in the city. Whilst the group has a largely Jamaican membership and almost exclusively Jamaican leadership, most members claim that the objectives of the J.W.A. are designed for any West Indian community in the locality. Indeed, many members point to the fact that English and West African individuals are, or have been, members of the group and they have taken an active part in their proceedings. The membership of the J.W.A. was between fifty and sixty members, at the time of the research\(^4\), although a nucleus of not more than ten members attends to most of the association's affairs. The association has a written constitution and formal elective procedures for officials. The day to day business is attended to by an Executive Committee of fifteen members (attendances did not reflect this number) and various sub-committees. Meetings take place in the homes of Executive members and in a room adjacent to a local adventure playground.

---

4. These figures were almost certainly highly exaggerated because membership figures in all the West Indian associations described in this chapter are very approximate because accurate records were seldom maintained. Certainly, these memberships bore little or no relationship to the numbers of West Indians who actually attended or took an active part in associational activities.
The aims and objectives of the J.W.A. as put forward in the constitution are as follows:

(a) The Purpose of the Group is to promote and encourage efficient and effective liaison between all agencies, organisations and bodies statutory and voluntary, charitable or otherwise, established for or engaged upon activities for the benefit and care of the community as a whole or any particular section thereof operating within the City of Easton and its environs.

(b) In furtherance of the above purposes the Group may:

(i) Establish or secure the establishment of a social and cultural centre for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes and social events and for the provision of an advisory centre for the community.

(ii) Arrange for the writing, printing, publishing, issuing and distribution of any reports, periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or other documents.

(iii) To encourage and promote an understanding of varying West Indian cultures.

(iv) To seek to promote Educational Development within the community.

(v) Make arrangements to promote the fullest participation in the work of the Group with persons and organisations with common aims and objectives.

This extract from the constitution shows that, formally, the main focus of the J.W.A. is to act as a support organisation for all West Indians in the City and, in particular, to raise funds for the establishment of a permanent Community Centre. The latter is intended for use in promoting the general aims of the association as described above. The main methods of fund raising used by the J.W.A. are a regular programme of dances and "socials" which are usually well attended, although they meet with certain problems which arise from cultural norms in the West Indies.

Many West Indians are used to attending dances and parties which start late in the evening and go on to the early hours of the following
morning. The J.W.A. find that the licencing laws in Easton and the regulations for hiring rooms and dance halls prohibit these late hours. Consequently, most dances are held from the early evening until midnight. This can lead to difficulties. As the current Social Secretary of the J.W.A. put it:

"We have a lot of trouble with times and bar facilities and so on. This has encouraged private set-ups and commercial house parties. It's always been difficult to hire proper rooms at a reasonable price for our socials. Many places won't have us and those that will often don't provide the facilities we want. Back home you wait until say around ten o'clock when it's cool and set up a bar and have your party or dance until everyone wants to go home. Obviously we've got restrictions over here so we have to start a dance at say seven-thirty and end it at midnight. You find everyone starts arriving at nine, the place warms up by eleven and then we have to close up only a short time after. We had a lot of trouble with people complaining about the times and early bar closures but they have to get used to it. Mind you, it has encouraged the commercial parties set-up. We can't get a proper hall so people are forced to use private houses and then the neighbours complain about the noise, it's a vicious circle. If we had our own club it would be O.K."

Despite these difficulties, the J.W.A. does hold regular dances, many of which are quite extensive affairs. Initially dances were of a fairly modest kind and were held, for example, in small church halls in the locality. More recently, these activities have become more ambitious and some large public halls have been booked for dances, particularly for special occasions. The Jamaican Independence Day dance in August is always the biggest event of the year for the J.W.A. Such events usually call for a substantial outlay of funds, (very few dances were said to be very profitable) often in the region of at least several hundreds of pounds, but these costs are usually met because "social" activities of this kind are very popular among the West Indians in the city. In fact, they are the only forms of large-scale entertainment specifically provided for West Indians in Easton. Comparable leisure outlets, that is to
say, leisure outlets which fit into typically West Indian patterns of leisure sociability, were not provided by the host community.

Very few of the West Indian associations in Easton combine to arrange dances or other activities and the J.W.A. is no exception. However, there are a few occasions when the J.W.A. and another local West Indian association, the British-West Indian Club, did co-operate with one another. One such occasion was when the local Community Relations Commission asked both associations to arrange a 'Caribbean evening' as part of a 'Community Relations Week' in Easton. This event consisted of an exhibition of Caribbean crafts, a buffet of Caribbean foods from a number of islands and a concert of music and dance. Many members of the J.W.A. expressed delight that on this occasion more than the customary handful of regular activists were able to come forward and participate. However, other projects met with very different reactions from the West Indian settlement.

Some of the J.W.A. committee members complain that many West Indians in Easton avail themselves of the facilities provided by the association but most of them refuse to take an active part in the running of these projects. Hence, a member of the J.W.A. Executive grumbled:

"It's pretty hard trying to put on anything round here, you put in your time for them and when its all set up they turn out but you try getting anybody to help you before they've tasted the goods."

The Social Secretary remarked in a similar vein:

"I remember we put on a coach trip to .... last year for the kids and their parents. We had a good coach load and it was a really good day but the parents treated it as a chance to get their kids off their hands for a day, hardly any parents came. That's O.K. but it wouldn't have hurt to help us out with the arrangements instead of taking things for granted."
The emphasis on recreational events is a constant source of irritation to some of the younger members of the J.W.A. who want the association to have a more positive political role. One or two of these members are formally in a black militant group in the city and they tend to push for less 'social' activities.

The role that the J.W.A. should play in relation with other associations in Easton, whether West Indian, Asian or local white organisations, is a highly controversial area which provokes considerable disagreement between J.W.A. members. However, there are very few 'militants' in the group. The majority of committee members are first generation Jamaicans who have resided in Easton for some years. They have achieved a better standard of living than many of the West Indian settlement in the city. This is reflected in their occupational and residential backgrounds. The main members of the Executive Committee have the following occupations:

- Chairman: Tool Maker
- Vice-Chairman: Welder
- Secretary: Design Engineer
- Assistant Secretary: Trainee Youth Worker
- Treasurer: Accountant
- Social Secretary: Machinist

In addition to the above, the committee also contains a number of 'general' members with no officially designated specialised roles to perform. These include a section leader in a local tyre factory, a bus driver, the headmaster of a local Junior school, a clerk/typist and one or two nurses. There are three women on the Executive but none of them hold office on the main committee. Two of them, however, are Minutes Secretaries for sub-committees set up to deal with special problems, for example, finance and 'social' activities.
The occupational backgrounds of the major officials in the J.W.A. demonstrate a tendency for skilled and professional people to predominate in voluntary association activity. That is not surprising. However, the majority of committee members do not differ occupationally from large numbers of the West Indian settlement who do not participate in any forms of association. This is also borne out by the occupational background of the sample which shows a significant number of men in skilled manual work and also several women. Therefore, the 'leadership' of the J.W.A., corresponds to the occupational background of a sizeable number of upwardly mobile skilled workers within the West Indian settlement in Easton but the majority of J.W.A. members are not significantly different occupationally from the majority of West Indians in the city.

A similar pattern was found in the residential backgrounds of the J.W.A. officials. A majority of the members are living on the periphery or in some cases well away from Lowdale but again this was no means a consistent trend. Several members live in the middle of the 'twilight area' in small, terraced housing, others occupy council housing in the same area. Only four members out of a committee of fifteen live well away from Lowdale in 'better' residential suburbs. All of the latter have lived in Easton for over fifteen years and were part of the general trend of West Indian dispersal to areas adjacent to the central zone or to new housing estates in the suburbs. The residential patterns of committee members demonstrate that they have a standard of housing commensurate with their occupational level. However, the housing patterns of the majority of J.W.A. members do not differ significantly from those of the majority of West Indians in Easton.
The residential pattern of J.W.A. committee members is also consistent with their period of residence in the city. In the main the committee is composed of individuals who have lived in the area for a considerable number of years and have thus benefited from the early pattern of settlement in Easton when West Indians were able to acquire houses and jobs more easily than more recent arrivals. Length of residence was also influential in shaping the attitudes of the J.W.A. members towards the host community and their fellow West Indians. The majority of members could remember a time when, with a much smaller number of West Indians in the city, black/white relationships had been more harmonious, not necessarily because the level of hostility towards them was low but mainly because West Indians were far less visible as a group at that time and they lived away from the main centres of the white population. Factors such as these went hand in hand with a high degree of deference towards the host community in the sense that most J.W.A. members recognised that they were 'immigrants' and therefore expected an unequal slice of the cake in terms of access to local resources. As one member, a Jamaican woman who has lived in Easton for sixteen years, put it:

"I can understand many white people not accepting us on equal terms. You keep reading about West Indians arriving in this country and expecting the streets to be paved with gold and it's true I did myself up to a point. But we were being unrealistic. A man or woman likes to hang on to what he sees as his own and that's right I suppose, but my sons who were educated here in Easton won't see it that way because they're really British and expect to get what every other kid in school wants. So they don't overlook a lot of things. Maybe we are wrong in being quiet and just wanting a few necessities out of life but to be anything else is to invite trouble and frustration."

This view is common to many members of the J.W.A. and explains their reputation as a 'moderate' organisation. The label 'moderate' is equated with the advocacy of non-violent forms of protest against
any observed forms of discrimination against West Indians and also
with a non-separatist outlook with regard to co-operating with and
using white activists. Only two members of the Executive, the
Social Secretary and the Secretary, objected to the use of white
participants in the association and wanted little to do with them.
The vast majority of J.W.A. members are 'moderates' who tend to take
the line that all ethnic or racial groups should be subsumed under
one group, even if West Indian needs were primary. Thus, they are
prepared to include some local whites and two Africans in their
membership. The 'militants' take an opposing view and tend to see
the association as having a specialised role within the West Indian
settlement and complain that white activists are not to be trusted.
They claim that 'white liberals' tend to dominate or 'take-over'
black organisations, so they should be excluded. However, it is
noticeable that both 'militants' and 'moderates' are in almost total
agreement about the exclusion of Asians who are generally seen as
being more than capable of looking after themselves. The following
quotes give an impression of the way in which different J.W.A.
activists see their role in Easton. The Chairman expressed the
viewpoint of an overwhelming majority of members when he said:

"I don't really see the role of the J.W.A. as a political
one, at least in any open sense. West Indians get very
suspicious of the word 'politics'. They also fear
anything to do with it in many ways. They often see
politics as a means for someone to make a little money
or for personal gain of some description and in some
respects thinking of what used to happen back home
particularly in the past (in Jamaica) maybe this isn't
too far from the truth, but its very demoralising for us
because when you ask someone to join they often say what's
in it for me or what are you getting out of it? We want
to do things on our own so we haven't any English members
on the committee but we do have white members. I see
the role of the J.W.A. as representing all the local
community. If we want help we should go for it whoever
that person might be, but mainly we need to help the West
Indians because they're getting left out in Easton and
we're the least well-equipped to help ourselves."
A slightly more 'militant' line was expressed by the Secretary:

"West Indians have got to learn to look after their own interests. I don't mind getting assistance from any man, whatever his colour but its got to be on our terms. You ask someone to help you out and sooner or later they are dictating the show. We used to get this with white radicals like students and that. Some of them were really good but others only wanted to help if they could run the whole show. Anyway a lot of West Indians, particularly the kids, don't want a mixed set-up anymore; they want to do their own thing. So if we get lots of whites on the committee we destroy our chances with them for any support."

It can be seen in the following quote from the Social Secretary that attitudes towards local Asian groups, although guarded, are less amicable:

"I know one or two Asians and they are O.K. but most of them look after their own and look down on West Indians. Maybe its our colour or our background in the old days but they just don't want to know. They stick together and organise themselves much better than we do. It's their religion you know, it binds them. West Indians want to go their own way and they mistrust one another too much. Its like we are two different sorts of people; they keep to themselves as a group and want to keep separate from anyone else. The West Indians want to mix in but there have been too many disappointments and for some strange reason which I can't explain, most of them are not prepared to come together as a community and do the sort of things we have in our minds."

During the period of research, it was noticeable that these separate viewpoints often became mixed and it was apparent that most members of the J.W.A. are highly ambivalent about most issues. This ambivalence is particularly noticeable during committee or general meetings. At most meetings, when certain policies are being discussed, particular individuals are able to control the meeting through being more forceful or entirely negative to the proceedings. This tends to exasperate the other members who complain that these meetings become nothing more than wrangles. Such overt clashes are rare but they sometimes produce considerable animosity between individuals and in some cases members actually
leave because of these conflicts. They are more often centred on the role of particular committee members in the association rather than on group policies generally. One woman who had been on the committee, but has since resigned, is a case in point. She reacted to some of these personal animosities by stating that:

"I still remain an ordinary member of the group and I think they are doing a useful service but I left because one or two people wanted to run it on their own. They didn't want ordinary members to have a say and went off with plans which the group wasn't consulted about. I think things are a little better now but I wasn't going to stay and be ignored."

The above statement is perhaps not representative of many members of the J.W.A. but it does amplify some of the inner conflicts within the association.

One of the general policies of the J.W.A. is actively to encourage the establishment of certain facilities to assist West Indian children and adolescents in Easton. This involved the setting up of a youth club in a local school and assisting with the running of an adventure playground which had recently been established in Lowdale by a number of local action groups. The J.W.A. also tried to organise films, talks and discussion groups with an emphasis on extra education for local West Indian school children. A 'black studies' programme had been outlined but these sorts of plans seemed to be rather perfunctory and had not come anywhere near fruition by the end of the research period.

The desire to provide a community centre for the West Indian settlement in the city was prompted by the realisation among J.W.A. members that all other major ethnic groups in the city had provided themselves with this kind of facility. Many members bemoaned the fact that West Indians in Easton seemed quite incapable of organising
themselves to an extent where this type of project could be a viable proposition. Leading members of the J.WA. stressed, once again, that most West Indians would wait until such a facility had been provided for them and then they would participate.

The J.W.A. had explored a number of possibilities for buildings and land which could be used for this purpose but the expense had proved prohibitive. The task of establishing a community centre dominated the aims and objectives of the association and if the minutes pertaining to this objective are examined it can be seen that the general aims of the group are centred on this project. The aims and objectives of the establishment of a 'West Indian Social and Cultural Centre' are as follows:

1. To promote an understanding of varying west Indian island cultures.

2. As an information centre on West Indian events - Exhibitions, Library and Reading Room.

3. Educational Development.


5. Social Centre for the showing of films and the holding of Socials and Party Type activities. It is also envisaged that there will be a licensed bar on the premises.

6. To be used by anyone wishing to gain an understanding of West Indian cultures.

It can be seen that the general aims and objectives of the J.W.A. are provided within the above aims of the establishment of a community centre. Furthermore, the role of the centre is to promote relations between various groups rather than to act as a separatist institution. However, the difficulties in the way of achieving this goal are considerable. The J.W.A. had approached the local Borough Council for premises or a financial loan but had met with little success, for reasons which had more than their share of irony. The
Secretary explained the situation, thus:

"We approached the Council and asked them for assistance either in the form of some financial help or a building of some kind. They told us that we shouldn't try and build a community centre as two local council estates had them already. We said that they didn't provide the sort of entertainment that we wanted and anyway they didn't make us very welcome in those places. Then we suggested we build a specialised building just for West Indians as a club. They said this might be alright but they couldn't provide funds for a building which was to be set-up by just one group of West Indians, it had to be a combined project. They also said it would be rather awkward giving us some money for such a building when no other group in the city had had some money for the same thing. We have given up trying in that direction and will try and do things on our own but we think it will cost about £50,000 for a building and that's an awful lot of money to raise by dances and socials."

These negotiations with the Borough Council demonstrate some of the difficulties of the J.W.A. and other West Indian associations in the city, in a somewhat ironic fashion. It appeared quite plausible for the Council to deny the J.W.A. funds on the grounds that no other ethnic group in the city had required such assistance but it also demonstrated that the Council were either unaware of the island distinctions and other lines of conflict which prevented West Indians from forming 'representative' communal groups, or that they chose to ignore these difficulties. The latter appeared more likely to the J.W.A., because an additional reason given by the Council for refusing funds was the argument that the J.W.A. was not representative of all West Indians in the city (a correct assumption) and hence could not claim to be a 'community' group. The Council stipulated that funds could only be advanced if the proposed club was a 'West Indian' rather than a Jamaican one and, furthermore, if the club was run jointly by all island communities in the city. The likelihood of this degree of co-operation among the various island communities in Easton was minimal during the period of field-work and appears
unlikely in the future. Certainly the J.W.A. abandoned their application to the Council on the grounds that they could see no way in which this stipulation could be met in the near future. The J.W.A. freely accepted that they were unrepresentative of all West Indians in the city but their members argued that island affiliations were one of the very few solidaristic bases from which some form of association could be established.

The final irony was that the J.W.A. was the only West Indian association in Easton which was represented on the local Community Relations Council. Whereas the Borough Council recognised the unrepresentativeness of the J.W.A. in the West Indian settlement, the local C.R.C. had included them as representative delegates for the West Indian 'community' as a whole. The C.R.C. was aware that the J.W.A. was primarily a Jamaican group but it considered that the policies advocated by the latter were designed for all West Indians. The Borough Council were not prepared to accept this. It can be seen that the ramifications of this particular issue are illustrative of some of the problems surrounding West Indian communal association in the city.

A further activity of the J.W.A. was the establishment of a local 'West Indian' newspaper which could be used as a form of communication among West Indians throughout the city. One of the members of the Executive had worked on the local city newspaper and was able to use certain contacts and his relevant experience in setting up a project of this nature. A previous colleague on the same paper was also available to advise on the technical details of layout and so forth. An editorial staff was formed, comprising several West Indians and white assistants. The paper was produced for five months and then it was abandoned.
The publication was admirable in many ways for it provided a vehicle for publicising many events which concerned West Indians both within the city and elsewhere. It enabled local West Indians to participate in a general exchange of ideas and opinions. Furthermore, the J.W.A. was able to assist other groups by making known their activities and could also advise other West Indians about certain problems which they might encounter in their daily lives. Thus, a typical edition might include a detailed list of forthcoming 'social' events plus a feature of an individual's legal rights if stopped and questioned by the police. Scanning through the pages one came across a variety of local news, for example, articles about a local Antiguan woman who was having difficulty getting the relevant documents to bring her son across to Britain. A local Barbadian woman who had won a cookery competition was also featured, together with a review of a recent book on race relations. The headmaster of a secondary school in Lowdale recounted how a Dominican boy had won a place at Cambridge University. The sports news was particularly extensive; cricket, football, boxing, and the local dominoes team were all covered.

The advertisements were all written with West Indian needs in mind. Cheap holiday flights to the Caribbean, West Indian dances in Easton and neighbouring cities, were typical examples. Apart from those pertaining to a local finance broker, a furniture warehouse and a local builder, all the adverts were concerned with West Indian entertainment, food and records etc. The newspaper was a mixture of the type of material which would be associated with any local newspaper, but the contents were illustrative of many facets of the daily lives of local West Indians which many members of the host community would be unaware of. The style of West Indian entertainment is part of a culture which is distinctive from that of the indigenous
white population, a culture which is only expressed through facilities supplied mainly by members of the West Indian communities themselves. Thus, the paper provided a link between the West Indian settlement and those activities which were arranged to meet the needs of the subculture.

Nevertheless, after only five monthly editions the paper was officially suspended by the J.W.A. for what were said to be 'staffing problems'. However, many members suggested other, more unofficial reasons for its demise. There was the suggestion that the editorial staff had not consulted the Executive Committee and that there had been certain anomalies in the financing of the paper. There were other members who argued that the financial committee had disagreed with some of the content of certain editions. One article in particular which criticised the local police force met with considerable hostility from some members of the Executive. An interesting feature of the closure was the apparent lack of publicity given to the newspaper. Respondents were asked if they had ever read the publication and very few had even seen it. It was noticeable that most of the respondents who had read the paper were Jamaicans. Hence, the distribution of the newspaper may have been so limited that this became an additional reason for its failure. Certainly, other activists in associations which were formed by different island communities attributed the demise of the J.W.A. newspaper to its island exclusivity, at least as far as circulation was concerned.

The J.W.A. was established by a few individuals who can be seen as representative of the small number of activists who appear recurrently in most activities organised within the West Indian settlement in Easton. One person in particular was extremely active within the J.W.A. in its earliest period of formation and
openly stressed that he saw himself as the 'dynamo of the group'.

Those individuals who adopted this kind of role in West Indian associations tended to be seen as 'getting above their station' by other West Indians who do not participate in associational activities. Whilst there appears to be little overt hostility towards such individuals, many West Indians consider that activists only take part in voluntary associations in order to acquire some degree of personal acclaim and thus infer that membership of an association is a means towards obtaining personal rewards or a form of status seeking.

The activists in the J.W.A. fully recognised that this was their image and sometimes confided to the researcher that they were often ambivalent about whether they did act in terms of ego gratification or for more altruistic motives. An Executive member of the J.W.A. admitted that:

"If you join a group you set yourself up as a target for all manner of abuse and suspicions. There is so much mistrust particularly about money that it gets really demoralising. You spend nights on committee meetings and running around after people who often don't want to know and you get little thanks. They just turn around and say, 'what you gettin' out of it, man?""

The Treasurer of the J.W.A. confirmed some of the problems of holding office in an association:

"Back home you hear all about so and so walking off with the funds, or this chap has set up a group just to make money out of it. It happens over here all the time. There was this Antiguan who started a group and said it was a charity for some association back home and he ran dances every Saturday night for a few weeks. Then he just drifted away and the next we heard of him he had just bought a posh house in ...... No one even sniffed that money in Antigua. You get these things going on and every group is under suspicion. I'm in a particularly awkward position as Treasurer. You should hear some of the things I'm accused of!"

The Chairman of the J.W.A. explained why he carried on with the association, in the following terms:
"I'm never really sure why I do it. It's taking plenty of my time and we can see what we want but getting it is another matter. You get so down seeing support dwindling but I have some conviction that what we are doing is worthwhile. That's all that keeps me doing things. Maybe I just like to be seen trying even if we get little thanks or recognition."

It is important to recognise that, although the question of ego gratification versus altruism is important, the beliefs held by members of the West Indian settlement about the motives for the activism of particular individuals are the crucial factor. Irrespective of the latters' self-evaluation of their motivations, considerable numbers of West Indians who are non-participants, equate association membership with self-gratification. The mere existence of these beliefs within West Indian communities in the city are sufficient to form and maintain gossip channels which dissuade many individuals from allying themselves with the J.W.A. or any other association for that matter. These gossip channels promote individual and group stereotypes which influence patterns of participation within the West Indian settlement. It is freely acknowledged within the latter that membership of a local voluntary association may be viewed as an attempt on the part of the participant to gain status recognition within his own kinship network of circle of friends, his island community, or within the host community.

Island divisions are very important in this connection and the J.W.A. suffered accordingly. Thus, irrespective of the original motives of J.W.A. members, their association is primarily recognised as a Jamaican group within the West Indian settlement in Easton. Therefore, many West Indians commonly deduce that Jamaican interests transcend those of West Indians in general within the association.

5. For a discussion of the links between voluntary association membership and status in the West Indian settlement, see p. 235
Certainly, it appears undesirable in retrospect for the J.W.A. to have included the island affiliation in its title and in the publication which they produced.

Many West Indians in Easton told the researcher that they believed that the J.W.A. was definitely a Jamaican group and they therefore had no intention of joining if they came from another island. This had the effect that the dances and socials organised by the J.W.A. were seen as an amenity provided for personal profit in the same way as any other commercial undertaking. Such activities were supported by West Indians in this light but many refused to buy the J.W.A. publication because they believed it to be a propaganda vehicle for local Jamaicans. The content of the newspaper did not substantiate this belief, but these suspicions of island exclusivity were not completely unfounded, for many members of the J.W.A. seemed to accept that, because Jamaica was a larger and more 'developed' island in their terms, they were better qualified to organise themselves than other, 'smaller' islands. They pointed, quite accurately, to the fact that the number of Jamaican activists and the relative success of the J.W.A. in relation to other West Indian associations formed by smaller islands, was not in proportion to the size of the Jamaican community in Easton. The Jamaicans were certainly not one of the largest island groupings in the city but they had consistently provided more associations and participants in the latter than any other island community. Furthermore, those associations which they had formed were able to rely on a much larger area of support within their community, albeit still very small numbers, than other, larger island communities in Easton.
An important factor to consider here is the apparent belief in their own superiority by many West Indians from the larger islands when comparing themselves to 'small island people'. The following example is illustrative of the importance of these island status evaluations. During field research the researcher attended a meeting where representatives from all West Indian associations in Easton met to discuss a programme for the eventual building of a community centre. The meeting was informal in character in the sense that points of view were freely exchanged between speakers and the audience. Nothing was decided because agreement could not be reached on any concrete proposals. Each association wished to retain its own identity and its own policies, with the eventual result that the meeting fragmented and finally broke down when arguments between individuals became heated and personal differences became uppermost. The dynamics of group interaction within the meeting centred on a small nucleus of activists who were well-known to most of the audience. It was apparent that policies put forward by an association were perceived by the audience as representative of a particular individual rather than of the association which that individual purported to represent. Thus, the occupation of an official position within a West Indian voluntary association was again seen as a platform for the promotion of individual status. Consequently, it was very easy for any debate to be transformed into a clash of personalities rather than a group discussion of general policies.

Certain phrases or ideas were believed to have emotive connotations and these provoked considerable argument between members present at the meeting. The question as to whether to use 'black' or 'coloured' in the title of any new organisation which might have resulted from
the meeting was one example of the sort of issues which provoked conflicts between the associations present. Much of this argument was highly personalised and even degenerated to threats of physical force against certain individuals. However, most of the acrimony centred on island distinctions and the low opinion in which Jamaicans held other islands and the converse.

This is not to suggest deep hostilities between particular activists or island associations — although they do exist in a limited number of cases — for the conflictual relations between groups and individuals in respective island communities in the city are subtle and usually covert. Many West Indians project themselves heart and soul into debate and meetings are less noted for calm intellectualising than for rapid cross-fire debate with much banter. Humour is used extensively as a subtle weapon for undermining the views of opponents and so forth. The quality of debate is high because, although an individual may be able to control the flow of ideas by monopolising speaking chances, there is an underlying critical faculty in West Indian political meetings which tends to subject each point to stringent analysis.

The result in the face of such searching scrutiny is often one of impotence, for only those points which can be subjected to severe censure are able to pass through a meeting undamaged. Within a particular association, this formula tends to be broken down by the fact that a small number of members will control a meeting and push through their own policies. This is made easier by the fact that most West Indian associations, perhaps in common with most voluntary associations, are dominated by a very few activists and the majority of the 'membership' is only 'present' on paper. The political meeting which has been described foundered because those
activists present were having to communicate at a representative level in the sense of inter-associational relations. This was perceived by most West Indians present as an artificial form of debate because so-called 'association' policies were continually obscured by the interjection of individual viewpoints. Furthermore, those associations which adopted a general policy front became annoyed at the level of criticism which was centred on their proposals. For example, members of the J.W.A. were annoyed and dismayed at what, in their eyes, were the trivia introduced during the meeting. No firm policies were confirmed and no liaison was established between the various associations; indeed the participants were even unable to agree on the name of a potential organisation representing an amalgamation of their interests.

Suffice to say that, after the meeting, several members of the J.W.A. were disillusioned by what they saw as pedantry and an over-concern with inessentials. Their criticisms were couched in terms of 'small island' narrow mindedness as most of the other associations present at the meeting were representative of island communities from Antigua, Nevis, Barbuda and so forth which are very small West Indian societies. After the meeting, the J.W.A. adopted a policy of attempting to build a community centre on their own. Its members could not see any possibility of maintaining agreement between the various island communities for such a project to be achieved as a joint effort. This policy decision was interpreted by the non-Jamaican associations, or at least many of their officials, as the final confirmation of the supposed arrogance of 'those Jamaicans' who wanted to do everything themselves.
It is important to note that such disagreements are usually confined to formal meetings, particularly of a political nature, and they do not necessarily affect all forms of West Indian interaction. The range of friendship networks has been shown to be largely centred on island affiliations within respective West Indian communities but they often extend beyond them to include individuals from other islands.

Nevertheless, certain individuals do maintain hostile attitudes towards one another outside of the formal structure of debate. Thus, on several occasions the researcher was warned that, although a certain person was worth seeing and his views were valuable he, (that is to say the author) should not divulge that he had spoken to other individuals who were not on friendly terms with other interviewees. Individual rivalries are certainly important when explaining the level of internal group conflicts within the West Indian settlement in Easton. However, these lines of conflict are often compartmentalised according to specific situations or contingencies. Island affiliations appear to be consistently important when patterns of interaction are highly formalised and are concerned with political and/or economic issues. They are also important in covertly or overtly defining the parameters of all social relationships between West Indians, but islands affiliations appear to be less conflictual in more informal settings, for example, friendship networks and so forth. This reinforces an earlier point which argued that the term 'community' could only be used in a very general sense to describe West Indian settlements. Common bonds of allegiance or homogeneity are mainly centred on 'island communities' within these settlements, although there are signs that second generation West Indians are less concerned with island distinctions.
The J.W.A. was the most highly organised and most patronised association in existence during the period of field research in Easton. It has a fairly elaborate organisation and is actively involved in a wider range of activities than any other West Indian association in the city. Furthermore, despite many of its members' firm denials that the association is in any way political, the J.W.A. was concerned with a number of projects which were attempting to change the life situation of the local West Indian settlement. Unlike most of the other West Indian associations described in this chapter, the J.W.A. is not a purely recreational association. At the end of the period of field research, the researcher left with the impression that if J.W.A. members were able to establish a community centre by themselves and then open these facilities to other West Indians, general support would be forthcoming. However, it seemed doubtful whether a single West Indian association could achieve anything as ambitious as this without financial support from, for example, other associations or the Borough Council in Easton.

One further problem concerned the role of key activists within the association and the relative importance which was attached to them within the group. One such figure, the Secretary, entered a course of full-time education at the end of the research period and it became critical whether the association could maintain itself without this individual. The Vice-Chairman was also planning to emigrate to the United States in the near future. Those West Indian associations which are composed of upwardly mobile individuals, face the recurrent problem of members and officials leaving their associations because the personal aspirations of many activists are separate from their group participation and these force them to leave. Those West
Indians who have 'made good' in Britain are often in a position to
move to other areas in the host society, to emigrate elsewhere or
return to the Caribbean. The latter group consistently form the
majority of active participants in the West Indian associations and
this 'leadership loss' is a continual problem of voluntary association
formation and maintenance within West Indian settlements in Britain.

Many West Indian associations rely on the projection of certain
activists within their leadership who are able to construct a
following based on their reputation in respective island communities.
This reputation tends to be based upon a number of criteria, including
the specific aims and objectives of the association concerned.
Sporting prowess in a football or cricket club is one example.
Other criteria may be more subtle, depending upon factors only known
to the particular social network from which a certain association may
be formed. In small island communities, family and kinship ties may
be particularly important. In the J.W.A., organisational skills and
expertise were highly rated in prestige terms. Hence, prestige is
relative to the contingencies surrounding group formation among West
Indians. A reliance on personalities to project group images and
amass support, renders group solidarity dependent upon the continued
presence of such prestigious individuals. The loss of this group
image through the withdrawal of key personalities, even temporarily,
can produce a crisis of identification and possible group fragmentation.
The latter is also probable if certain personalities indulge in
activities aimed at forwarding their own power positions in the
community rather than those of the associations which they 'represent'.
The spreading of gossip can be extremely influential in this
connection. The dissolution of several West Indian associations
was claimed (by West Indian respondents) to be due to a chain of
gossip built around certain key figures within these associations
which tended to discredit them and the associations with which they
were connected. This is particularly pertinent to any claims or
rumours of financial mismanagement or 'corruption'\textsuperscript{6} which is an
area of considerable mistrust among West Indians. It has been
suggested that this mistrust is a cultural trait which originates in
the nature of the history of Caribbean societies.

The researcher was unable to observe the aftermath of the
partial withdrawal of certain members of the J.W.A. One of the
problems of this type of field research is the ephemeral nature of
many group formations and individual participation within them.
Consequently it is only possible to gain a passing glimpse of certain
forms of organisation. However, the present study seeks to examine
the underlying structural patterns which, in general, largely explain
group formation. The activities of the J.W.A. form a major part of
this examination but it is important to consider other West Indian
voluntary associations for purposes of comparison and to build up a
composite picture of West Indian social organisation in Easton. The
analysis of other associations will be presented in the remainder of
this chapter.

The British-West Indian Club

The British-West Indian Club (B.W.I.C.) was formed in October,
1970 and differed from the J.W.A. in many respects, not least in the

\textsuperscript{6} 'Corruption' is a value-laden term which must be seen within its
cultural and social context. There is no available literature
on 'corruption' in West Indian societies but for an analysis of
this phenomenon in 'developing' countries, see, for example,
James C. Scott, 'The Analysis of Corruption in Developing Nations',
pp. 315–341, and Comparative Political Corruption, (New Jersey,
Prentice Hall, 1972), also Ronald Wraith and Edgar Simpkins,
fact of originating as solely a women's organisation, although this pattern changed marginally during the last months of the research. The B.W.I.C. was started by a small group of West Indian women who decided that a club should be started in Easton in order to encourage harmonious relationships between various groups and nationalities in the city. An English Headmistress of a local primary school was also very influential in the creation of the club, and the school premises are still used as its meeting place. The Club President came from Jamaica. She is a nurse who has lived in Easton for almost ten years. She explained her participation in the B.W.I.C. as follows:

"I didn't belong to the club at the start but I needed something to do in my spare time and I thought it was a worthwhile thing to do. We arrange a number of meetings and social activities, handicrafts and other hobbies. We also try and help (West Indian) mothers with problems of education and schooling. I haven't belonged to any other clubs in England but I was quite active in the 4H at home."

The original President of the group is the current Secretary and is a very well-known person among the West Indian settlement. She has lived in Easton for over fourteen years and is married to an Englishman. She told the researcher that her mother had been very active in politics in Jamaica and this had influenced her participation in the local community. She is one of the very few West Indians in Easton who had their own business. In her case this is a hairdressing salon in Lowdale. This salon is a focal point for many West Indians and it is used as a meeting place and centre of gossip exchange among local West Indian women. This is also true of the part-time barber shops which some West Indian men have established in the city. These, as was mentioned earlier, are in the

7. These 4H clubs are a form of 'young farmers' club which provide recreational and educational facilities for their members. They are not unique to the Caribbean. There are, for example, many 4H clubs in Canada.
front rooms of private residences and the 'barbers' are men who run these businesses in the evening after finishing their day jobs. Like the rum shops and street bars of villages and towns in the Caribbean, these barber-shops and the salon are places where West Indian men and women can sit around and catch up with the local gossip, read West Indian newspapers, ask about jobs and houses and generally find "what's around the place".

Because of the importance of her salon, D. is the figure-head in the B.W.I.C., even though she no longer holds an official position as important as her original post.

The Social Secretary of the association is a typist who came from Antigua. She has lived in Easton for nine years. She had never participated in any form of association before she came to Easton, either in Antigua or in Britain, mainly because she was too young. The Treasurer is from St. Kitts and has lived in Easton for eleven years and joined the B.W.I.C. because of a feeling of isolation in the area. This had been magnified by her family's move to a nearby council estate where there were very few West Indians. She told the researcher that:

"I had to join something to get out of myself. My husband is out working all day and doesn't feel it so much. We have been very cut-off since we moved here. It's a nice enough house but the neighbours don't say much and they look at you as if you just came down from the moon or something. Maybe they're quiet rather than unfriendly but just the same it's a kind of coldness which you can't get used to."

The final member of the B.W.I.C. committee is from Nevis and her husband is very active in one of the Island Development Societies described later in this chapter. She is a housewife and has lived in the city for twelve years. Apart from the Committee, one or two English women attend committee meetings. One is the Headmistress previously mentioned and another local teacher often attended as well.
The 'paper membership' of the B.W.I.C. at the time of research was thirty one, all but two of these members being female. There are seven English women and a West African among the membership. The remainder are all West Indians. Apart from certain general meetings, a nucleus of six members, including the Committee, tend to dominate club affairs. Despite attempts to broaden the base of support in the closing months of the research, the B.W.I.C. is known as a 'women's club' in Easton and consequently very few men express any interest in it. With such a large majority of female members, it is not surprising to find that the functions of the club are aimed towards the needs of local West Indian women. Discussion groups organised by the Club are often concerned with education and welfare topics. However, some general meetings are arranged in conjunction with the J.W.A. These often provoke lively debates. The B.W.I.C. sometimes organises dances and 'socials' with the J.W.A., the Club being responsible for the catering and some of the entertainment. These links between the B.W.I.C. and the J.W.A. were forged by the past President, "D", who had belonged to the J.W.A. before the B.W.I.C. was established. During the final months of research, some attempts were made to amalgamate the two associations. They co-operated, for example, in organising a number of general meetings on the problems of local West Indian families. These covered a number of subjects, for example, the problems of finding child-minders for mothers who had full-time jobs; the educational problems of West Indian children; and the difficulties faced by both parents and children when adjusting to inadequate housing conditions in the locality.

Such problems are often discussed by the B.W.I.C. who have made several attempts to encourage local West Indian mothers to discuss their problems with the teachers of their children. One of the meetings arranged by the Club was a discussion of the educational needs of West Indian children and it brought together many West Indian parents and some local teachers. A West Indian schoolteacher from a neighbouring city was the guest speaker and he spoke of some of the problems which West Indian children meet in the British educational system. He particularly objected to some of the value premises, the stereotypes of black and white, and the neglect of the role of black people in history, found in many school textbooks.

This parents' meeting provided an opportunity for an exchange of ideas between parents and teachers which was often impossible in the normal school situation. Many West Indian parents expressed fears of the type of reaction which they might receive if they went to their child's school on their own. One anecdote which can be related from this meeting demonstrates how inter-island distinctions can pervade all forms of West Indian social interaction. During the course of the meeting, the Jamaican headmaster who was a member of the J.W.A. recounted how he had been a member of a recent educational delegation sent out from Britain to study teaching methods in the Caribbean. He mentioned that the delegation had only visited Jamaica on this trip. This brought an immediate rejoinder from some of the women present who pointed out that here was another example where their small islands had been ignored in

preference to Jamaica. In this case, the tone of the accusation was light-hearted but it was illustrative, nevertheless, of the underlying island distinctions which represent an ever-present pre-condition for the occurrence of conflict and hostility within the West Indian settlement in Easton.

However, it is most significant that the B.W.I.C. is the only first generation West Indian voluntary association in Easton which is an inter-island association in terms of its membership and leadership. This is mainly due to the fact that the B.W.I.C. is recognised as a purely recreational association by most West Indians in Easton. It is also perceived as primarily a women's group and as non-militant. Indeed, the B.W.I.C. has a multi-racial membership and encourages harmonious relationships between black and white in the city. Apart from those few militant activists and associations in Easton (who are predominantly second generation West Indians) who disagree with this apolitical and non-militant stance of the B.W.I.C., most first generation West Indians see the latter as a harmless women's club. The emphasis of the B.W.I.C. on host/migrant relationships tends to bypass inter-island rivalries. However, the main reason why the B.W.I.C. has managed to circumvent inter-island conflicts is because of the non-competitive nature of its recreational functions. It has been argued that inter-island distinctions are less important at the informal level of association and thus one would expect those West Indian voluntary associations with purely recreational functions to avoid island conflicts. But this is to overlook the fact that most West Indian recreational associations in Easton are sporting associations.

It will be shown later in this chapter that most of these sports associations are island exclusive. This is due to the fact that many
sports in the Caribbean, particularly cricket, have a deep significance for West Indian populations as a means of expressing nationalistic feelings. Sport tends to be competitive in the Caribbean both in a recreational and political sense. The B.W.I.C. is not involved in any forms of sporting activity and therefore avoids this competitiveness. Indeed, the B.W.I.C. is relatively isolated as far as other associations are concerned. All other West Indian associations in the city are predominantly male preserves and they tend to ignore or deride the women's club as being unimportant. Similarly, the type of hobbies and pastimes which the B.W.I.C. are concerned with are entirely separate from the competitiveness of more athletic pursuits. Therefore, the B.W.I.C. is able to maintain a membership which is not island exclusive.

However, during the last few months of the research there were signs that even the B.W.I.C. was facing internal conflicts within its membership. This came about through the attempt to organise joint activities with the J.W.A. and the suggestion by some members that an amalgamation between the two associations might be possible. However, all attempts to promote any kind of union between the J.W.A. and the B.W.I.C. met with little success. Members of both groups tended to blame the other for the relative lack of rapport between the two associations. Most of the B.W.I.C. members did not want to become connected with an association which they perceived as openly political in its objectives. They also believed it to be insular, island based and not prepared to include other associations within

---

its framework. On the other hand many J.W.A. members did not want to join with an association which they saw as small, ill-organised and unable to make a strong contribution to 'important issues' like founding a community centre. Sex differences were seldom mentioned but some informants outside of the J.W.A. and B.W.I.C. believed this was a major cause of friction. The men in the J.W.A. were afraid that they might lose face in the West Indian settlement if they amalgamated with a women's group. At the end of the field research period, those few members of the B.W.I.C., mainly Jamaicans, who wanted to join the J.W.A. were threatening to resign and the Club seemed in imminent danger of a serious disruption.

The B.W.I.C. can be seen as a form of Women's Guild or Institute for West Indian Women in Easton. Within this frame of reference it is able to operate on a purely recreational level and co-exist with other associations in the city. It stands apart from the economic and political power structure of the West Indian settlement and therefore avoids most of the internal and external conflicts which most other West Indian associations face in Easton. This is in sharp contrast to the following association:

The Black Power Group

Consideration of the Black Power Group, (B.P.G.) is included in this chapter because it constituted an association with an ascertainable membership, a constitution and designated officials. However, it differed from other West Indian 'formal' associations in many respects. For example, B.P.G. members tended to interact within an informal and close-knit network of relationships which were difficult to disentangle, whether by the researcher or by the majority of the local West Indian population. It was, moreover, a voluntary association which was based on an 'ethos' rather than a policy.
This ethos encapsulated the ubiquitously used but invariable imprecise concept of 'black power'\(^{11}\).

Although the Black Power Group was formed in 1969, at the same time as the establishment of the J.W.A., there were few links between the two associations. Most of the original members of the B.P.G. were drawn from what has been called the 'intermediate generation'\(^{12}\) of West Indians in Britain. These are West Indians who were born in the Caribbean but were partly educated in Britain. Most members of the B.P.G. had therefore completed a few years in secondary schools in Easton. They had left school at fifteen to enter mainly unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. In many cases, they soon drifted into unemployment or underemployment and the B.P.G. became the central feature of their day to day life situation. There were about a dozen members when the association was first formed and this had grown to approximately twenty at the time of fieldwork. However, it was difficult to obtain accurate membership figures because records were not kept by the association. Island representation does not seem to have been particularly important either in the general recruitment of members or in 'leadership' patterns. This can be largely attributed to the 'separatist' nature of the association. In many ways the B.P.G. was isolated from the main West Indian settlement and all island communities in the city. It can also be explained by the 'black power' ethos which disavows any form of distinctions within a common 'black' identification.

---

11. See discussion, pp. 331-334
The latter was reflected in the predominantly West Indian membership although a few whites were included in the association. The majority of these were prostitutes who supported the male members of the group and a few white students from the local university. The latter took a very marginal role in group activities and were largely concerned with certain 'leisure' activities connected with the B.P.G. The general organisation of the B.P.G. imitated the Black Panther movement in the United States. The leading members of the association lived in a small terraced house which they called the 'Black House'. This house was used as a centre for social gatherings which attracted some young West Indians, local students and girls, both white and coloured. The Black House was also used for regular commercial parties. These 'shebeens' were the main source of income for the leading members of the B.P.G. Apart from the provision of music and food, the parties also involved illegal drink and drugs sales. The group was also involved with prostitution, and several members supplemented their incomes by 'pimping'. These activities attracted the attention of the local police force on innumerable occasions.

The American Black Panther organisation was also used as a framework for the administration of the B.P.G. Although the ideology


14. A 'shebeen' is a commercial party where illegal drink and drugs sales commonly take place
of the group rejected any notions of formal 'leaders', certain members were informally 'elected' to official positions within the B.P.G. These 'offices' included a Chairman, a Secretary, a Minister of Information, a Recruitment Officer, a Minister of Defence and a Treasurer. Apart from the usual duties of association officials, the positions of Ministers of Defence and Information were connected with the political aims of the group. The Minister of Information was responsible for publicity and his role included the editorship of the group magazine and the organising, along with fellow officials, of 'recruitment campaigns'. The Minister of Defence was responsible for the protection of the group against the police or any other local organisations which were seen as a danger to the B.P.G. and its members.

There was, in addition a constitution which outlined the aims and objectives of the association. The constitution revealed the overtly political role of the association. It therefore stood in sharp contrast to the J.W.A. and B.W.I.C. which, formally at least, rejected such a role. The aims and objectives of the B.P.G. were as follows:

1. To re-educate black people on politics so that they can see clearly just what politics is doing to them.

2. The Organisation will whenever possible give practical and ideological aid to other black people in other parts of the world, fighting for the freedom of black people.

3. To fight for the rights of black people in England for economic and social justice, and to defend these rights by the most effective means at its disposal.

4. To raise funds by all legitimate means; to advance the aims and objectives of the Party.

5. To demand that African history and culture be added to the education programmes, to all black children so they too can be proud of their ancestry, and also see the reasons for migration.
6. To establish Community Advice Centres.
7. To form a Community Self-Help Organisation.
8. To co-operate with Organisations, Groups or Parties whose aims and objectives are similar to ours.
9. The Organisation will insist upon discipline of all members. The disciplinary measures for activities against the Organisation will be enforced after discussion.
10. The Organisation will have an official party journal to be published ....... to propagate its views and to win other members for the organisation.
11. All major decisions will be made by a simple majority of the members providing at least two thirds are present, and all members are required to carry out these decisions.

Those members of the B.P.G. who could be called regular activists, that is to say those who took an important part in decision making and the implementation of the decisions reached within the association, could be placed in three categories: local black students, usually West Indians, who tended to take an active but ephemeral role within the group; young West Indians who were in regular employment in the locality but who maintained some connections with the B.P.G.; and, finally, a nucleus of unemployed and underemployed youths and young men who depended on B.P.G. activities, crime and casual work for their subsistence. All members who occupied official positions were in the latter category, apart from the Secretary and the Minister of Information who were local West Indian students.

The structure of the B.P.G. and the nature of the social relationships between its members were difficult to research. Because of the separatist nature of the association with regard to both local black and white communities, the opinions and beliefs of 'outsiders' were based more on gossip and hearsay than direct knowledge of B.P.G. activities. However, it can be suggested that
the beliefs which individuals and groups hold, irrespective of the
degree of direct involvement in the actions to which those beliefs
pertain, provide a useful clue in this respect. Thus, the actions
of the B.P.G., limited though they were, had widespread
repercussions for the West Indian settlement in Easton. Therefore,
the influence and importance of the B.P.G. in shaping the attitudes
and beliefs of both West Indian and other local communities, far
outweighed the very small number of individuals who actually
participated in B.P.G. activities.

The B.P.G. was viewed as a highly deviant group by most West
Indians in Easton and also by the local white and Asian communities.
It was believed to be connected with a number of what were labelled
as 'deviant pursuits' which included drug peddling, prostitution,
petty crime, violence and drunkenness. The actual extent of such
activities within the B.P.G. was difficult to ascertain because the
nature of the association tended to provoke emotive statements both
from outside observers and B.P.G. members themselves. The degree
of direct observation which was possible of this group was also
rather more limited than that which was possible for other West
Indian associations in the city. This was due to the fact that
B.P.G. members were highly suspicious of any outside observers and
this made access extremely difficult.

B.P.G. members tended to play down any connections they might
have with activities labelled as deviant by the surrounding
community but evidence suggested that many members were involved
in most, or all, of the activities previously described. In fact,
several members of the group openly admitted that this was so.

During the period of field research, the B.P.G. suffered a severe
loss of membership and the association was threatened with dissolution. Its decline could be traced to a period when the Black House was raided by the police and when several members were convicted of offences, among which drug usage and living off immoral earnings were prominent. Even in the initial stages of the group's formation, these activities, particularly the 'pimping' of prominent officials, alienated several members, especially those in regular employment. During this period, for example, two founder members of the B.P.G. disassociated themselves from the group and eventually joined the J.W.A. One of them described his experiences as follows:

"I belonged to the B.P.G. from its formation in '69 when a group of us got together to form the group. We wanted to get some sort of radical association going instead of all the tea parties and such like which was going on. At the beginning most of us were in jobs and I was studying at night school in my employment. When I thought about getting married and settling down I moved out of Lowdale and came here on the outskirts of Wigton. I don't know whether I was resented for getting on and getting above myself. I didn't want to get involved in the pimping and drugs scene. We were always getting busted because of these sorts of things and some of the ideas got mixed up and became a bit wild. I still believe in the basic philosophies of the group but I joined the J.W.A. because it seemed to be moving towards some sort of political voice but without the stupidness. The group (B.P.G.) is now just seen as a bunch of layabouts who don't want to work and who live off their women and ganja\textsuperscript{15} peddling. I still know one or two guys in it and it's not true of them but these things go on and it makes us unpopular in the area."

These views were typical of two or three founder members of the B.P.G. who, after becoming established in their jobs, had moved into the suburbs and subsequently became marginal participants in the life of Lowdale. The involvement of students was a further reason for the instability of the group because such members tended

\textsuperscript{15} 'Ganja' is a term often used in the West Indies to describe Marijuana
to leave Easton after relatively short periods of time. Similarly, they were distinct from the majority of members in terms of their education and social class background. This tended to produce conflict in so far as student activists were seen as middle class intellectuals who were merely participating in the B.P.G. for their own ego gratification. Nevertheless, these students played an important role within the association, for they tended not only to be very influential in acting as purveyors of ideology but also maintained some degree of contact with other West Indian associations in the area. This became evident when some members of the J.W.A acknowledged that they knew a small number of B.P.G. activists who were prepared to meet them 'socially' and also attend joint meetings with other local associations.

It can be seen that the B.P.G. consisted of a very loosely structured association which had a nucleus of members who formed a kind of commune in which members shared a common residence and lifestyle. A small number of additional adherents surrounded this nucleus and acted as marginal influences who may or may not have taken active part in the political activities of the group. Whilst the ethos of the association condemned any notions of 'leadership', it has been shown that a number of officials did perform specialised tasks within the group. However, common ideologies and forms of identification acted as the main underpinnings of such cohesion as the group possessed. The B.P.G., with obvious allusions to the United States, had adopted the idealisations of a form of 'black power' with its ramifications of negritude, separatist inclinations and an active avowal of identification with cultural and/or phenotypical features as a basis of group solidarity. The identification was

---

evident in speech mannerisms, — for example, the cultivation of slang expressions and pseudo-American accents, — in forms of dress and other outward manifestations of a group identity. The B.P.G., therefore, was an example of an attempt to build a counter culture rather than a formal association, a representation of an ethos rather than a formalised policy forming organisation.

Paradoxically, 'black consciousness' did not act as a means of uniting the disparate 'black' communities in Easton. The B.P.G. consisted predominantly of West Indians and there were no Indians or Pakistanis in or connected with the group at any time during the period of field research. Whilst many members of the group openly advocated the inclusion of all coloured or black people in the 'black revolution' they privately remained as detached from the local Asian communities as those other West Indian associations in Easton which more openly admitted their reservations about their coloured 'neighbours'. However, similar to the B.W.I.C., the B.P.G. did not appear to suffer from island conflicts. The absence of internal dissension on these lines might be attributable to the 'black power' ethos. This particular type of 'consciousness' might have counteracted other forms of identification, for example, island affiliation which are potentially conflictual. Nevertheless, it is more likely that the age and period of residence in Britain of most B.P.G. members was more significant in this respect. It is possible that the young West Indians who predominated in the B.P.G. had different aspirations and expectations about their social position in Britain than, for example, the majority of first generation West Indians who were predominant in other West Indian associations in the city. All the B.P.G. members were recent arrivals in Easton, that is to say they
had all settled in Britain since the mid-1960's, and therefore had to settle in the city when the hostility towards coloured minorities in Easton was more overt than in the immediate post-war years. Factors such as these appear to have contributed considerably to the 'militancy' of most B.P.G members.

The militancy and the forms of deviance associated with the B.P.G attracted considerable publicity in Easton. Despite being a small, in many ways ill-organised association, which was totally unacceptable to the majority of West Indians in the city, the B.P.G attracted more local publicity than all the other West Indian associations in Easton put together. Whereas the activities of the latter were seldom mentioned in the local press, the B.P.G attracted considerable and consistent comment. Furthermore, whilst a number of West Indian associations were hardly known outside of their respective island communities, all the West Indians interviewed by the researcher had heard of the B.P.G.

Invariably the publicity was not complimentary to the B.P.G and its members. Those incidents which involved the police and criminal proceedings were widely reported and commented upon and were widely condemned by black and white members of the local community alike. These connections with forms of deviance tended to negate the power of the B.P.G. in the locality. Despite their active participation in protest marches, demonstrations and some co-operative activities with other similar groups in nearby cities, these political activities were ignored or more likely grouped together as merely another form of deviant activity which complemented those already disapproved. Hence, political militancy was directly equated with drug abuse and so forth by the police, the local white and Asian communities and many West Indians in Easton. The blanket hostility towards the
B.P.G., however, tended to increase group solidarity within it. Members were aware of their 'isolation' from other groups in Easton but the negative images projected upon them by outsiders served to reinforce their beliefs and forms of identification.

The ideological commitment of the B.P.G. was reflected in the content of their journal which differed significantly from the subject matter presented in the J.W.A.'s publication. Whereas the latter was eventually dissolved because of its alleged 'political content', the B.P.G. journal was openly concerned with circulating the political views of 'black power' as it was perceived by B.P.G. members. Copies of the journal included articles on alleged police brutality towards local coloured people, racial discrimination, black political activities in Africa, the United States and the Caribbean, and a number of articles concerned with 'black ideology'.

The following excerpts from an interview printed in the journal give some indication of the views expounded by the B.P.G. The Chairman is being quoted in the following extracts:

'The blacks have always felt the urge to fight, but they haven't realised the advantage of collectiveness until the last few years. I don't think that we are influenced by the Panthers to any extent. The movement here arose simply because the blacks were being pressurised by society. We take certain lessons off the Panthers, of course. They have been at it longer than we have and are highly organised. But it must be remembered that Black Power is just part of a world revolution, a feeling of brotherhood between oppressed peoples.'

In answer to a question about the B.P.G.'s attitude to white radicals, the Chairman said:

'Of course they can help the struggle. In the final analysis we're both fighting against the system and we'll co-operate with the white radicals if we feel that it will benefit us. But on our terms never theirs.'
As regards the police:

'We believe that the image of the police has got to change before we want to see blacks joining the force. We're quite aware that blacks can be bad too, and then its even more pathetic. No, the police must change. At the moment they act like Hitler's storm-troopers.'

Finally, when questioned about his attitudes towards the local Asian communities, the Chairman stated that:

'They have their own thing, of course. They are organising themselves and we can get together when its needed, because we are all fighting the same fight against the same enemy. Of course there has been the language difficulty for one thing but we all consider ourselves part of the Third World.'

These excerpts represent a reasonable cross-section of the views formally expressed by the B.P.G. but the opinions given in interviews to the researcher and the contents of other journal articles were more 'militant'. Most of the articles in the journal were strongly anti-white and anti-police. Both "Whitey" and the "Pigs" were portrayed as the enemy in very inflammatory tones. Similarly, it has been shown that the B.P.G. contained no Asian members and had very little contact with any Indian or Pakistani associations.

The relationships between the B.P.G. and other West Indian voluntary associations in the locality were heavily influenced by the nature of the adverse publicity which surrounded the group. Many of the West Indians in other associations were highly critical of the B.P.G. and saw it as a highly disruptive influence within the West Indian settlement. It was perceived as a group which had endangered any chances of harmonious relationships between black and white.

Many West Indian parents expressed considerable concern lest any of their children become connected with the group.

Other West Indians were more ambivalent about the B.P.G. On the one hand they firmly disapproved of all of the 'deviant' activities assigned to B.P.G. members but they did have some sympathy with the ideology or ethos which the B.P.G. represented. For example, some members of the J.W.A. and other associations stressed that some identification with their colour or common heritage would be a useful focus for West Indian solidarity. But these members tended to differentiate between an identification with a distinctive 'West Indian' life style or background and what they considered to be the somewhat ethereal ethos of negritude or Afro—culture. The latter was seen as too abstract for most West Indians to identify themselves with. Furthermore, such idealisation was criticised because many West Indians do not accept that the British situation is similar in all respects to that in the United States. They also disagree with the notion that West Indians should destroy all affinities with European culture. Whilst it is accepted that West Indians should organise themselves effectively, independently and without reliance on whites, nevertheless it is felt that the historical links with Britain cannot be erased by simply turning towards Africa. As one Antiguan said to the researcher: "If we try to replace our European heritage with an African one, we are merely replacing one borrowed culture with another."

This ideological gulf between the B.P.G. and other West Indian associations tended to isolate the former. Such isolation was reinforced by the fact that the B.P.G. officials who took part in the few meetings arranged between all West Indian groups in the city, consistently used a rhetoric and a form of ideological argument which
most other associations found impractical and irrelevant. As one J.W.A. committee member said to the researcher:

"Who the hell wants to hear about African heritage when you're talking about a building fund or the weekend dance."

B.P.G. members answered in turn that the J.W.A. were middle class 'Uncle Toms' who, with the aid of 'Whitey' avoided what to them were the bitter realities of black exploitation.

It has been mentioned that the B.P.G. was seriously disrupted by the number of police raids which took place during the period of field research. By the end of this period the B.P.G. had been completely disbanded and the only remnants which remained were a small number of the original members who had partially aligned themselves with a similar group in a neighbouring city. It remained problematic whether they would re-form and perhaps gain support from the increasing numbers of unemployed West Indian youths in Easton. It was difficult to deduce the feelings of the latter towards the B.P.G. but some impressions could be drawn from the conversations with West Indian youngsters which took place in clubs and cafes in the course of the research.

Among West Indian youth, the ethos of negritude or 'black power' forms part of a whole youth counter-culture which embraces not only forms of black identification but also an elaborate set of values incorporated in, for example, their forms of dress, language and music. However, there appeared to be a marked disinclination to take an active part in political associations like the B.P.G. Modes of speech,

18. See Peter Evans, Attitudes of Young Immigrants, (London, Runnymede Trust, 1971)
clothes and hair styles reflected a cultural expression which was approximate to that used for black power identification but it appeared that 'Afrostyles' were used more as a kind of fashion or 'style' than as a reinforcement of any particular political affiliation or ideological commitment. However, this may be a transitional stage towards a greater political commitment among second generation West Indians.

The demise of the B.P.G. can be explained by this lack of direct commitment among West Indian youth in Easton, the apprehension of many of their officials by the police, and finally, by the possibility that alternative West Indian associations, for example the J.W.A., were becoming more overtly political in their objectives and were therefore adjudged sufficiently 'militant' to attract West Indian members who would have previously aligned themselves with the B.P.G. None of these factors in isolation can explain the demise of the B.P.G. but, in combination, they certainly played a part.

However, West Indian associations do tend to be ephemeral and constantly to change so it is quite probable that groups similar to the B.P.G. may form or re-form in Easton in the future. Certainly it can be stated that 'black power' as an ethos is substantially more important than the very small numbers of active participants in associations like the B.P.G. appear to indicate and this is duly recognised later in the present study. At this juncture, however, further West Indian associations in Easton will be described which generally have more 'moderate' aims than the B.P.G.

19. See p. 328
Island Development Societies

These associations are recent innovations in Easton and are organised strictly along island lines. The three associations of this kind established in Easton represented the local West Indian communities from Nevis, Barbuda and Antigua respectively. Their main purpose is to promote fund raising activities to support development programmes which are intended to contribute to the economies of the respective islands. The islands represented are all small in size and relatively impoverished, so funds from their island communities in Britain could make a substantial contribution to their economies. The Antiguan and Nevitian groups are local branch associations of national organisations but they differ considerably from each other in their memberships and activities.

The Antiguan group is primarily based in London and the majority of activities organised by this association take place in the Metropolis. Consequently, the Antiguan Association in Easton consists of nothing more than one representative of the national organisation. Similarly, the local branch of the Antiguan Association has a membership which is only meaningful in relation to the national organisation because the local branch does not have a committee or elected officials except for the branch secretary.

This lack of formal structure at the local level means that the Antiguans, despite being the largest West Indian community in Easton, are under-represented in inter-island associational activities within the West Indian settlement in the city.

Nevertheless, the branch secretary is very well-known among West Indians in the neighbourhood. This is mainly due to the fact that he has many interests outside of his duties in the Antigua
Association. He is involved, for example, in running a local youth club for West Indians and he also acts as an agent for a West Indian firm in London which specialises in charter flights to the Caribbean.

The activities of the Antiguan Association and the other island development societies largely hidden from West Indians in other island communities in Easton. Apart from the usual dances which these associations hold on infrequent occasions, the nature of their organisation is exclusive to their own island community. The West Indian associations which were formed by 'small island' communities are organised on an informal basis centred on kinship and friendship relationships which originated in the home island. Most of the West Indians from Antigua, Barbuda, Nevis and most of the other small islands represented in Easton come from a small number of villages in their home societies. Thus, most Nevitians or Barbudans knew one another before their arrival in Britain. Therefore, associations formed by these communities are based upon, for example, village affiliations in the home island. An elaborate kinship and friendship network tends to replace or at least to complement any formal associational network which might exist within these communities. Although this pattern holds for all West Indian communities in Easton, it is particularly the case for those smaller island groupings which lack a formal associational structure.

One exception to this is the Nevitian Development Society. This does have a local committee and formally elected officials. This association had approximately twenty members at the time of the research and these included an elected Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer who were the most active participants in the group. The occupations of these officials were, respectively, a schoolteacher,
a section leader in a shoe factory and a telephonist. In common with the J.W.A. and the B.W.I.C., all the 'leaders' of the development associations are upwardly mobile working or middle class West Indians who have been resident in Easton for many years. The main aims and objectives of the Nevitian Association are to raise funds for development programmes in Nevis and, in particular, to provide equipment for the improvement of medical and educational facilities in the home island. These funds are raised by personal subscriptions or the organisation of dances and other recreational events. The Nevitian Association in Easton maintains links with similar associations in Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham, cities which all have sizeable Nevitian communities.

There is little contact with other West Indian associations at the local level. The J.W.A. is avoided as a 'Jamaican' group and, therefore, likely to be 'uninterested in small islands'. Unlike the Antiguan Association which is based outside of Easton, the local Nevitian Association holds regular meetings in the city and combines these with visits to Nevitian communities elsewhere in Britain. All members of the committee plan to return to Nevis within a few years after, as they put it, the home island has been 'redeveloped'. They consider that Nevitians in Britain have a duty to transfer funds to the home island not only to provide for their fellows in the Caribbean but also in order to stimulate the island's economy so that Nevitians can leave the 'hardships of Britain' and return home.

The Barbudan Association is very small and run by very few individuals. Membership figures were unavailable and the only active participants who could be traced were the 'Chairman' and the 'Secretary' whose sole duties appeared to be organising regular dances.
The aims of this 'association' are claimed to be similar to those of other island development societies. That is to say, the Barbudan Association is claimed to be a fund raising organisation for the home island. The Barbudan community in Easton, although comparatively small in numbers, is in fact, the largest grouping of Barbudans in Britain. The links between these islanders are again based on kinship and village networks which, in part because of the smallness of the island society, are highly intimate. Most Barbudans knew one another and many are directly related through family and kinship ties. Both formal and informal associational activities are, therefore, highly exclusive and completely separate from those of the other West Indian communities in Easton.

These very close-knit social networks are possibly not so important among larger island groupings where a greater number of individuals tend to be strangers. Moreover, in the case of islands such as Jamaica, where industrialisation and urbanisation are sufficiently advanced to have produced more pronounced rural/urban distinctions, formal associations may be more common. However, it can be seen that the degree of informal interaction between West Indians is a crucial factor in influencing the level of formal associational participation in all West Indian communities in the city. The lack of formal associations within certain island groupings may not be indicative of a lack of associational activity per se but possibly that informal kinship and village networks which were predominant in the home island are similarly present in the host society. However, the significance of this informal type of activity is important in relation to the links between and within particular West Indian communities and also in connection with relationships between the West Indian settlement and the host community.
The relative closure of highly informal networks which are based on intimate normative prescriptions excludes neighbouring island groupings at least partially and fully excludes members of the host community. Thus, group solidarity based on this type of affiliation may be irrelevant or detrimental to the establishment of West Indian communal associations, that is to say those associations which transcend intimate island distinctions.

The latter point is illustrated by the attitudes which many members of the J.W.A. have towards the formation of island development associations in Easton. Many J.W.A. activists were disquieted or openly annoyed about the formation of these associations because they perceived them to be a danger to the establishment of associations incorporating all West Indian communities in the city. The J.W.A. considered that these associations would not only increase the competition in arranging dances and socials and thus disperse funds throughout the settlement, but that they would also re-introduce island insularity and endanger the possibility of establishing a community centre. Some J.W.A. members also insinuated that some of these development associations might be merely a cover for certain individuals striving to build a power base for themselves or, even more likely, that they were a means of making personal financial gains. Members of the Nevitian and Barbudan Associations, in particular, were openly accused of taking for themselves a percentage of the profits from the dances which they organised, supposedly on behalf of their associations. Even worse, it was suggested that the avowed aims of these groups were completely fictitious and that all monies were being misappropriated.
These fears are not entirely unjustified for there have been several occasions in the past when local West Indians have established 'associations', some with supposedly charitable aims, and gone off with the funds accumulated from putting on dances in the 'association's' name. The running of dances was the most common abuse because most local halls would book their rooms to associations rather than individuals to prevent private profiteering. However, these stipulations led to the formation of bogus organisations or groups with false objectives which were purely private profit making enterprises. It has already been shown that many local West Indians imputed motives of personal gain to activists in associations. Accordingly, these bogus organisations are deeply resented by bona fide West Indian groups. There is no evidence that any of the development associations are bogus organisations but the important factor is that they are believed by activists in other associations and many West Indians from other island communities to be bogus and this was corroborated by the interviews and conversations which the researcher had with local West Indians throughout the research period.

The main significance of the formation of island development associations in Easton is the confirmation of the fact that, since the demise of the Sports and Social Club and the failure to establish a communal West Indian association in the city, island communities are forming their own associations. Although none of the island development associations explicitly forbid the entry of other island representatives their memberships are highly exclusive in practice. This is hardly surprising when the avowed intentions of these groups are to advance the economies of their respective islands rather than to encourage wider co-operation between islands in the Caribbean. Thus, the comparatively recent formation of these associations indicates a
definite move away from the so-called generally representative
associations like the J.W.A. and the B.W.I.C. Their formation
points towards a resurgence of island insularity within the West
Indian settlement in Easton. This was recognised by the J.W.A. and
B.W.I.C. who saw this new development as detrimental to West Indian
solidarity in the city as it tended to factionalise the local settlement.

The reasons for the fragmentation of West Indian associations
will be examined in some detail later in the thesis\(^{20}\). Suffice to
say at this juncture that the move away from communal to island
associations is partly due to the recurrent quarrels between the
various associations in Easton, some of which have been described in
this chapter. These conflicts led to further erosion of inter-island
relationships, which have always been mistrustful, and contributed
to a situation where internal island solidarity was perhaps
perceived by many West Indians at the time as the only viable basis
for group cohesion. However, since at the time of the field research,
most of the island development associations were only recently
established, it is a matter of conjecture whether their formation
indicates a concrete trend towards a hardening of island distinctions
or whether such associations are simply ephemeral formations.

West Indian Sports Associations

The emphasis upon recreational voluntary associations within the
West Indian settlement in Easton has already been mentioned. The
number of West Indian sports associations in the city confirms this
emphasis. There were five cricket clubs, a football club, local
facilities for boxing and weightlifting and finally a domino club in

\(^{20}\) See Chapter 6
existence during the period of research. The provision of these separate sporting facilities stemmed from the previous attempts to maintain a Sports Association which would encompass all such activities within one West Indian recreational association.

The organisational pattern of local cricket clubs follows the trend of the island development associations and further confirms the degree of island insularity which is re-emerging among West Indians in Easton. One cricket club, mainly composed of Antiguans, is the last remnant of the old Sports and Social Club. Another is associated with a local youth club which has a predominantly West Indian membership and this includes players from a number of different islands. The other three clubs are predominantly or exclusively Barbudan, Jamaican and Barbadian teams respectively. The Barbadian club can be seen as illustrative of the ways in which island insularity influences the composition of local West Indian cricket teams and the nature of the power struggles within these associations. Initially this particular club was a mixture of Antiguans and Barbadians but there were many quarrels about the island composition of the elected committees within the club. The Barbadians argued that the Antiguans were trying to 'take-over' the club whilst the latter expressed similar sentiments about the 'Bajans'. One particular point of contention between them was focussed on whether the team should play in a Saturday or Sunday league. The religious affiliations of many of the Antiguan members were significant in

21. Most of the sports clubs established by West Indians in Easton used the facilities provided for a youth club which held its meetings in a local Secondary school. This club was initiated as an attempt to 'mix' youngsters from the various ethnic communities in the vicinity but at the time of field research it was almost exclusively West Indian in its membership
this decision for many of the latter were Seventh Day Adventists which meant that they could not play on Saturdays. The Barbadian members of the committee, one of whom was Match Secretary, were accused of organising the club fixtures so that matches fell on a Saturday. The Antiguans argued that this was a political ruse to force them out of the club. The result of this quarrel was that the majority of Antiguans did leave the club and organised a cricket team of their own, leaving behind them a predominantly Barbadian cricket club which did not change its composition during the period of research.

Many West Indian men in Easton play cricket, either for their works teams in local factories, in exclusively West Indian clubs which are often island exclusive or in one of the local "white" teams. Some West Indian players are called 'cricketing mercenaries' because they move from club to club within or between seasons according to their talents. It is often insinuated, by other West Indians, that sums of money are involved in these 'transactions' and that some West Indian players are able to command quite substantial sums for their 'transfer'. Such activities are almost invariably alleged to be connected with local white or mixed teams rather than with exclusively West Indian teams who refuse to make such payments. These claims were not proved or disproved by the researcher who had to rely on gossip and hearsay but these opinions are widespread among local West Indians. It is significant that this form of activity, if indeed it did occur, is not censured but perceived by most West Indians as a 'perk' for cricketing ability. Most of the criticism of the system is directed at the ability of particular West Indian

22. Sums of up to £50 were sometimes mentioned
players and how their individual performance does not match the level of financial rewards which they are assumed to be receiving!

Although one or two members of non-recreational voluntary associations in Easton are also members of cricket clubs in the locality no links are apparent between these various groups. The majority of participants in sports clubs do not appear to be involved in any other form of association. Similarly, island affiliations have been shown to be important in the formation and maintenance of certain cricket clubs which are either exclusively or predominantly composed of players from a single island. But there is no observable connection between cricket clubs and other West Indian associations primarily based on island affiliations. The only exceptions are two members of the J.W.A. committee who belong to cricket clubs, and the captain of the football team who is also active in the cultural association which will be described later in the chapter. However, these activities are perceived as entirely separate from one another which confirms previous studies which have suggested that West Indians, in common with many members of the host society, tend to compartmentalise their social activities.

The role of sporting activities in the West Indian settlement does not appear to go beyond the function of providing an outlet for recreational and athletic endeavour. Those members of cricket clubs who have joined other groups of a political nature in the past, or who attend meetings and discussions connected with, for example, the Community Centre project, appear to do so as individuals not as representatives of the sports clubs they might be associated with. This is not to say, of course, that politics are not important in the composition of teams or in West Indian cricket generally. The power struggles within West Indian cricket teams in Easton have already
been alluded to. Moreover, one has only to look at the inter-island rivalries which influence the selection of West Indian Test Teams in the Caribbean to see that political considerations permeate at least that sporting world to a significant degree!

The local West Indian football team is solely comprised of youths from a local club organised for West Indian youngsters. They have an English coach but the team is exclusively West Indian. The coach related how he had had considerable discipline problems when the team was first formed. He said that the West Indian players were individually talented but they had no conception of tactics. Matches tended to be a display of individual skills with a low degree of team-work. This may have been due to lack of experience or a reflection of West Indian social patterns. Both the coach and the team captain stressed the individualism of players and emphasised that strict discipline was necessary in order to maintain any order. Such cohesion as the team acquired was attributed to the authority of the captain who was widely respected by the other players who acknowledged his skills and athletic ability. The football club had a membership of nineteen but this fluctuated considerably. The majority of players came from Antigua but there is little evidence to suggest that players from different islands are excluded. This was confirmed by the coach and several of the players. It has already been suggested that inter-island distinctions are less important in recreational associations, particularly those where no financial gain is connected with associational activities. Thus, the lack of such conflict in the football team is not surprising. Similarly, the point has been made

23. See footnote 19
that second generation West Indians appear to be less concerned with these distinctions and this is reflected in the team which is composed of West Indian youths.

The football club does have a President and a Match Secretary but it can be seen as an informal, recreational voluntary association which is non-political and quite separate from any other West Indian association in the locality. Those two officials who were elected are solely concerned with the day to day running of the football team and its participation in one of the local amateur leagues. In common with the cricket clubs previously described, the football club only functions during those months when its sport is actually played competitively. In fact all the sports associations tend to disband when their respective sports are 'out of season'. They do organise a team or club dance on occasions but these activities also cease during the close season.

The local Domino club is illustrative of a popular form of West Indian recreation. In the Caribbean it is played by men in bars, rum shops and barber shops as well as in their own homes. Whilst the game is commonly played as a parlour or pub game by members of the host society, West Indians play dominoes competitively and have organised regional league and cup competitions in Britain. It is part of the local West Indian 'scene' in Easton to see a group of men or youths playing dominoes in the part-time barber shops or in the youth club. Participants are often surrounded by a group of spectators who loudly acclaim or denigrate each move. The Domino

24. It is possible that 'domino leagues' are also formed by the indigenous white population in other parts of Britain but it appeared to be an exclusively West Indian activity in Easton and in neighbouring cities.
club was very successful during the period of research and won a number of regional competitions.

The club has approximately twenty five members, most of whom are young men, although a few older members have been introduced into the club in order, to use a phrase used by the Club President, 'to act as figure-heads'. These officials, a President, Chairman and Secretary, complained that most of the younger members could not be bothered with the club's administration. They were only interested in the actual playing, so the older men had offered to join the club in an administrative capacity. Following the pattern of other West Indian sports associations, the Domino Club cannot be said to exist for any purpose other than for the specific recreational pursuit for which it was formed. Similarly, its mixed island composition, predominantly Jamaican but with several other islands represented, corresponds with the pattern observed in other purely recreational associations.

This brief appraisal of West Indian sports associations in Easton seems to suggest that these forms of association have limited recreational goals and do not constitute groupings which are likely to provide a basis for formal political activity. Such degrees of formalisation as do exist, in the sense of elected committees and officials, are merely administrative provisions which are seen as necessary within the specific limits of sporting activities. In this way West Indian sports clubs share many common characteristics with similar associations in the host society. They perform certain functions in providing recreational and sporting outlets for their West Indian members and, in the case of cricket and soccer clubs, they promote a limited kind of interaction with similar local white and Asian clubs. These sports associations, in addition to
certain sporting activities such as boxing and weightlifting, which take place within the West Indian youth club, where the total number of such associations in existence during the period of research.

The Caribbean Cultural Group

The Caribbean Cultural Group is a drama and music association established by the J.W.A. to promote forms of Caribbean artistic expression among West Indian youth in Easton. It grew out of the 'People to People Week' organised by the local C.R.C. in 1972. During the 'Caribbean Evening' which was jointly staged by the J.W.A. and B.W.I.C., a group of local West Indian teenagers performed a number of dance routines and recited their own poems. The success of this venture prompted the youngsters taking part to form a cultural group which would meet regularly to develop their interests in Caribbean literature and drama. An active member of the J.W.A. was largely instrumental in establishing the association and arranging for premises where they could meet. The Group had about twenty members at its inception, all of whom were in their teens or early twenties.

During the first few months of its existence, the group was very enthusiastic and established a regular programme of concerts which they performed at West Indian dances and 'functions', both locally and in neighbouring towns. A dance teacher from a local college was introduced by the J.W.A. and facilities were provided for the group in a room attached to a local adventure playground. During the last few weeks of field research, however, the group started to disband due to internal conflicts and disagreements between its members and the J.W.A. The latter had intended to form a general co-ordinating committee which would meet infrequently and
and serve as an advisory body for the group. This proposed committee was never formed, however, and no clear objectives were established among the membership. The latter resented the 'assistance' from the J.W.A. who were seen as attempting to control the activities of the group. J.W.A. members denied this and argued that the youngsters were intransigent and would not accept any advice, even though they were unsure of their objectives or how to organise themselves. These disputes decreased the membership and at the end of field research only a very small number of youths still attended weekly meetings.

The interesting feature of the Caribbean Cultural Group is the attempt to re-impose West Indian culture, in particular literature, through its activities. The latter is a cultural area in which the Caribbean is richly endowed. Much of the material used by the group is written by members and displays a strong concern with their search for a 'West Indian' identity. Poems depict the problems of living in a society which offers no clear symbols of acceptance or rejection but a confusion of actions and attitudes which create ambivalence and insecurity among West Indians in Britain. Half-forgotten remembrances of a Jamaican or Antiguan childhood are contrasted with their more recent experiences in Easton. There are family problems, for example parents who treat them as strangers, recounted in their literary efforts. The rhetoric of black consciousness is also present. An amalgam of shared experience is initiated by this creativity but it takes the form of

fragments of written expression rather than a coherent flow of ideas which can be neatly categorised. Some members reinforce their island backgrounds and seek to draw the parameters of their life experience around a specific West Indian society. Others categorise their life situation as part of a world-wide phenomenon which embraces the Caribbean, Africa and North America.

The cultural antecedents of the present search of black youth in Britain for a coherent identity would form a study in themselves. Indeed, such antecedents and their current expression form a potential basis for future political expression among blacks in Britain. However, the present study has more limited objectives and thus it will be restricted to an examination of the formation and maintenance of West Indian associations at a more superficial level. Within this framework, the Cultural Group can be viewed as a loosely structured association which is far more fragile than the ethos which encouraged its formation. In terms of political organisation, the links which the J.W.A. hoped to foster with established associations like themselves were never forged during the period of research. Indeed, there were signs that this association will fit into the ephemeral pattern of organisation which seems to typify West Indian associations in the city.

The J.W.A. was disappointed that the Cultural Group had not been able to establish a viable association which would provide some form of clear identification for its members, whilst at the same time, serving as a cultural reference group which might unify disparate interests and possibly promote a form of solidarity similar to that which the B.P.G. had sought. The Cultural Group was seen as a form of association which could encompass the 'radicalism' of the latter
but within a group context which disavowed the 'militancy' of the B.P.G. and the 'deviant activities' which were connected with it. However, somewhat paradoxically, there are signs that the Cultural Group's search for an identity by exploring the Caribbean, 'roots' of its members might re-introduce island conflicts. It is evident that individual members are tending to explore their Caribbean ancestry through a close examination of the West Indian societies from which their parents had migrated. Thus, there is a tendency to search for 'Jamaican' or 'Barbadian' identities rather than 'West Indian' ones. However, it remains problematic whether this search will lead to a reinforcement of the island insularity common to many first generation West Indians or whether this is a transitional stage in the final accomplishment of a 'West Indian' or 'Caribbean' identity which could dissolve island conflicts.

Entertainment Groups

One of the focal points of most West Indian parties and recreational gatherings is provided by distinctive forms of music played by West Indian musicians or provided by tapes and records. The presence of a large radiogram or hi-fi set is a common sight in many West Indian homes. Similarly, at dances and house parties, particular forms of West Indian music are the main attraction. The recreational function of most West Indian associations has constantly been stressed and this creates a demand for specialised forms of musical entertainment. This demand has led to the formation of several 'Entertainment Groups' within the West Indian settlement in Easton. There are at least four regular bands in the area, two
of them steel bands or 'pan groups', which stem from primarily Trinidadian influences. One of these bands has been mildly successful beyond the locality and has issued recordings nationally. Many of these West Indian groups play in neighbouring towns and are not confined to exclusively West Indian dances.

However, most groups play at social gatherings which are organised within those areas of heaviest West Indian occupation. In many 'twilight areas', the basement rooms of large Victorian houses are given over to dances, 'shebeens' and blues parties where every weekend the walls throb to the heavy bass beat of a high wattage 'sound system'. Some of these parties are gatherings of friends and relatives but others are run on a commercial basis with the sale of (usually illegal) drinks supplementing the money taken at the door. The particular forms of music are an important part of the cultural expression of a subculture where music and dance express the 'style' of folk entertainment. Dances are noisy and crowded, characterized by uninhibited participation in "reggae", "rocksteady", "blue beat", "sk" or "sag ting" or whatever is the latest 'scene stealer'. Most of the time, the music is Jamaican reggae with its distinctive bass line setting the dance rhythm. West Indian dances and house parties are mainly patronised by the young but not exclusively so. Local

26. A 'pan group' is a group of musicians who perform on 'pans' which are a form of drum, shaped from empty oil drums which are beaten out to reproduce particular musical notes. These groups are also called 'steel bands' and can be found in many West Indian societies but they are most famous in Trinidad where the term originates from.

whites are rarely in evidence apart from some white girls who have
black boyfriends or who are attracted by the unique excitement of
forms of recreational expression which are far removed from the
local 'Palais'.

Whilst individual members of dance groups may have or have had
links with other West Indian associations, their main interests are
centred on the provision of entertainment through participation in
the local music scene. Two West Indian bands in Easton can be
classed as semi-professional with regular paid 'gigs' in local dance
halls and clubs throughout the city and elsewhere. Most of the
musicians treat their participation as a means of supplementing their
earnings though, in some cases, it is their sole source of income.
Entertainment groups can be seen as an important part of the day-to-day
life of West Indians in Easton. But this role is strictly confined to
a specific form of commercial enterprise or recreational association.
There is no indication that these groups constitute any form of
political expression. Moreover, their economic functions are
individualistic as they provide incomes for group members rather than
funds for island communities or the West Indian settlement as a whole.
The relationship between these entertainment groups and other West
Indian associations who use their services is a strictly commercial one,
although the negotiation of playing fees and booking dates may be
influenced by informal contacts between musicians and the members of
the associations hiring them.

This concludes the brief appraisal of those voluntary associations
which West Indians in Easton have established both prior to and
during the period of field research. It can be seen that the majority
of associations are recreational and non-political in their functions
and objectives. Similarly, in common with most previous studies of
working class participation in voluntary associations, memberships
in most of the West Indian associations described are low and the
number of West Indians who can be described as 'activists' is
extremely small. A limited number of 'leaders' tend to operate and
tcontrol the organisation of these formal and semi-formal associations
which have been established within the West Indian settlement.
However, it was shown that the introduction of formalised procedures,
for example, elected officials, committees and structured decision
making, has to be seen within a framework of largely informal,
individualised practices.

In most West Indian associations in Easton, there appears to
be a blend of formalised procedures, for example, a concern with
'procedural etiquette', and a high degree of personalised debate.
It is not suggested that the West Indian associations observed
in the research were completely informal in their decision making.
Indeed, there is a marked concern with formal agendas and so forth,
but these procedures are often seen (by members) as outward manifestations
of respectability. They are the 'right thing to do', as one West
Indian described them. Therefore, there is a kind of formal ritualism
observable at most West Indian meetings which partly conceals the
informal nature of the group interaction within this context.

Within this framework, group situations are often dominated by
'personalities' and highly individualised debate. These key figures
in West Indian associations produce conflicting results. In many
ways their presence initiates a form of organisation in which an
individual, provided he has the necessary support from other members,
can dominate an association and thus overcome the dissension which is
common in these associations. Conversely, and more commonly, the
rigidity of this situation provokes further internal conflicts and
acrimony. Criticism is often used in a negative manner so that
individual proposals are often discarded without any substantive alternative policies being offered in their place. The demise of the Sports and Social Club and the failure of the J.W.A. to organise communal support for their Community Centre project can be seen as illustrative of the repercussions of these organisational difficulties.

It has been shown that island distinctions within the West Indian settlement are extremely important in 'explaining' the 'forces' which make for variations in the balance between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in communal or island-exclusive associations established by West Indians in the locality. These island distinctions appear to be more important in affecting those West Indian associations which have overtly economic and/or political objectives rather than purely recreational aims. The mistrust which surrounds financial matters is also quite marked and corresponds to similar social patterns in the West Indies.

Most of the voluntary associations in Easton which do have some political aims or functions, for example, the J.W.A., the B.W.I.C., the Cultural Group and the Island Development Associations, are 'moderate' organisations which seek changes within their own communities in Britain and/or the Caribbean, without resort to violence or any methods which might disrupt relationships between themselves and the host community. Most West Indian activists within these associations are middle or upwardly mobile working class West Indians who have acquired a living standard which is somewhat better than the majority of West Indians in Easton. In many cases these activists are first generation West Indians who have resided in Easton for many years.

The exceptions to the above were provided by the B.P.G., and a minority of activists within the Cultural Group and the J.W.A.
These were younger, second generation West Indians, mainly from working class backgrounds who lived in Lowdale. They advocated more 'militant' forms of political expression which were likely to be socially unacceptable both to the host community and the vast majority of West Indians in Easton.

The pattern of West Indian activism in Easton shows many similarities to the patterns of leadership in the Caribbean which have been previously described. It has been shown, for example, that 'leadership' in Easton is commonly, but not exclusively, the prerogative of the middle and upwardly mobile working class West Indians in the city. However, irrespective of class position, very few West Indians are prepared to adopt 'leadership' positions in local West Indian voluntary associations because of a recurrent pattern of what might be termed 'leadership deprecation' among West Indians in Easton.

This pattern can be partly attributed to the existence of an egalitarian value system within the West Indian settlement which deprecates any group or individual who is perceived by other West Indians as 'getting above themselves'. Similarly, there is a general ethos of mistrust and jealousy among West Indians in the city which surrounds the occupancy of leadership positions or 'influential roles' within West Indian voluntary associations, particularly those connected with financial matters. These social patterns are very similar to the nature of associational activity in Caribbean societies, particularly among the 'lower classes'.
These factors, together with others which will be analysed in greater detail later in the study\(^{28}\), contribute to the observed scarcity and ephemerality of West Indian non-recreational, political associations in Easton. This pattern of ephemerality and fragmentation further confirms the findings of previous studies of West Indians in Britain which were mentioned earlier in the thesis. Having established what appears to be a consistent characteristic of West Indian voluntary associations, both in Britain and the Caribbean, the following chapter will be concerned with an examination of another feature of West Indian social organisation, namely family and household structure.

---

\(^{28}\) See Chap. 6
Chapter Four

Family Organisation Among West Indians in Easton

There are few aspects of Caribbean social structure which lend themselves to explicit statements and nicely rounded definitions. The passage of history has contrived to weave a tapestry of social relationships which are as varied as the colour gradations found among the individuals who exist within them. Nevertheless, even within this rich profusion, the area of family and kinship has produced a greater variety of debate (and confusion) than most other aspects of the social structure of West Indian societies.

It is not necessary here to delve too deeply into the more contentious areas of this debate. Nevertheless, an outline of the main characteristics of family and household structures in the Caribbean will be useful for purposes of comparison with the family and kinship patterns observed in the present study among West Indians in Easton. It is important to realise at the outset that variations in Caribbean family and kinship patterns have to be viewed against the systems of social stratification of the different West Indian societies. It has been shown that the latter commonly follows a three-tiered model of a white elite

and a mass black proletariat/peasantry, with a 'mixed' middle class sandwiched between the two of them\(^2\). Moreover, in recent years, since many islands have achieved full or semi-independence, the white elite has been replaced by the middle class but this does not appear to have led to significant changes in family and kinship patterns.

This is mainly due to the fact that those differences in family and kinship patterns which are widely separated (by social scientists) as significant tend to follow the lines of social class. Thus, the higher strata usually adhere to the legal marriage unit common in most Western industrialised societies, although there are certain subtle distinctions which are of importance. However, the main concern in the present study is with those family and household units which typify the lower classes, and they, it must be remembered, represent the vast majority of individuals in each of the West Indian societies in the Caribbean. At this class level, there is considerable variation both between islands and regionally within them. These variations must be kept in mind throughout the discussion which follows. It should be emphasised, moreover, that the characteristics singled out in this discussion are not intended as a definitive typology of 'lower class' family structures in the Caribbean.

Katrin Fitzherbert\(^3\) has stressed the importance of regarding the West Indian family unit as a highly flexible and variable type of social organisation. She believes that it is more important

\(^2\) See p. 33

\(^3\) Katrin Fitzherbert. *West Indian Children in London*, Occasional Papers on Social Administration, No. 19, (London, Bell and Sons, 1967)
to consider differences in locality rather than those between island societies. There are rural/urban distinctions within islands but rural and urban patterns may be similar in different islands. Patterns of family organisation depend upon a number of local contingencies, political, economic and social. These contingencies depend very largely on how individuals and groups view their own life situations and those of their neighbours. Thus, 'family' as a local phenomenon may be more dependent on how the term is meaningful to the individuals within this social group than on more concrete features such as blood ties, marriage forms and patterns of land tenure.

Legal marriage among the West Indian lower classes usually coincides with 'economic maturation'. That is to say a time, often when common-law partners are middle-aged, when the male has sufficient wealth or income to marry, with all the necessary ceremonies. A study, carried out by Cumper in Jamaica⁴, illustrated the complexities which can exist within a particular society. What he shows is the way in which different forms of economic organisation can influence the pattern of 'economic maturation' in the sense of determining whether this comes in middle or old age or earlier.

According to Cumper, two economic subsystems can be distinguished in Jamaica. He calls them the 'estate' and the 'peasant' subsystems and they contain, respectively, landless wage-earners and landed, self-employed peasants. He shows how

---

economic relationships, particularly as they affect the male role, can help to shape family forms. Thus, among the landed, self-employed or 'peasant' group, economic relationships act to strengthen family ties and, in particular, to reinforce the central position of the father. Among the landless wage-earners in the 'estate' subsystem, however, the degree of coincidence between economic and family relationships is considerably lower. The estates display sharp status differences in terms of economic and monetary rewards, differences which do not arise to the same extent in the more homogeneous peasant communities. In the estate society, the fact that status is vested in male workers coincides with the fact that the male-centred family has high prestige. This produces a family form which, while normatively similar to the peasant one, is functionally different. Thus, in the peasant community, common-law marriage is a transitional state, a stage on the road to legal marriage. As with advancing age, the male head of the family grows economically more secure, coming, for example, to increase the amount of land under his control, so he tends to establish a legal relationship with his common-law spouse. On the estate, by contrast, legal marriage is not, to anything like the same extent, a normal 'end-state'. Moreover, the permanence of common-law marriages tends to vary, not in relation to age, but in relation to the performance of the worker in his economic role.

In a study of family and household units in Jamaica, Grenada and Carriacou, Michael G. Smith lists certain common features of lower class family organisation in these islands:
Their household heads are of either sex, their members are differentiated by birth status, they practice alternative forms of mating, they differentiate parental roles in correspondence with these alternative mating forms. Their domestic units vary widely in size and constitution. Consensual cohabitation is ambiguous in so far as it may dissolve or develop into marriage, which is therefore structurally indeterminate. 5

He goes on to state that:

'All the societies we have been studying have a formal commitment to monogamy, a ban on polygyny, a plurality of mating forms and of elementary and domestic family organisation alike. 6

The general features of family organisation must be related to the historical context out of which they have evolved over the past few centuries. Smith shows how the persistence of high illegitimacy rates, unstable unions, and anomalous forms of domestic grouping in the West Indies, are all due to the same historical conditions 7. Such conditions had their origin in slavery, in particular the mating organisation of slaves within a system of permanent domination. West Indian slaves were not allowed to marry, but they were free — indeed they were encouraged — to 'cohabit consensually' or to mate extra-residentially without any limitations other than the provision that they could not establish a common home:

'In both the hill and plains populations of Jamaica, and in other West Indian societies, emancipation merely permitted the adoption of a new mating form; it could not abolish the old mating system; nor

---

6. Ibid., p. 255
7. Ibid., p. 260
could the new form introduced into this traditional
dual system displace either of its original forms.\(^8\)

Smith makes an important distinction between conjugal and casual
relations, a distinction which rests on the public recognition of
these respective forms and the social regulation of mating and
parenthood within them. The family is seen as a system of
interrelationships extending beyond household units. If Smith's
analysis is compared with a study carried out in Guyana by Raymond
T. Smith, certain similarities may be observed, although there are
points of difference with respect to lower class West Indian family
organisation:

1. The 'household' rather than the 'family' should be
taken as the main unit of analysis.

2. The distinctions between legal and illegal forms of
'marriage' or individual status are erroneous for
purposes of sociological analysis.

3. The 'father' plays a marginal and unimportant role
in the family.

4. There is a tendency for 'matrifocal' dominance.

5. Matrifocality and male marginality are due to the
ascribed nature of stratification, low rates of
social mobility, restricted public roles for adult
men in terms of a marked absence of 'managerial'
functions, political responsibilities and status
differentiation.\(^9\)

Raymond Smith elaborates his position concisely when he states:

'It is apparent that in speaking of the family in the
Caribbean we are dealing with a number of varying
types, which we may either distinguish and classify
terms of a series of specific characteristics; or which
we may attempt to distinguish in terms of their structural
characteristics and functional relation to other elements
of the social structure.'\(^10\)

8. Ibid., p. 261
10. Raymond T. Smith, 'The Family in the Caribbean', in Vera Rubin,
op. cit., pp. 67-75
A somewhat similar set of propositions outlined by Hyman Rodman, describe the general characteristics of West Indian family types in a very lucid and understandable way. These propositions, which are based on data from Trinidad, outline features of the social organisation of the family and these will be taken as a basis for the remaining discussion in this chapter:

1. Legal marriage is the preferred marital form, but alternative marital unions are also included within the normative range.

2. Legitimate childbirth is preferred, but illegitimate children born within an alternative marital union are normatively accepted.

3. There are strong individualistic and personal elements in all kinship relationships which are both empirically and normatively expected.

4. Kinship relationships are characterised by replaceability and permissiveness. These characteristics are also empirically and normatively expected.

These propositions demonstrate the complexity of household and family structures in the West Indies. Among the lower classes, there is a tendency towards flexibility and fluidity in family organisation. This is not the case to anything like the same extent with family organisation among the middle and upper classes.

---


12. All references in this chapter to lower-class family organisation in the Caribbean refer to negro or predominantly negro-mixed families. In some societies, particularly Trinidad and Guyana, there are significant East Indian populations. Although there are some similarities between negro and West Indian family patterns, the latter form a separate entity which are not included in the present analysis. For a discussion and bibliography pertaining to East Indian families see, R. T. Smith, 'Culture and Social Structure in the Caribbean', op. cit., p. 449.

13. Rodman, op. cit., p. 191
or even among those who are upwardly mobile from the lower classes. However, there is a danger of adopting an ethnocentric perspective and thus impressing the normative expectations of a white middle class observer onto the material. This is illustrated by the tendency of some academics to view West Indian family life as typified by 'promiscuity', 'loose' attitudes towards sex and legal marriage, high illegitimacy, and general 'immorality'. One illustration of a not untypical academic viewpoint can be taken from the work of Judith Blake who sees the lower class family in Jamaica as characterised by:

'A vicious circle, in which lack of control breeds lack control; illegitimacy breeds illegitimacy and frustration breeds frustration.'

Blake rejects the notion that West Indians are merely acting in terms of alternative norms, and that common law unions are simply replacements for marriage in a legal sense. She argues that eventual legal marriage belies this point, and that the mere presence of an alternative form does not necessarily imply lack of acquiescence with 'conventional' marital norms. She is criticised by M. G. Smith for impressing middle class values onto her data and thus explaining marriage (that is to say legal marriage) as a normative state to be aspired to. This leads, in Smith's opinion, to an explanation of the low incidence of such marriages among the lower classes in terms of the prevalence of the 'ruined innocence'


15. Ibid., p. 180

16. M. G. Smith, op. cit.
of West Indian women. Smith points out that this argument is contradicted by the fact that most women accept pre-marital relations as normal. He further argues that marriage, particularly in rural communities, is seen as an essential condition of maturity and social status rather than as a basis for procreation. He is supported by a study by Henriques in which the latter argues that the use of 'labels' such as 'promiscuity' and 'illegitimacy' as indices of family disorganisation can only obscure the real nature of the problem. This is to be understood by a consideration of those power relationships, shaped by an historical past of oppression and social constraint, which render all social patterns for the subordinate majority as 'unstable'. Henriques suggests that:

'Jamaican society is in a state of dysnomia of which the major causes are poverty and colour. The family structure betrays the influence of poverty and is the result of a response to the general social situation.'

It can be seen from this brief discussion of merely one aspect of family organisation in the West Indies that controversies abound. Rodman explains this when he argues that:

'Very few ethnographic studies have been published about lower-class Negro communities in the U.S.A. or the Caribbean. This is one reason for the sharp controversies about whether family life is organized or disorganized; whether the families reflect a culture of poverty or a poverty of culture; whether they represent strength or weakness; whether a war on poverty should focus on the deficiencies of a society which perpetuates poverty.'


He could have added the heated debates about the acceptability of the 'household' or 'family' as the basic unit for analysis, the question of whether an undifferentiated or uniform pattern of family organisation can be discerned among the lower classes in the Caribbean, to say nothing of the continuous debates over the predominance of historical (retention of African culture) or contemporary (specific economic and social deprivation) factors in explaining the genesis of such family patterns 20.

Despite these debates, it can be seen that there are certain generally accepted features of West Indian family organisation. These include the flexibility of role relationships within the family unit; the general acceptance of legal marriage as a status prerequisite the attainment of which is equated with a degree of personal and economic maturity; the relative importance of matrifocality; the highly personalised and individualistic role expectations embedded in the overall framework of the family structure; the class and status divisions which are believed to characterise various family types; the existence of stereotypes both within and between classes which generate group images which may extend beyond the parameters of family and household organisation; and finally, the important point that these general features can be extended to a potential host society and the effects which this may have on host-migrant relations.

The present study is not concerned with a detailed examination of the origins, or 'historical underpinnings', of those features of family organisation which have been outlined above. However, it can be suggested that a suitable explanatory framework would view the contemporary characteristics of lower-class West Indian family organisation as the result of a multiplicity of internal and external contingencies. These would certainly include various forms of economic and social deprivation as well as the historical ramifications of, not only African origins, but also that particular blend of inter-societal contacts which mark the on-going process of colonialism and settlement between Britain and the various West Indian societies.

Within this perspective, the 'labelling' of certain perceived or non-perceived characteristics of lower-class family life can be seen to influence in-group and out-group formations along the lines of 'deviant' and 'non-deviant' activities. This leads to the conclusion, posited by Rodman, that 'deviant' acts with West Indian lower-class family units are solutions not problems for the lower classes; such acts only become 'deviant' by the labelling of the middle class. In this case, Rodman is referring to labelling by the middle classes in the Caribbean, but the present researcher would wish to broaden this type of perspective to include those members of the white population in Britain who may also 'perceive' the social organisation of immigrant (and indigenous) West Indian families in this way.

21. Rodman, op. cit., p. 197
Returning to the contextual nature of the values of particular groups at any given time or place in society, the fourfold schema constructed by Rodman to indicate the predominant value positions adopted by different groups can be usefully referred to at this point. Within this classification, value positions change according to particular social contexts but generally they may be equated, as far as Rodman is concerned, with higher and lower positions within the lowest stratum of the stratification hierarchy of West Indian societies as previously described. The value positions are as follows:

**Middle class values** - lower class individuals share middle class values and have not developed any alternative. This designation is situational and shows no differences in cultural values between lower and higher strata in society.

**Lower class values** - lower class individuals have abandoned middle class values and have developed their own values. This designation is subcultural and there is a distinct difference in cultural values between strata.

'**Value Stretch**' - lower class individuals share middle class values and have also developed alternative values.

'**Pragmatism**' - lower class individuals have abandoned all values in a particular area and act in the light of circumstances.\(^22\)

These positions can be seen as responses to the Mertonian problem of inability to act in accordance with society's dominant values because of forms of deprivation\(^23\). It will be seen that these responses fit in with several classifications of conjugal unions and

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 193

family patterns in the West Indies. One of these will be given for illustration, namely the classification developed by T. S. Simey. This classification parallels similar categories discussed previously, including, among others, those constructed by Henriques and Edith Clarke. It is important to note that the categories used in Simey's classification are meant to apply to West Indian societies generally with the added proviso that:

'They are usually correlated with economic and social status, colour, land ownership and to a lesser extent with rural and urban residence.'

Simey's classification is this:

1. Christian families - patriarchal units based on legal marriage.
2. Faithful Concubinage - patriarchal without legal sanctions.
3. 'Companionate' unions - consensual co-habitation of less than three years.
4. 'Disintegrate' families - women with their children or grandchildren.

This classification of conjugal unions and family patterns conveys an impression of the nature of social stratification in West Indian societies generally. Together with the schema of responses developed by Rodman, a schema which represents value positions within the lower stratum alone, it provides a useful means for synthesising the discussion so far. Thus, whilst Rodman emphasises that 'value-stretch' is the characteristic value position of most members of the lower

24. Henriques, op. cit.
25. Edith Clarke, op. cit.
26. Patterson, Dark Strangers, op. cit., p. 262
classes, he recognises that the other positions are possible and indeed observable at this level in the stratification hierarchy. Similarly, Simey acknowledges that the first position in his classification — 'Christian Families' — is usually found only in the upper and middle strata. Hence, in both these models, there is a cut-off point above which legal unions, and below which non-legal unions are the norm. This cut-off point coincides approximately with the dividing lines between the middle and the lower strata. It is worth stressing that each of the above categories is only an approximation. Moreover, legal, Christian marriage is the ideal at all levels in the stratification hierarchy. Thus, in the lower classes, such a position may be acquired late in life if 'economic maturity' is achieved. Conversely, within the upper and middle classes, particularly for men, the legal marriage unit may still allow some flexibility in the sense that extra-marital relationships may not result in complete breakdown of the marriage, although such relationships are not openly condoned. Bearing these qualifications in mind, one can now turn to an examination of West Indian groupings in Britain in order to see whether any changes have occurred in family organisation and marital patterns consequent upon migration.

Comparatively few in-depth studies of West Indian groupings in Britain have been carried out so far. Most of the information currently available has been gleaned from 'community' studies which

28. For a brief but excellent synopsis of the 'debates' surrounding these issues see, M. G. Smith, 'Introduction', in Clarke, op. cit., pp. I-XX
examine various groups within a given geographical location. This is a useful approach, but it often, by necessity, lacks depth by attempting an overall appraisal which often has to neglect some some constituent parts of specific group structures.

Katrin Fitzherbert represents an exception. In her study of West Indian families in London, a study connected with a project centred on child welfare, she has provided us with much valuable information. She stresses the flexibility and variability of family organisation both among West Indians in the Caribbean, and among West Indians and natives in Britain. There are, she notes, many differences between English and West Indian family styles although many of them are subtle and based on similar normative prescriptions. There are also considerable difficulties in comparing family life styles cross-culturally, particularly since it is extremely hazardous to try to allow for class and status differentials. Fitzherbert mentions a number of differences between English and West Indian family styles ranging from attitudes to family structure and instability, fostering and child care, and to education and child rearing practices.

In addition she notes differences in language, food and dress habits, religious practices, and attitudes to welfare services. Finally, there are differences in temperament and the degree of formality in friendship and sexual relations. A number of factors

29. See discussion in Introduction, pp. 3–6
30. Fitzherbert, op. cit.
31. For a discussion of some of the problems of cross-cultural analysis, see Donald P. Warwick and Samuel Osherson, (eds.), Comparative Research Methods, (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1973)
32. Fitzherbert, op. cit.
influence variation in these patterns, including island of origin, class position, length and place of residence in Britain, age and sex differentials etc. Similar differences exist, of course, among native British groupings. However, this is not to say that everything is relative. There appear to be important distinctions in family types, the classification of which would benefit from further research, particularly into the everyday life of families over time. The interesting feature is to see how patterns of migration and settlement have influenced the structure of the West Indian lower class family as it has moved from a partly rural, peasant-based economy to an urban-industrial milieu. Research on these lines is in its infancy, if indeed such a comparative approach has been born at all.

Robert Bell has compared lower class negro families in Philadelphia with a sample of West Indian families in Reading, Berkshire, and has drawn some interesting conclusions. He suggests, for example, that West Indian views on sex and marriage are moving towards an 'English' concept of monogamy. He also argues that, for both marriage partners, the West Indian family unit provides more meaningful roles than found in the family structure of a comparable American negro sample. Thus, the former incorporates roles which are more closely related to opportunities for the man to be a breadwinner and the wife expects certain rights

because she, too, has economic independence. Bell concludes
that West Indians generally have higher aspirations than
American negroes. However, this is only an isolated study the
results of which have not been further researched. Therefore,
one cannot draw concrete conclusions from it.

One study which has been concerned with similar comparative
problems, although within the wider context of West Indian social
organisation generally, is that of Sheila Patterson\textsuperscript{34}. Her profile
of the Jamaican community in Brixton includes an analysis of family
organisation and of the changes produced by migration and
settlement. In this study she constructed a classification of
family types based on earlier studies of West Indian societies,
particularly the one by T. S. Simey\textsuperscript{35}. Patterson\textsuperscript{36} adopted the
following classification which she took as corresponding to
both West Indian societies and West Indian settlements in Britain
(with the proviso that the majority of West Indians in Brixton
were Jamaicans).

A. Legalised Monogamous Units
   1. Patricent\textsuperscript{al}
   2. Egalitarian

B. Units based on Concubinage or Non-Legal Unions
   1. Faithful
   2. Unstable or Housekeeper

C. Maternal Units
   1. Matricent\textsuperscript{al}
   2. Matrilineal

\textsuperscript{34} Patterson, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{35} Simey, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{36} Patterson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 264
The following comments by Patterson should be considered in relation to the classification which she offered:

"In Type A units the stress falls mainly on the conjugal link between man and wife; in Type B it falls to a lesser or greater degree on consanguineous bonds. In Type C1 the mother keeps most or all of her children with her; in Type C2 she goes away to work and leaves them with her own mother, grandmother, sister or cousin.

Type A is in the West Indies found only in the upper and middle classes, and in a small, upwardly mobile section of the lower class. Type A2 is virtually restricted to the younger professional minority. Types B and C in all their variations are normal lower-class patterns."

The vast majority of migrants in Patterson's study were lower class and, consequently, family patterns tended towards types B and C. However, this was an early study, carried out in the late 1950's and most of the West Indians who came under scrutiny appear to have lived in Britain for less than two years. It is unlikely that such a period of settlement was long enough for any significant changes to have occurred. Nevertheless, the general tendency seems to be towards a greater incidence of legal marriage. Thus, a study of a sample of Jamaicans who had lived in Britain for two years, reported by Davison in 1966, showed that the proportion among them who were legally married had risen from 22% to 52% since migration to Britain. Further confirmation of this trend is provided by the present study. Since this study is based on a sample which is more representative of the West Indies generally than any of the studies discussed above, it would seem that one is dealing here with a trend which is general among West Indians in Britain and not simply confined to 'Jamaicans.'

37. Ibid.
38. Davison, Black British, op. cit.
As was noted earlier, the West Indian settlement in Easton has a relatively settled population. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of the 108 respondents in the sample had lived in the city for several years. In fact, no fewer than 76% had lived in Easton for at least eleven years and some had lived there for as much as sixteen or seventeen years.39

Whilst all the family types included in Patterson's classification were observed in the sample, there was a preponderance of legal unions. Thus, 59 out of a total of 68 residential units were based on male-female unions. Of these, 47 involved legal marriages, and only 12, non-legal unions. There were, in addition, 4 women living with one or two children but without a male partner, and 4 men and 5 women who were living completely alone. Of the 47 married couples, 26 had married since arrival in Britain. In some cases, the couple had met for the first time in Britain but, in others, they had known one another in the West Indies. Often, one spouse came to Britain, became established, and then sent for his or her partner. Usually, this involved a husband sending for his wife or, if they were not yet married, an unmarried man sending for his girl friend or fiancee. For example, Mr. R..., a Nevisian said:

"I came over in '61 and came to Easton because my brother was here though he's gone to Birmingham now. I stayed with him and his wife for a couple of years almost, had a good job at .......... getting some money together until I could get some rooms of my own. I sent over for my wife and she left the two kids with her sister until the year after when they came over and we was all together. We managed to scrape up enough for this house, so we're pretty settled now."

39. See Table 5, p. 81
This was a fairly typical case, although in a number of instances a single man or woman had come to Britain with no relatives or friends and had married since his or her arrival. Thus, Mr. B., an Antiguan said:

"I worked for the railway in London when I arrived but I wasn't too keen on the conditions there. I shared a house with several other men and I had a friend in Easton who wrote and said the jobs and houses were easier here so I came up here in 1961 and worked as a packer. I met my wife here soon after and we got married the year after and we've been here ever since in the same job, although I've moved house about three times."

Since several couples had maintained such unions since their arrival in Britain, many of the non-legal unions were apparently permanent. Moreover, the existence of a trend towards legal marriage was confirmed by informants from several islands who had lived in the area since the earliest arrival of West Indians in Easton. Discussions with local clergymen indicated that many West Indians had married soon after arrival in the city. They also suggested that legal marriage had become the norm for younger couples, particularly those who had been born or, more commonly, received most of their education in Britain. Unfortunately, owing to the lack of a statistically valid sampling frame, it cannot be stated that this trend towards legal marriage is representative of all West Indians in Easton (and certainly not in Britain) but it does seem to indicate a tendency in that direction among West Indians since their arrival in this country.

It is significant to recall in this connection that the sample was drawn mainly from West Indians with lower-class origins in their respective islands. Comparatively few respondents could be placed,
using occupational indices, within the middle classes. This raises the interesting possibility that settlement in Britain, at least in the urban area which forms the subject of this study, is leading the class differences in family patterns which exist in the West Indies to disappear. It may simply be the case that the migrant lower class is undergoing a process of internal differentiation as far as patterns of marriage and family organisation are concerned. Alternatively, what we may be witnessing is an upwardly mobile working class - upwardly mobile, that is to say, relative to the working classes in their islands of origin - and possibly even the incipient emergence of a migrant middle class.

Several factors would seem to be significant in such a process. The major one is the rise in economic status experienced by many West Indian individuals in Easton. The predominance of non-legal unions amongst the lower-class in the West Indies was explained earlier by the existence of values in terms of which economic maturity is a necessary precondition for entry into legal marriage. Thus, with a rise in earnings and greater material stability, (the majority of our sample claimed that they were 'better-off' or 'much better-off' in money terms in Britain), many West Indians see themselves as having risen in social status. This has meant that many older West Indians, who previously adhered to a non-legal union, now consider themselves to be in a position legally to marry, whilst many younger West Indians are in an economic position which enables them

40. See Table 9, p. 91
41. This pattern of deferred legal marriage is a common practice in the West Indies, see, for example, Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 105.
to enter a legal union immediately, or at least to change from a non-legal to a legal union at a much earlier age than their parents had done.

Among the other factors which have played a part in promoting the tendency towards legal marriage and in transforming some unstable unions into stable ones, the increasing financial independence experienced by many West Indian women in Britain appears to have been important. However, this trend towards greater financial independence on the part of West Indian women is not without its strains and stresses. The comments offered by Morris Freilich and Lewis Coser on the 'gratificatory system' (that is to say the system of negative and positive sanctions) within the Caribbean mating pattern are appropriate here:

"In view of their minimal rewards, women will gladly turn to alternatives if such should present themselves. They will have much to gain from modernization which would offer them some means for reducing their dependency on their sexual partners. When forces of industrialisation or urbanisation begin seriously to impinge on the system, the male-female relationship will emerge as one of the weakest links in the structure. Here, as elsewhere, exploitative relationships will be resisted, and strains towards complete reciprocity will emerge in full force once traditional impediments to equalization have begun to crumble." 43

There is every sign that these 'traditional impediments' are crumbling and that the process of migration from the Caribbean to Britain is akin to the processes of modernisation in so far as they are occurring within particular West Indian societies themselves.

---

42. See p. 86

The isolation of West Indian family units in Britain may also promote stability in so far as the segregation of conjugal roles common to the West Indies may be broken down. Patterns of work, a lack of recreational outlets and a harsh social existence forces many West Indian men to spend much more of their time in the household with their wives than would be the case in the Caribbean. However, these changes in family relationships will depend very largely on the size of the local West Indian population and, more specifically, on the presence or otherwise of friends and kinfolk within a particular island grouping. In many ways the social communality of West Indian village life, and the co-operative efforts of matrilineal kin, have been largely destroyed in the sombre urban locations of Britain. The terraced back streets and cold exterior of the urban landscape in the host society is a far cry from the warm spontaneity and camaraderie of the 'yard life' of the Caribbean. Many West Indians in the present study, particularly the women, constantly reiterated the fact that the lively, outdoor and warm environment of their home town or village had changed to the indoor life of, at best, a warm fire, a few friends, and the television. At worst, it was a withdrawn, socially isolated existence amongst damp walls, paraffin stoves and overcrowded rooms.

Other influences in this trend have been the ratio of West Indian women to men in Britain, which tends to favour women rather more than is the case in the West Indies. This reduction in

44 It would be a most rewarding (although difficult) task to study the links between changes in the 'connectedness' of the West Indian family network and the conjugal roles within it, both before and after migration to Britain. The study by Bott would be an obvious choice for comparison. See Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network, (London, Tavistock, 1957).
competition for males, reinforced by the fact that the availability of white women redresses the balance only marginally—there are strong taboos in Britain on inter-racial sexual unions—has helped family units to stabilise even further. More direct social pressures from British society itself may also have played an important part in producing this trend towards a greater proportion of legal marriages among West Indians. Local mores condemn non-legal unions far more strongly than their counterparts in the West Indies. Whilst, as has been shown, legal unions may be normatively aspired to in the West Indies, the extent of non-legal unions belies the existence of severe constraints in that direction. Moreover, contact between the middle and lower classes in the West Indies is not of a degree or type to permit effective censure. In any case, the retention, at least among middle class men, of forms of permissiveness akin to that which exists among the lower classes serves to dissipate even further social control of lower class sexual patterns from that source.

In Britain, however, West Indians are faced with the dominant value system of the host society which largely condemns non-legal unions. Even without a high degree of social contact between West Indians and local whites (a tendency firmly indicated in our survey) contacts with certain local institutions such as schools, churches and welfare agencies, as well as the influence of the media, provide indirect social control in this area. Patterson has suggested, for example, that:

'Another powerful incentive may be provided when the migrant's children are sufficiently old to compare their own and their schoolmates family circumstances, and to exert pressure on their parents or parent to conform to local patterns'.

45. Patterson, op. cit., p. 268
All these factors, in isolation or combined, are likely to increase the proportion of legal marriages among West Indians in Britain. This is certainly the general picture which emerges from the survey and complimentary research on which the present study is based. However, it should be noted that many West Indians in our sample were legally married before arrival in Britain. Moreover, whilst very few respondents could be clearly defined as middle class, many of them were upwardly mobile skilled workmen, and hence more likely to be legally married.

Patterson, whilst mentioning many of the points previously discussed in relation to factors producing more stable unions, also points out that certain of these factors could serve to fragment family units. Similarly, Sheila Allen has argued that whilst the urban location of West Indians in Western industrialised societies such as Britain tends to provide constraining influences towards legal unions, mainly from the host society, the nature of the urban existence of West Indians means a slackening of their social controls over certain types of non-legal union, controls which would be exercised in the communal closeness of a village or small-town setting in the Caribbean.

It is important to stress once again that whilst forms of non-legal union are condoned among the lower-class in the Caribbean, this does not indicate an anarchic situation where 'promiscuity' and 'immorality' are the norm. Indeed, the values attached to non-legal unions by West Indians in the Caribbean are practically identical to those equated with legal unions. The

46. Allen, *op. cit.*, p.83
urban situation in Britain places the West Indian in a social context
which is confused and hence the indigenous family and kinship
structures of the Caribbean are 'pushed and pulled' by their new
cultural and social environment, often with paradoxical results.
Thus, Sheila Allen perceives that family and kinship patterns among
West Indian communities in Britain display:

'Two contradictory trends of greater degrees of legal
marriage but less control over nonlegal unions existing
together and having to be seen in relation to a
multiplicity of pressures and counterpressures exerted
on West Indian men and women in the context of British
society.'47

The importance of these 'contradictory trends' for West Indian
political organisation will be discussed later in this chapter.48
At this point it should be noted that the greater economic 'stability'
of West Indians in Britain compared with their situation in the
Caribbean, appears to have influenced a trend towards legal marriage
in the host society but this economic improvement may also have
the reverse effect and enable individuals, notably West Indian women,
to break a legal, or perhaps more commonly, non-legal, stable unit
and exist on their own resources. (However, this latter pattern
appears to be less common in Easton where the majority of West
Indian families studied were stable units).

It has been shown that many West Indian women in Easton have
full-time jobs49. In the majority of cases this is a necessity
brought about by the perceived desire to supplement the income of
the male partner in the family unit. The important thing to note

47. Ibid.
48. See pp. 246–247
49. See Table 6, p. 86
in this connection is that, even the remuneration of lowly paid manual
or unskilled work appears to give many West Indian women a degree
of financial independence which they did not enjoy in their home
island. The consequent lessening of financial dependence on men
has enabled some West Indian women to sever 'marital' relationships
with sometimes long-standing male partners. The availability of
social security benefits in Britain has also contributed to this
situation. There were some West Indian women in Easton, who
voluntarily or involuntarily, were bringing up a family without a
male partner. In many cases, this was because the women had been
left to fend for themselves by a common-law partner, but several
women had established independent households since arriving in
Britain, breaking long-standing legal or more often common-law
partnerships in order to do so. Nevertheless, it should be
stressed that this eventuality was relatively untypical in what
has been shown to be a largely stable West Indian settlement.

It has been shown that (with the exception of the B.W.I.C.)
the formal associations established by West Indians in Easton are
dominated by men. Nevertheless, many West Indian women are
influential in the informal organisation of their communities.
For example, some West Indians in Easton have established rotating
credit associations [50] in their respective island communities. These
are usually based on family and kinship networks and many of the
'bankers' are women. Many West Indians maintained that these
financial associations are less frequent in Britain than in the home
island because of the greater availability of alternative financial

50. See p. 53
organisations in this country. Consequently, they are able to use the economic outlets for saving or borrowing money provided by the host society or even, in some cases, those provided by the local Asian communities.

However, rotating credit associations are fairly common, particularly among those West Indian communities in Easton which originated from the smaller islands. Several associations of this type were discovered in, for example, the Barbudan, Montserratian and Antiguan communities. In most cases, these were based on two or three families who were closely related in kinship terms. It was difficult to ascertain why so many of the bankers in these associations were women but many West Indian respondents argued that it was because the women in the household could be trusted and could therefore perform this kind of role which depended on a high degree of mutual trust among members. It has certainly been argued that the female is very influential in West Indian households generally. Therefore, the performance of 'banker' roles in these credit associations may be an illustration of her importance. Certainly it gives some West Indian women a degree of power which, due to their exclusion from formal leadership positions, is denied them within wider communities.

In addition to their participation in credit associations, some West Indian women in Easton were widely known for their provision of certain services for their communities. It has been shown, for example, that one of the leading members of the B.W.I.C. owned a hairdressing salon which acted as a focal point for informal discussion among West Indians in Easton. Similarly, some women were well-known in the city for arranging weddings and christenings for West Indians. These women would make wedding cakes and arrange
for parties in the bride's parents' home after the marriage service. Other women ran dressmaking businesses in their spare time. These services were highly informal and often based on friendship or kinship relationships rather than impersonal financial links. They were invariably restricted to relationships between West Indian women but, often, homes where the woman provided an important service for her community or family network, served as common meeting places for both men and women. Furthermore, a few West Indian women in Easton who were 'bankers' in rotating credit associations or who were relied upon for 'social' occasions were highly influential within their respective island communities. Mrs. A. or Miss B. was looked upon as an important individual and was often consulted on activities in the community which were not necessarily connected with her primary function as a provider of a particular specialised service. These women, in common with some of the men who were more formally recognised as 'leaders', for example, of a voluntary association established by an island community, were used as advisers by other West Indians who required advice or information. The latter ranged from information about the whereabouts of a friend or relative, advice about arranging a wedding and so forth, to the passing on of gossip. Therefore, in a very restricted sense these women acted as 'information brokers' in their respective island communities, and by fulfilling this role they acquired a degree of authority within their community or family network which was denied them in more formal political roles within West Indian voluntary associations in the city.

However, it is important to note that these informal networks within West Indian communities were very restricted. Only an extremely small number of West Indian women were 'known' in their
communities for the provision of some of the services which have been briefly described above. Similarly, comparatively few West Indians belong to credit associations. But it is important to perceive West Indian family and kinship networks, particularly in small island communities where informal relationships are highly intimate and still based upon social links maintained from the home island, as associations which perform important functions for their family and kinship members and in some cases for the wider community. In addition to those functions which Rex has assigned to 'primary communities', West Indian family and kinship networks also perform certain functions which are more common to specialised voluntary associations. That is to say, in addition to the provision of such needs as are required by family and household members who 'are bound together by intimate personal ties', the informal friendship and kinship networks within West Indian communities also provide some of the specialised services required by the latter and, in addition, act as supportive agencies in conjunction with those voluntary associations established by West Indians in Easton. Finally, family and kinship networks enable certain individuals, in particular West Indian women, to participate in and occupy power positions of an informal kind within their respective island communities and possibly throughout the West Indian settlement in the city.

51. See p. 21
52. Ibid.
However, West Indian family and household networks do not embrace the multi-functional role common to the joint family systems of Indians and Pakistanis. The latter are characterised by the existence of a basic unit which differs markedly from West Indian patterns of family and household organisation.\(^5^3\)

The intricacies of the Indian and Pakistani family systems as they operate in Britain warrant further study. Moreover, a comparative appraisal of Asian and West Indian family and kinship patterns in this country would be a difficult but rewarding exercise.\(^5^4\)

At this juncture, it must be sufficient to suggest that West Indian family organisation appears to lack the system of mutual obligations which typifies the family in Asian communities. Within the latter, it is impossible to separate political and economic relationships from religious and kinship ties because they mutually interrelate with one another. The social network of an Asian community can be viewed as consisting of a number of multiple relationships in which economic goals are influenced by familial obligations. These obligations rest on the maintenance of authority relationships which stem from the home society and which are reproduced in Britain. This retention of indigenous familial obligations appears to offer greater potential (than the more individualistic West Indian

---

53. The literature on Indian, Pakistani (and more recently Bangladeshi communities in Britain is not as extensive as one would like but for an overview of the literature see, Michael Lyon, 'Ethnic Minority Problems: an overview of some recent research', New Community, Volume II, Pt. 4, 1953), pp. 329-352. For an excellent study of changes in the Hindu family brought about by migration, see, Aileen D. Ross, The Hindu Family in its Urban Setting, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1961).

54. See Lyon, op. cit., p. 349
family structure) for communal self-help and for the creation of institutions separate from those offered by the host society. This is demonstrated in the degree of financial interdependence within and among Asian communities which exists on a far more sophisticated level than the limited West Indian credit associations55.

The difference between West Indian and Asian family organisation cannot be analysed thoroughly within the present limited study but it can be suggested that a major factor for consideration is the fact that the traditional joint family common to Asian communities in Britain appears to embrace a system of mutual interdependencies which typifies a form of family organisation which has escaped the peculiar stresses of slavery and consequent forms of oppression suffered by West Indian 'families' in recent centuries. Above all, Asian family organisation reflects the influence of tradition, and of a religious base which includes a common set of values unblemished by problems of ambivalence and inconsistency. The West Indian is unable to maintain an ethnically separate identity in the British situation without severe difficulties because, historically, there is no strict separation between the Western and non-Western features of his or her life situation. That is to say, there is a built-in ambiguity in the latter, reinforced by the co-existence of conflicting value systems which were maintained in the West Indies and which have now been transposed to the British migrant situation. Many Asians can maintain a separate identity in Britain because their traditional ties depend, not upon an artificially created colonial amalgam, but upon ancient norms and prescriptions which reach back into a cultural

55. See p. 331
heritage established long before the British entered India. Historical and cultural differences such as these, in conjunction with a host of other social factors, suggest that, in terms of family organisation, the common pattern of Asian households leans towards a degree of collectivisation and mutual interdependence which is often absent in the more individualistic West Indian family units. This brings us to the question of the links between family organisation and political association among West Indians in Easton. Two main sets of questions are raised in this connection: firstly, the significance of patterns of family organisation, both in the Caribbean and in Britain, for the formation of political associations by West Indians; and secondly, the significance of these patterns in producing individuals capable of adopting active roles either in forming or maintaining such associations. The latter point will be examined first.

The status attached to male and female roles is generally important when examining the relationship between 'leadership' within the family or household unit and activism in 'external', that is non-familial, associations. There is a close connection between the availability of leadership roles within the family, the learning processes which reinforce them in that context, and the possibility of transferring these roles to external associations in which such leadership roles may be reproduced. Many studies have questioned the

56. 'The whole complex of ethnic institutions manifests the community's wish not merely to express but also to defend and perpetuate their traditional social forms, values and beliefs and identity. To put it negatively the ethnic institutions are a means of making explicit the migrant community's refusal to adopt local norms'. Badhr Dahya, 'Pakistanis in England', New Community, (Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter, 1972-3), p. 27.
availability of such roles to male partners within lower-class West Indian family units. Such families (in the Caribbean) tend to be 'matrifocal'. That is to say, the female occupies the only stable conjugal role position whilst the individuals who perform the male role within the family tend to be more or less constantly replaced. Consequently, the 'father' role tends to be significant mainly for its marginality and relative unimportance. The male can achieve a position of importance where 'economic maturation' leads to a stable union and/or marriage but, in those situations where such maturity and stability are problematic, the potential for the male to develop authority within the family is slight. The fact that in the main, ascriptive criteria are used in evaluating the male role works in the same direction. The criteria used include those of colour, class and status, and in all of these respects, that is, dark colouring, low class position, low economic stability etc., the lower-class male has little potential to obtain or maintain authority within the family. Speaking of the male role in the Caribbean, Raymond T. Smith has written:

'In rigidly stratified societies where social roles are largely allocated according to the ascriptive criteria of ethnic characteristics, the lower-class male has nothing to buttress his authority as husband-father except the dependence upon his economic support.'

57. All the studies mentioned in this chapter have supported this assumption. This question has also been widely debated in relation to the American negro male, see, for example, Frazier, op. cit., and Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in White America, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice-Hall, 1968), also E. E. Baughan and W. G. Dahlstrom, Negro and White Children, (New York, Academic Press, 1968).

58. David Lowenthal states: 'Race and colour are not the sole determinants of status in the West Indies. But class distinctions are mainly seen, and expressed, in racial terms.' See, Lowenthal, West Indian Societies, op. cit., p. 93

59. Raymond T. Smith, 'The Family in the Caribbean', op. cit., p. 73
Katrin Fitzherbert takes a similar line and goes on to compare
the position in the Caribbean with the situation in Britain:

'The paternal role (in the Caribbean) is poorly defined
and very flexible ...... it depends on the relationship,
economics, locality and landholding, the attitude to
children ...... The man in Britain has less flexibility ...
he can be the 'family man' or the 'kickster' having a
good time (but it is) very difficult to combine the
roles.'

The West Indian male in Britain tends to be caught between the mores
which prevail within his own island grouping, the possibly contradictory
norms surrounding the West Indian settlement as a whole - which may or
may not be consistent with his own class and status position - and
finally the forms of social control which emanate from the host society.
The latter, of course, may well be shaped by stereotypical 'labels'
rather than by direct interaction between the different ethnic and
racial groups.

The lower-class female tends to be placed in a similar position
in terms of colour, class and status but her position in the family,
a stable role supported by matrilineal kin, may provide her with a basis
for assuming an authority role. However, the marginality of the male
role within the (lower-class) West Indian family means that lower-class
West Indian males tend to be denied the opportunity for learning
leadership roles within the family context. Such marginality tends to
be more acute in Britain where family units based on stable male and
female roles are the norm. This means that the status loss felt by
many West Indian males tends to be emphasised even further. The female

---

60. Fitzherbert, op. cit., p. 27

61. For a discussion of the links between family decision making and
socialisation patterns and their relations to political activism,
see Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, (Princeton,
had an opportunity to develop leadership roles within the family, moreover, tends to find it difficult to adopt such roles in formal associations in Britain because, in this country, female leadership in formal associations with a sexually mixed membership is atypical and de-emphasised if not actively discouraged.

Not surprisingly, status conflict between West Indian men and women is common and can exercise an important influence on participation in associations outside the family unit. Paul Pollard, for example, in a recent study of the relationships between Jamaicans and Trinidadians in North London, observed that:

'A man is made to look weak in front of a woman, for example if both he and his wife are members of the same voluntary association, but the wife occupies the position of vice-chairman while his own position is that of general member. For this reason, and others, spouses rarely took up memberships in the same organisations in the borough.'

This is merely one example of the separation of the sexes which tends to be the norm in West Indian families. Certainly among first generation West Indians in Easton very few husbands and wives attend recreational events together. The men tend to go to the pub, dances or a sports event in small groups leaving their wives at home or to visit other wives in the locality. In addition, division of labour in the home appears to be strict with many West Indian men expressing the view that work within the home is 'women's work'. These observations are only relatively superficial, however, since intimate access to a sufficient number of West Indian homes was denied to the researcher. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that much of

the research on West Indian family organisation in the Caribbean
remarks on this separation of sexual roles and the strict division
of labour in the home\textsuperscript{63}.

One or two younger West Indian couples in the Easton sample
who were newly married and more importantly, born in this country,
appeared to be breaking away from these traditions. The husband
would assist his wife with the housework and stay at home most
evenings. This was in sharp contrast to many first generation West
Indian homes where the husband was out every evening, perhaps only
taking his wife with him at the weekend. Other young married men
continued the 'traditional' pattern and went around in small peer
groups. Again this corresponds to the findings of research
carried out in the West Indies\textsuperscript{64}.

This distinction between male and female roles tends to be
influential in local West Indian voluntary associations in a number
of ways. It prevented the amalgamation of the J.W.A. and B.W.I.C.,
for example, because of the 'suspicion' which had arisen between the
Jamaican men and the women who ran the British-West Indian Club.
It has been shown how the J.W.A. only co-operated with the B.W.I.C.
when the latter was solely concerned with catering for 'social
functions'\textsuperscript{65}. Women were encouraged to perform these kinds of duties
but were dissuaded from taking any active part in the more 'serious'

\textsuperscript{63} See, for example, Clarke, Cohen, Henriques and Kerr, \textit{ops. cit.},
also William Davenport, 'The Family System of Jamaica',

\textsuperscript{64} See, Peter J. Wilson, 'Caribbean crews: some unconsidered
aspects of social structure', paper presented at American
Anthropological Association meeting, Washington, D.C. 1967,
mimeo.; mentioned in Lowenthal, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{65} See p. 139
(as defined by West Indian men) business of policy making. Thus, many West Indian women who were better educated and more used than their male counterparts to adopting authoritative positions within the family, were denied access to most formal 'leadership positions' within the West Indian settlement.

The psychological and sociological implications of the relationship between parental roles in West Indian families and, in turn, the links between these roles and political activism require considerably more study and a greater depth of analysis than can be attempted here. Care is required in examining the problems of personality formation, socialization patterns and their relationships to particular family structures or the parental roles within those structures. Similarly, the importance of 'male marginality' and its links with leadership potential (or the lack of it) within the West Indian family, or the 'negro family' for that matter, is an extremely delicate and controversial issue.

Although the personality level is undoubtedly important in measuring the relationships between family structure and individual responses to the political process, the complexity and in many ways ill-defined nature of the concepts used to define 'personality', preclude one from making more concrete statements in this context.

However, it can be suggested that the present study is on rather more firm ground when examining the overall social structural significance of West Indian family patterns for West Indian political organisation.

It was observed earlier that the legal/non-legal dichotomy of West Indian family types follows class lines in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the degree of family stability, including the tendency towards patriarchal leadership roles, tends to vary directly with social class position. Consequently, in common with the norm in the majority of Western industrialised societies, there is a tendency for political leadership roles in the Caribbean to be dominated by middle and upper class individuals. Of course, family situation is only one of a number of factors which affect this situation. Economic stability, availability of time, educational attainment and so forth are all influential in this respect. However, the present study is concerned with those features of West Indian family organisation which appear to influence the degree of West Indian participation in associations and organisations, particularly of a political nature, which are external to the family unit. Given the fact that the majority of West Indians in Britain are working class, one would not, perhaps, expect among them a high level of participation in political and other forms of voluntary association. However, their level of activity is low relative to that of other minority groups (and the indigenous white

67. See p. 205
working class, although this is problematic). Moreover, as has been shown, the greater economic security of West Indians in this country and the associated trend towards legal marriage means that many see themselves as upwardly mobile relative to the positions they held in their home islands. It may even be the case that a proportion see themselves as becoming middle class. The increase of stable family units certainly seems to point in at least the former direction.

Hence, the continued absence of participation is puzzling, for one would expect an increase in the number of higher status family units to be coupled with a higher level of political participation.

A number of factors may account for the failure of the expected trend towards higher levels of political participation to occur. Firstly, although many West Indians have stabilised their position, they may still be affected by forms of socialisation and childhood insecurity which stem from their earlier low-class status. This may mean that personality difficulties are reproduced in the higher status position, or it may simply mean that a disinclination for activism is only a short-term phenomenon which will disappear with the increasing stability of the family unit. However, a number of factors appear to negate this kind of reasoning.

If one examines closely those upwardly mobile West Indians in Britain who have adopted legal marriage, this, together with increased economic security, appears to be the only feature which distinguishes them from West Indians who still retain non-legal forms of family organisation. Consequently, many upwardly mobile families are unable

68. See p. 315
69. See discussion in Introduction, p. 16
to confirm their 'higher' status (and/or class) position by drawing on those ascriptive attributes, for example, phenotypical characteristics, which are used in the Caribbean to indicate higher or lower class positions. Moreover, since most upwardly mobile West Indian families in Easton retain occupations, levels of educational attainment, modes of speech and dress etc. which are indicative of lower-class social status, they do not comply in terms of achieved criteria with all the status requirements for higher class positions in the West Indies.

Furthermore, whereas in West Indian societies a high class position is underpinned by acknowledgement from other strata, the status of upwardly mobile West Indians in Britain may well be undermined by the host society, both by, for example, the white middle class and the white working class. The vast majority of West Indians in Britain are subsumed under the label of 'coloured immigrant'. Moreover, distinctions within that grouping tend not to be recognised by members of the host society. Thus, those West Indian families which raise their status relative to their position in their home island, may not do so in the eyes of other West Indians in Britain, partly because their position is not reinforced by those achieved concomitants of high status which are recognised as such in the West Indies, and partly because members of the host society do not recognise and hence reinforce this 'rise' in status.

A further feature of the host society's influence is the fact that political activity on the part of upwardly mobile individuals is sometimes regarded, by the individuals themselves, as potentially damaging to their own or their family's 'respectability'. The aspiration towards high status (for example, a middle class position) among West Indians tends to take the form of aspirations towards Western European values and normative expectations. Consequently, even
with a larger proportion of West Indians within legal family units. this may well negate rather than increase the likelihood of political activity, simply because the possibility of provoking negative sanctions from the host society is raised by overt actions which may be interpreted (by members of the host society) as hostile to the latter.

Therefore, it can be seen that those upwardly mobile West Indians who do adopt activist roles, or possibly even contemplate such actions, are faced with severe problems in handling their status ambiguity, both with regard to their position in West Indian groupings and with regard to the relation of that position to the host society. Conversely, it may lead them completely or partially to reject the host society. The latter decision, observably the least likely, may increase the potential for activism within this upwardly mobile group of West Indians but this potential may be partially negated by the status distinctions previously described.

In addition, consideration must be given to the parallel existence in Britain of non-legal, fragmented West Indian family units which, because of the diffuse urban situation, are subject to a lower degree of social control by other West Indians. As suggested by several of the factors previously discussed, the nature of such unions tends to preclude activism. However, the very existence of non-legal units may also seriously affect the general level of participation among West Indians. Thus, the presence of types of family organisation which are perceived as deviating from the normative expectations of family life current in the host society may help to produce or sustain negate images among members of the latter and these stereotypes may, in their turn, influence the degree of constraint under which all West Indians in Britain are forced to live.
It can be suggested, fairly briefly, that deviant labels of 'promiscuity' and 'immorality' tend to be attached to West Indians generally because certain forms of such 'deviancy' are observable to members of the host society through contacts with welfare agencies and similar institutions. In addition, images of deviancy tend to be dramatised or distorted through the mass media, and more specifically through local gossip channels both within the West Indian settlement and, more importantly, within the host society generally. These deviant group images may cancel out or indeed completely transfigure the 'respectable image' attempted by the majority of West Indians. Such attempts, moreover, are ironically self-defeating since respectability is demonstrated by covert actions, for example, keeping away from parties and staying within the home which, because of the low degree of informal interaction between West Indians and host community members, are not readily apparent to the latter.

It is important to stress that the relation of family and social organisation to political activity is not simply a mechanical process whereby different forms of organisation within a 'family' structure give rise to a given potential for political activism. Nor is it merely a question of looking at the cultural background of a migrant group and then relating its social and cultural characteristics to those of the host society. If the latter perspective is adopted one becomes involved in the 'problems' of acculturation, assimilation and integration with their myriad connotations of mechanical lines of similarity and difference between hose and migrant groups. What has to be considered is how contemporary migrant/host contact situations are related to the historical process of interaction between the groups involved, the
emergent patterns of interdependence and of super- and subordination between them, and the belief systems which help to maintain this pattern.

The arrival of West Indians in Britain in significant numbers cannot be seen simply as a migrant, rural-based group settling in an urbanised, industrial setting with concrete cultural differences. The patterns of settlement and re-settlement of West Indians in Britain are merely one phase in the patterns of migration which have taken West Indians to the United States, Canada, Central America and now to Europe. Settlement in Britain has re-emphasised the lines of white/black domination perceived in the Caribbean. The ambivalence produced by the conflictual nature of the relationships between white and non-white, and so forth, are an extension of colonial/historical relationships, not merely a 'new stage of development' in Britain set in motion by an incoming migrant group. The settlement of West Indians in Britain has produced different forms of relationships both within and between various groupings in the host society and it will probably produce different beliefs and sentiments which will in turn influence the forms of relationship and the patterns of modification which they undergo.

Flexibility in social relationships may be perceived as beneficial in adjusting to new situations and new relationships and hence the West Indian 'family structure', in its various forms, may appear

---

70. 'West Indian migration must not be seen merely as a colonial movement of unemployed to the metropolitan economy .... but just another stage in a wider socio-cultural sense, of the circulatory migratory movement of the Caribbean folk peoples over the last sixty years, to Cuba, the Aruba oilfields, the Panama Canal Zone, the United States and now to Britain.' Gordon Lewis, 'Race Relations in Britain - A View from the Caribbean', Race Today, (Vol. 1, No. 3, July, 1969), p. 79.
convenient for such a process. However, this is to forget that those historical contingencies which produced and changed this family structure were related to forms of subordination which were expressed in and through colonial patterns of domination. West Indians in Britain now find themselves in a situation where patterns of relationships and social situations may have changed, but for many, if not all, those patterns of domination associated with colonialism still remain, and consequently the forms of subordination which have negated political expression until very recently are being reproduced in the host society. This reproduction introduces ambiguity and ambivalence within and between individuals and groups and into their perception of their situation to such an extent that it becomes extremely difficult for stable and on-going forms of political expression to be maintained.

Nevertheless, it has been suggested in this chapter that changes can be discerned within West Indian communities in Britain which do suggest a move towards consolidation and permanence in social relationships, changes which are reflected in the nature of West Indian family and social organisation in Easton and which may point towards the possibility of political organisation occurring in the future. But the eventual outcome of these changes will be contingent upon changes in power relationships and in the degree of access to resources which the host society allows or, more likely, is forced to give up.

It can be seen that patterns of West Indian family and social organisation not only influence forms of economic and political activity but also tend to promote certain beliefs and expectations within and between coloured minorities and the host society. Such beliefs in their turn, influence relations of power and domination
generally. These patterns of family and social organisation should be seen, therefore, as one important feature in any consideration of the social relationships within West Indian communities, in the relationships between such groupings, and, finally, in those between the West Indian settlement and the host community in Easton. This whole network of relationships should be viewed within the historical context of the on-going forms of subordination and superordination which initially shaped West Indian family patterns and social relations in the Caribbean. They now influence the existence of West Indian family and household units in Britain.

Having examined some of the relationships between West Indian family organisation and West Indian participation in other forms of association, the following chapter will explore, in similar fashion, the links between West Indian religious associations and the latter.
Chapter Five

Religion: West Indian Membership and Participation in Easton

The single most striking finding to emerge from this study so far is the fact that West Indians tend not to form, join or become deeply committed to formal associations. Only in one area of social life is there an exception to this general pattern: that of religious worship where their levels of membership, participation and commitment are high. This is especially the case in the West Indies but, with one or two modifications, the overall Caribbean pattern has been transplanted to the British setting. This emerges clearly from the present study. Whereas low levels of participation in non-religious associations were found in the Easton sample, membership of religious organisations and regular attendance at religious gatherings were claimed by the vast majority of respondents. The following table shows the religious affiliations of respondents (in the Caribbean) prior to their migration to Britain:
Table 20  
Religious Affiliations of West Indian Respondents  
before migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination/sect</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>(54.7)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(11.3)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(13.2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(7.5 )</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(5.7 )</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.8 )</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.8 )</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No affiliation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.9 )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 108

1. It is important to note that many religious organisations which are accepted as 'churches' or denominations' in West Indian societies would be labelled as 'sects' in Britain. The present study, noting the difficulties of cross-cultural comparison in this respect, will not be concerned with the continuing debate over the highly complex definitional problems attached to these various terms. For purposes of what follows, a 'church', in Britain, can be loosely defined as a religious association which is marked by a relatively high level of institutionalisation, integration with the existing social and economic order, recruitment on the basis of residence and family membership, and relatively restrained and routinised participation. Within this broad definition, a denomination, can be seen as a form of church which corresponds to modern industrial societies where church membership is pluralistic and there is a separation between church and state. See, Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology, (New York, Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 424-425. The main features of a sect have been summarised by Bryan Wilson as follows: 'It is a voluntary association; membership is by proof to sect authorities of some claim to personal merit - such as knowledge of doctrine, affirmation of a conversion experience or recommendation of members in good standing; exclusiveness is emphasised and expulsion exercised against those who contravene doctrinal, moral or organisational precepts; its self-conception is of an elect; a gathered remnant, possessing special enlightenment; personal perfection is the expected standard of aspiration, in whatever term this is judged; it accepts, at least as an ideal, the priesthood of all believers; there is a high level of lay participation; there is opportunity for the member spontaneously to express his commitment; the sect is hostile or indifferent to the secular order and to the state'. See, Bryan R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', American Sociological Review, (Vol. 24, February, 1959), p. 4.
As one can see, almost 100% of the sample claimed to have been members of a religious sect or denomination in the West Indies. Only two respondents said they did not belong to such a body before coming to Britain. The figures in Table 21, below, suggest that this was not simply a question of formal membership but of regular participation as well:

Table 21
Rates of Attendance at Religious Gatherings of West Indian Respondents in the Caribbean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of Attendance</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- every week</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>(59.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- at least once a month</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(35.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- less than once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 106

Thus, the religious commitment of the Easton sample is demonstrated by high rates of claimed attendance at religious gatherings and not just by high levels of membership of religious associations. While still in the West Indies, more than half of the respondents attended some form of religious gathering at least once a week. Less than 5% claimed to have attended religious worship less than once a month. These findings, limited though they are, lend support to the view that religion plays a part of considerable importance in Caribbean social life.

Of course, patterns of religious participation and belief are not uniform throughout the West Indies. There is, as one would expect, considerable variation along class lines. The upper and middle classes belong mainly to the Anglican and Catholic churches. The lower classes, although Christian in a formal sense, not only belong to a number of the major denominations but also participate
in sectarian forms of worship which often contain vestigial elements
of magic and myth which originated either in the days of slavery or
in Africa. As David Lowenthal has put it:

'Most working-class Creoles are no less formally
Christian than the elite and middle-class, but
the institutional structures, systems of belief,
and emotional significance of religious faith differ
profundly. Caribbean peasannies and proletaries
combine traditional, evangelical, and fundamentalist
forms of Christianity with revivalism and spiritualism.'

Patterns of religious belief and practice in the West Indies are
complicated even further by the existence of differences between
the islands. These have arisen, by and large, because of their
different colonial histories. Catholicism predominates in islands
which were originally settled by the French and Spanish. This is
the case even when such islands later came under British rule.
Trinidad, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent are examples of islands
in the British West Indies in which Catholicism is the dominant
religion because they had previously been French or Spanish
possessions. Islands such as Barbados and Jamaica, which have
been under British rule throughout all or most of their colonial
history, are largely Anglican.

West Indian societies are also notable for the multiplicity
of churches and sects they contain. After emancipation, the
Caribbean was subjected to a period of vigorous missionary activity.

In the words of Sheila Allen:

'The intense missionary activity which began in the
post-Emancipation period led to a multiplicity of
Christian sects: Christian Science, Seventh Day
Adventists, Society of Friends, Jehovah's Witnesses,
as well as the splitting of the more conventional
church into Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists,
and the like.'

In addition to the above, there exist, particularly in the more rural

3. Sheila Allen, New Minorities, Old Conflicts, op. cit., p. 99
areas of the larger islands, certain cults and sects whose roots can be traced back to the shores of Africa. Among the most notable are the Shango cults in Trinidad and the Pocomania and Obeah movements in Jamaica. In the Caribbean itself, the membership of these cults is drawn mainly, but not exclusively, from the lower classes.4

It is difficult for West Indians in the Caribbean to avoid the social mores which dictate participation in some form of worship. Church membership is obligatory for upper and middle class West Indians because it is seen as an affirmation of their class and status position. Within the lower classes, religious worship is also expected, whether in formal church attendance or participation in sectarian or cultist activity. The plethora of religious associations in the Caribbean has been viewed both negatively and positively by various writers. When examining religious associations in Jamaica, Manley remarks:

'Jamaica is probably better churched and Christianised than some parts of the world more commonly known as Christian.'5

However, Davis, writing of the same island argues that:

'If anything, the West Indies suffers from being over-church ed, fragmented by the multiplicity of worship.'6

This brief discussion must suffice for present purposes as a description

4. Thus, Madeline Kerr has written: 'The middle and the rising middle classes will deny hotly that magic plays any part in their lives, yet in cases of breakdown, many people will revert to magical practices and healing'. Quoted in Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 117. The quote is taken from Kerr, Personality and Conflict in Jamaica, op. cit.


of religious activity in the Caribbean. The main emphasis in the remainder of this chapter will be centred on the religious membership and participation of West Indians in Easton.

The Lowdale area of Easton, where most West Indians in the city reside, contains a variety of churches and sects. There are four Anglican, two Roman Catholic, a Baptist and a Methodist church within its boundaries. In addition to the latter, there are several other religious associations in or adjacent to Lowdale. These included local branches of the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, a Pentecostal and an Evangelical church. The proportion of West Indian members in particular congregations varied with individual places of worship, ranging from the few West Indians in most Anglican congregations to the exclusively West Indian memberships of the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. The following Table shows the religious affiliations of West Indian respondents in Easton:

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination/sect</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(36.1)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(14.9)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(6.5 )</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4.6 )</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1.9 )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.9 )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No affiliation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(35.2)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 108
Table 23, below, shows the rate of attendance at religious gatherings reported by our respondents:

Table 23

Rates of Attendance at Religious Gatherings of Respondents in Easton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rates of Attendance</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- every week</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(32.9)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- at least once a month</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(37.1)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- less than once a month</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(30.0)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N= 70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can see from the above tables, 106 respondents in the Easton sample (98.1%) reported that they had belonged to a church, sect or denomination prior to migration to Britain. Only 2 (1.9% of the sample) reported no religious affiliation at all when resident in the Caribbean. By contrast, 70 (64.8%) reported membership of a religious association in Easton, whereas 38 (35.2%) reported no religious membership at all. The figures on rates of church attendance are similar. Thus, fewer than 5% of the respondents claimed to have attended a religious gathering less than once a month in their home islands, whereas in Easton, out of a reduced total of church members, the corresponding figure had risen to 30%. Thus, consequent upon migration, there had occurred among the Easton sample a marked fall in both church membership and rates of attendance at religious gatherings.

It is interesting to note that the drop, both in levels of membership and rates of attendance, was lower for women than for men. In the Caribbean, the men and women in the sample were approximately equal in both of these respects. In Easton, however, 26 out of a total of 52 male respondents claimed that they were no
longer members of a religious association, whilst 44 of the female
members of the sample claimed that they still belonged to a church.
Similarly, 34 West Indian women in Easton claimed that they attended
their place of worship at least once a month, whilst only 15 men
made such a claim.

The rise in West Indian membership of Pentecostal churches in
Easton compared with the membership level claimed in the Caribbean,
is also significant. The number claiming to belong to this type of
religious organisation in Easton was double the number making such a
claim with respect to their period of residence in the West Indies.
The importance of the growth of West Indian Pentecostalism in Easton
will be discussed in some detail later in the chapter.

Religious participation is such a widely accepted and expected
form of activity in the Caribbean, that it was to be expected that
most West Indian migrants would, on arrival in Britain, seek to join
a church in their new area of settlement. Several earlier studies
have confirmed that this, in fact, is so. However, many West Indians
have met with mixed receptions in British churches ranging from
condescending acceptance to outright rejection. Furthermore, even
if West Indians did not meet or overcame these affronteries, they
often left local congregations because of what are, to them, the dull

7. Allen, op. cit.
8. The best descriptions of initial rejection come from West Indians
themselves. See, for example, Donald Hinds, Journey to an
Illusion, op. cit., W. Collins, Jamaican Migrant, (London,
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), and H. Tajfel and J. L. Davison,
details of rejection in religious associations see, Clifford S.
Hill, West Indian Migrants and the London Churches, (London,
and lifeless forms of worship in most churches in Britain. In the West Indies, services, including many within the major denominations, tend to be more spontaneous and lively than their counterparts in Britain.

A number of factors such as these have combined to lead many West Indians in Britain to change their patterns of religious affiliation and church attendance. They have either turned to alternative forms of religious expression, for example, Pentecostalism, or have adopted the pattern of non-attendance common to the majority of members of the host society. Whether or not they have maintained religious affiliations, many members of the West Indian population in Easton disapproved of the low level of church going in the white community, expressing their dismay or disgust at the seemingly "un-Christian" trend towards secularisation. The following comment by a Nevisian respondent was typical of many West Indians in the area: "I wish that people realised that there is a God ...... that more people would go to church and get love in their heart."

Similar sentiments were expressed by an Antiguan: "People here don't go to or worship in the church like in the West Indies." And a Jamaican woman said: "In Jamaica everyone used to go to church sometimes two or three times on a Sunday. Here (that is to say in Easton) they find all things to do except worship the Lord. I fear for my children that they will go the same way."

These views underline the fact that many West Indians were surprised to see their traditional white rulers, who so firmly avowed the need for Christian principles in their teachings in the West Indies, seemingly ignoring them in Britain. Even more inexplicable to them was the rejection or avoidance from white churchgoers which many West
Indians encountered in local churches. Apparently church fellowship halted at the boundaries of skin colour in Britain. Thus, many respondents recounted how they had joined a congregation in Easton but had soon left because of the 'reception' which they received from white parishioners. Often the condescending manner with which West Indians were picked out as our 'black brothers' by members of the clergy or congregation annoyed them more than when white members of the congregation refused to sit in the same pew or simply walked out of the church when they appeared. A Barbadian, who had been an active member of his church in the West Indies, described the latter reaction when he recounted how:

"When I first came to Easton we went up to St .......... in our first few weeks. We had been told not to expect opening arms from my cousin who was here but I suppose it was a matter of pride and not really believing. I find it difficult to describe what it was like ....... the service seemed to take days and my wife was in tears when we came away. It was like you were being stripped naked by all those eyes and some of them were not just curious but really disliking us there. I went for a few weeks and some of the people were very nice but it was like being in the zoo with all that staring, you just got too uncomfortable to stay."

There was no discernible pattern of acceptance or avoidance among the different denominations in and around Lowdale. In some Anglican

churches, a small number of West Indians, noticeably better off than many of their fellows, were accepted within their respective congregations. These West Indians were middle or upwardly mobile working class and this factor presumably compensated partly for their colour.

In other local churches, the attitude of the minister towards the migrants was very influential. One Anglican minister, in particular, had made deliberate attempts to encourage West Indians into his church. A brief account of the history of West Indian membership in this church will be related here to illustrate the effects of the attitudes of local clergy on West Indian religious affiliations in the city.

In the early 1950's, when West Indians began to settle in Lowdale in not inconsiderable numbers, several Caribbean migrants came to St. John's. The initial reaction from the white congregation was ambivalent, a mixture of curiosity and hostility. However, during this early period when only a few West Indians joined the congregation, most of the white parishioners continued to attend services. When the numbers of West Indians increased there was a virtual exodus of white members which the Minister described as "very disconcerting". Nevertheless, despite his dwindling congregation, he continued his 'open door' policy towards the West Indians in his parish. By 1960 very few white members remained in the congregation but the numbers of West Indians who regularly attended St. John's continued to rise. This trend continued until the late 1960's when the church had gained a reputation in Lowdale as a 'black church'. A small number of whites continued to attend but the congregation was predominantly West Indian. However, in recent years, the numbers attending St. John's have declined quite significantly, leaving only
those West Indians whom the Minister described as 'hardened' in their religious convictions. The Minister attributed the decline in church attendance to the fact that many West Indians, particularly younger, second generation West Indians, were adopting the secular habits of the majority of the local white community.

The experience of West Indian attendance at St. John's indicates that some caution is required in approaching an explanation of West Indian patterns of religious association. If nothing else, it points towards the dangers of attributing falling levels of membership and rates of church attendance among West Indians in Easton solely to rejection by the host community.

Social changes common to West Indian communities in Britain, may also have played an influential part. Thus, forms of social control which constrain West Indians in the Caribbean to engage in certain types of social participation, including church attendance, may have been loosened or destroyed by the process of migration to Britain. For example, the falling-off of West Indian involvement in indigenous religious organisations in Easton may reflect a change in the degree of internal social control within the West Indian settlement and hence a loosening of the prescriptions surrounding religious membership and attendance. This may account for the move towards secularisation rather than increasing religiosity among West Indians in Britain.

10. See the similar links between West Indian settlement in Britain and family and household structure, discussed in Chapter 4.
The performance of official roles in religious associations may be conducive to the learning of administrative skills, and the confidence to use them, and these skills may be transferable to other associational settings. Therefore, since religious participation appears to be the most common form of associational activity among lower-class West Indians, both in Britain and the Caribbean, the level of 'activism' in 'official' church/sect positions they display could be significant for leadership in other associations. The following table shows the number of respondents in the sample who were, or had been, church/sect 'officials' in the West Indies or in Easton. It also indicates the nature of the 'official' positions held:

Table 24

Number of Respondents who held 'Official' Positions in a Church or Sect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the West Indies</th>
<th>In Britain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Officials</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Given</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Official' Positions Mentioned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Church Council</th>
<th>Sidesman</th>
<th>Choir member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Official'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. A number of studies have studied the links between religious worship and membership of other forms of voluntary association. See, for example, Hausknecht, *op. cit.*, Hyman and Wright, *op. cit.*, and Bernard Lazerwitz, 'Membership in Voluntary Associations and Frequency of Church Attendance', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, (No. 2, Autumn, 1962).
As one can see, the number of respondents holding 'official' positions in religious organisations is small. It is also about the same for the West Indies and for Britain, particularly if one separates choir membership from the occupancy of more important positions in the church. However, the figures for the Caribbean may have been depressed somewhat by the fact that some of the respondents would have been too young when resident in the West Indies to be considered for official positions in their churches.

It is interesting to note that whereas the figures for the Caribbean include 'official' positions in a number of different denominations, the Easton figures relate to only two churches, both of them Anglican. In fact, 7 of the eight 'official' positions mentioned by respondents in relation to Easton were positions in St. John's. Sex differentials were not significant in either the West Indies or Easton. Thus, in the Caribbean, the majority of choir members were women whilst all the respondents who claimed to be sidesmen or on the church council were men. A similar pattern was observable in Easton where only one choir member was male and no women were on church councils. The tentative conclusions which can be drawn from these few figures point towards the fact that very few West Indians in Easton occupy 'official' positions in local churches and, hence, that this kind of participation may be relatively unimportant as a means of providing leadership for other forms of formal association. Nevertheless, this only relates to the present situation. The future implications of religious association for other forms of participation will be discussed later in the chapter.
It is appropriate to summarise the pattern of religious participation among West Indians in Easton at this point. It has been shown that there is a tendency for West Indian church membership to be high in the early days of settlement in Britain. However, for a variety of reasons which have been suggested in this chapter, membership and attendance decline until only limited numbers of West Indians are to be found in the local congregations of the major denominations. However, membership and attendance in exclusively West Indian Pentecostal churches are rising. The figures for West Indian membership of indigenous sectarian organisations in the city are still lower than for their counterparts in the Caribbean but they are significantly higher than the corresponding figures for West Indian membership in traditional church denominations in Easton.

It has been mentioned that 'sects' like the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses are accepted as churches in the West Indies. Both of these religious organisations are represented in Easton and have several West Indian members. Attendance at the meetings of these groups is small compared with the major denominations but it was noticeable that the proportion of West Indians in their 'congregations' is considerably higher than in most of the Anglican churches in and around Lowdale. The Seventh Day Adventists, for example, had a large number of Antiguan

12. Officials in the Jehovah's Witnesses estimated that West Indians formed 25% of their membership in the Lowdale area which was approximately 48 members at the time of field research. Similar estimates for the Seventh Day Adventists, were a West Indian membership of 50% out of a total of 74 members. Most of the latter were Antiguans. These proportions were confirmed at those meetings of these groups which the researcher attended.
members. Adventism is particularly strong in Antigua and hence it was not surprising to find that the sizeable Antiguan population in Easton was well represented in the local Adventist branch. The Jehovah's Witnesses also had some West Indian members, most of them from Jamaica and Montserrat.

Unlike the major denominations, these sects did not experience a significant loss of white members when West Indians joined them. This is primarily due to the fact that sectarian forms of worship are perceived as separatist, fringe activities within the host community. Thus, white members of the sects in Easton may not have perceived the admission of West Indians to their organisations as endangering either their status or their 'respectability'. Furthermore, both the Adventists and the 'Witnesses' are openly evangelistic in their aims and this would tend to assist the entry of migrants into their organisations. Their more informal types of worship would also be more attractive to many West Indians than forms of worship in more traditional churches and this would have further encouraged a higher West Indian membership.

Despite the importance of West Indian membership of indigenous sects, previous researchers have been most concerned with the establishment and growth of black (that is to say West Indian) Pentecostal churches in Britain. There were two 'churches' of this type in Easton at the time of the present research. Both held meetings in large, terraced houses in Adelaide Street, Lowdale. One, the 'New Testament Church of God', was a local branch of a church which has grown throughout the West Indian population in Britain. The other, the Evangelical church was a branch of West
Indian Pentecostalism which was growing in the Midlands. The leader of the Evangelical church lived in Easton, whilst the Minister who usually led the meetings of the New Testament church, lived in a nearby town. Both ministers were Jamaican.

The form of worship in these churches is markedly different from the traditional forms of worship in the major British denominations. There is an emphasis on the spiritual, for example, the 'speaking of tongues' where a 'disciple' in the congregation takes possession of the Holy Ghost. At Pentecostalist meetings, members may enter this spiritual state and thus transfer the words of the Apostles to fellow 'saints'. Pentecostalist meetings are richly spontaneous, the Minister delivering loud exhortations which are returned by the congregation with ritualistic replies. The Pentecostalists believe that a direct connection between the Deity and themselves is established during their meetings. This peculiar combination of spontaneity of response and ritual shouting bears little resemblance to services in traditional British churches. Commenting on Pentecostalism in the West Indies, Lowenthal states:

'Their deity is accessible to direct persuasion. They believe both in salvation by faith and in a spirit world where the dead possess supernatural powers and mediate among the living ...... Their rites frequently generate intense emotions, often culminating in group-induced spirit possession and public conversion.'

Like their white counterparts, these Pentecostal groups tend to be highly puritanical. In fact, in all these sects there is a strict

13. The term 'saints' is used in the West Indian settlement in Easton to describe local members of the Pentecostal churches. It is probably a term which is used throughout the West Indian population in Britain, see Banton, Racial Minorities, op. cit., p. 153

14. Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 115
disavowal of worldly pleasures and the outward display of material wealth. Tobacco and alcohol are forbidden and sexual abuse is severely frowned upon. The West Indian Pentecostal churches encourage legal marriage and faithfulness between marriage partners. However, they are attuned to family mores within the lower classes in the Caribbean and, hence, their attitudes are in some ways flexible. Nevertheless, promiscuity or immorality as defined by these churches is forbidden.

The reasons for the establishment and growth of black Pentecostalism in Britain has been the subject of some debate. Most writers agree that these churches provide certain supportive functions for their West Indian followers who commonly occupy positions of social deprivation in the host society and in the Caribbean. Thus, in the West Indies these forms of worship are exclusive to the proletariat and the peasantry, although it has been shown that the middle and upper classes may secretly subscribe to some of the magical beliefs contained in sectarian and cultist worship.

The vast majority of West Indians in Britain are from the working classes in the Caribbean and hence it has been argued that the establishment and growth of Pentecostalism among West Indian settlements in Britain is not unexpected. Malcolm Calley, for example, views the growth of black Pentecostalism as a reflection of the large numbers of lower class Jamaicans in Britain. He argues that this growth reflects a need felt by many lower class West Indians in Britain to practise forms of worship which guard against

15. See Kerr, op. cit.

the harshness of their lives in the host society. Moreover, as Kiev has argued, Pentecostalist beliefs can have a cathartic, psychotherapeutic effect on those — the groups described by Niebuhr as 'the dispossessed' — who adhere to them. Pentecostal worship, that is to say, by providing forms of spiritual release, can compensate for the deprivations of worldly existence.

The growth of black Pentecostalism can also be in part explained by the fact that entry to these churches only depends on the acceptance of the doctrines preached within them and the adoption of a life style which is shaped by these doctrines. The format of Pentecostalist meetings does not require high levels of literacy or verbal facility from participants. Similarly, membership does not depend upon the class, status and colour prescriptions which tend to restrict entry to the major denominations both in Britain and the Caribbean. All these factors tend to encourage attendance from lower class West Indians.

A further reason for the high memberships and rates of attendance in black Pentecostalist churches applies to religious participation among West Indians generally. Religious worship provides many West Indians with an opportunity to enjoy themselves, to become the centre of attention, to dress in their best clothes and communally take part in an activity which can include the whole family. Every Sunday morning in Lowdale, a stream of West Indians can be seen walking along Adelaide Street. The women and the

children in neat and brightly coloured clothes, the men in more sober but still stylish suits. This sight stands out in sharp contrast to the drabness of the physical surroundings.

According to Clifford Hill, the growth of black Pentecostalism in Britain has to be explained largely in terms of factors inherent in the host society. It is not, in his view, a simple extension of religious practices from the West Indies but a response to 'deprivation' and 'racialism'. As he puts it:

'Deprivation has the effect of driving together in social solidarity, members of the pariah group (that is to say West Indians in Britain). Thus the rapid rise in membership of immigrant organised religious sects may well be a response to the experience of social deprivation.... a rise in congregations is equated with a rise of racialism.'

Hill points out that the composition of Pentecostal congregations in Britain is different than that of their counterparts in Jamaica. There are, he argues, proportionately higher numbers of men and better-off West Indians in the British congregations, whereas, in the Caribbean, the membership of these churches is almost exclusively lower-class and female. Hill traces the rise of Pentecostalism in West Indian 'communities' in Britain back to the 1964 General Election when, he argues, 'race' became, for the first time, a national issue. He counters the argument that women still predominate in these churches in Britain and that therefore, the growth in Pentecostalism can be seen as an extension of Caribbean norms, by pointing out that, proportionately, women made their biggest contribution to total migrant numbers in the early years of

---

West Indian migration to Britain. The rapid rise in black Pentecostalism, however, has occurred in the last few years when male migrants have been proportionately more significant. Thus, Hill argues, if the proportion of women in the migrant population is an important cause of the rise in Pentecostalism, this rise should have occurred much earlier than in fact it did. Hill explains the rise in male membership in these churches by arguing that West Indian men suffer from a greater sense of status loss in Britain than West Indian women. This loss of status forces them into Pentecostalism which is the only religious outlet in Britain which offers them support against status deprivation and discrimination.

Michael Banton has recently called for a more detailed examination of the internal structure of black Pentecostal sects so that some of the arguments regarding their establishment and growth in Britain can be resolved. For example, what is the island and class composition of the Pentecostal congregations in Britain? Do they, in fact, draw their memberships from predominantly lower-class, female Jamaicans, which would support Calley's argument, or do they show a widening of island, class and sex affiliations which may point towards greater validity for Hill's thesis?

It would be quite wrong to suggest that the present study can satisfactorily resolve this debate. It has been concerned with several aspects of the social organisation of West Indian groupings in only one urban location in Britain and has not been

20. Banton, op. cit., p. 152
focussed solely on religion. As a result, the examination of
religious participation among West Indians undertaken here is of
limited applicability and, in some ways, superficial. Nevertheless,
the following appraisal of black Pentecostal churches in Easton does
contribute to the debate, lending support to some earlier
interpretations whilst, at the same time, detracting from others.

Both of the black Pentecostal churches in Easton had only been
recently established at the time of fieldwork. The New Testament
church was formed in 1969, whilst the Evangelical church was
established in the following year. The establishment of both
churches coincided with the settlement of larger numbers of West
Indians in Easton, most of whom resided in Lowdale. However, it
should be pointed out that at least 6000 West Indians lived in Easton
prior to the mid-sixties. Thus, it could be argued that sufficient
numbers of West Indians were present in Lowdale from the early 1950's
to support the establishment of a Pentecostal church in the area.
The recency of the formation of these churches in Easton could lend
weight to Hill's argument which stresses the importance of what he
takes to be the rise in 'racialism' in Britain in the late 1960's in
explaining the establishment and growth of black Pentecostalism in
the host society21.

It was difficult to ascertain the island composition of the
Pentecostal congregations in Easton because records had not been
kept since their inception either of total memberships or of island
affiliations. However, by questioning many members and past and
present ministers of both churches, a rough indication of the

numbers and composition of their respective congregations could be established. Meetings in the first year of formation in both churches averaged an attendance of between twenty and thirty members. These figures had grown steadily until, at the time of fieldwork, attendances were consistently averaging between sixty and seventy members.

It has been shown that Easton contains a number of West Indian communities representing several island societies in the Caribbean. In contrast to many other West Indian settlements in Britain, Easton is also interesting because the Jamaican community, whilst significant, does not form an overwhelmingly large proportion of the total number of West Indians in the area. The Antiguans are by far the largest group but there are many other islands with sizeable numbers in the city. The island composition of the West Indian settlement in Easton is crucial to those arguments which attribute a growth in Pentecostalism to the presence of substantial Jamaican communities in Britain. The late establishment of the Pentecostal churches in Easton detracts from the latter argument somewhat. The pattern of West Indian settlement in the city clearly shows that the Jamaicans were among the earliest migrants to settle in Lowdale. The Pentecostal churches were formed at the time when much larger numbers of West Indians from other islands were settling in the area. If the establishment and growth of these churches is to be explained solely by the presence of Jamaicans, the evidence from Easton would appear to indicate otherwise. Pentecostalism should have been established much earlier, when the Jamaicans were the largest West Indian community in the city. Furthermore, Pentecostal membership would not continue to rise after the arrival of other island groupings, particularly when this arrival was not in any way paralleled by a continued expansion of the Jamaican community.
However, to redress the balance, it must be pointed out that both congregations did have a higher proportion of Jamaicans than would be expected from the proportion of the latter within the total number of West Indians in the area. Whilst exact figures were unavailable, the proportion of Jamaicans attending services in both Pentecostal churches in Lowdale was estimated at not less than one third and, on many occasions, more than half of the total membership present. These figures show that the Jamaicans did form a significantly higher proportion of both congregations, despite the size of the Jamaican community in relation to other West Indian groupings in the city. The evidence from this study appears to lend support to both Calley and Hill, who put forward alternative explanations for the establishment and growth of black Pentecostal churches. However, it can be suggested that both local and national contingencies should be considered when examining the establishment and growth of black Pentecostalism in Britain. If this perspective is adopted, it is possible to equate the establishment of black Pentecostal churches in Easton with the expansion of this type of religious organisation at a national level in Britain, a process which is heavily influenced by the substantial numbers of Jamaicans in the host society. However, when examining the growth of Pentecostal churches in Easton, the increasing numbers of West Indians from other islands than Jamaica who are joining these congregations, must be accounted for. Nevertheless, the Jamaican community in Easton still provides the largest proportion of 'saints' in the city because of the predominance of this type of worship within this island society in the Caribbean. Thus, the pattern of establishment and growth of black Pentecostalism in Easton would appear to reconcile the opposing theses of Hill and Calley. If both local and national contingencies are considered their alternative explanations are not necessarily incompatible.
It was difficult to observe whether the majority of 'saints' in Easton were drawn from the poorer sections of the West Indian communities in the city. It would have been necessary to make black Pentecostalism a central feature of the study in order to construct a detailed profile of Pentecostal members. However, it was noticeable that none of the middle or upwardly mobile working class West Indians in the sample, who were active in non-religious formal associations were 'saints'. Similarly, none of the sample who had intermediate or professional occupations claimed membership of Pentecostal churches. Nevertheless, those respondents (16 in all) who were 'saints' were not significantly different socially from the rest of the sample. A superficial questioning of 'saints' and local Pentecostal ministers appeared to substantiate that very few 'better-off' West Indians regularly attended meetings. Most of the congregation were no different from the majority of West Indians in Easton. That is to say, they were mostly skilled and semi-skilled manual workers who lived in or adjacent to Lowdale. However, it should be noted that the number of unskilled West Indians is comparatively low and that, similarly, the nature of West Indian migration has necessarily altered the composition of black Pentecostal churches in Britain.

Previous research indicates that the majority of West Indian migrants in this country are drawn from those sections of the Caribbean population who, in the West Indies, do not usually participate in sectarian and cultist forms of worship. That is to say, the rural peasantry are not well-represented in many West

Indian communities in Britain, including Easton. Thus, it is to be expected that black churches in Britain will reflect these features of the migrant population. However, it would appear that the lower stratum of West Indians in Britain does provide the largest proportion of 'saints' in the host society. Therefore, although, relatively speaking, 'saints' in Britain are higher status West Indians than would be probable in the Caribbean, they still occupy the lowest positions within their respective communities in the host society.

There is also some consistency between the social background of 'saints' in Britain and the Caribbean in terms of sex. Women form the highest proportion of black Pentecostal congregations both in Britain and the West Indies. Within the sample in Easton, 13 of the 16 respondents who claimed to be 'saints' were women. On those occasions when the researcher attended Pentecostal meetings, the predominance of females in the congregations was marked. Members of both Pentecostal churches in Lowdale confirmed that this was a consistent pattern and that very few West Indian men attended their meetings. Calley, too, shows that West Indian women predominate in Pentecostal meetings but he also argues that the proportion of West Indian men in these congregations has increased. This rise in male membership is attributed to the fact that West Indian men suffer from a greater sense of status loss than West Indian women in the host society. Implicit in his argument is the assumption that West Indians in Britain measure their status solely in relation to members of the host society.
Thus, Calley states:

'Membership in a sect compensates the individual for the inferior status assigned to him in society. West Indian piety is fixed on the next world.'

Similarly, the life styles which are governed by Pentecostal beliefs are also looked at in relation to the attitudes of the white community.

Hence, Calley again points out:

'Because the sects take up a great deal of their members' time and specifically forbid their taking part in the 'affairs of the world', members are prevented from participating in English social life ......... the insistence of the sects on members leading a clean life, and on their being legally married and faithful to their spouses, might be expected to engender respect for them in the white community and so assist assimilation. However, they are not visible to the white community.'

The meanings which white members of the host community impute to forms of West Indian religious association are a most significant area for further research. However, it is equally important to consider the attitudes which West Indians who do not conform to these forms of religion, have towards other West Indians who are 'saints'. This is particularly crucial in the area of status evaluation and the formation of status groups within West Indian communities such as that in Easton. For example, some 'saints' may find that the status that is accorded to them within a Pentecostal congregation will be higher than that accorded to them by members of the host community. This is extremely likely because skin colour will not be socially disadvantageous in black churches but it will certainly be so as far as the majority of local whites are concerned. However, it is suggested in this study that 'saints' are also labelled as 'lower class' and accorded low

23. Calley, op. cit., p. 64

24. Ibid.
status by many other West Indians who are not Pentecostalists. Thus, it would appear that membership of a black Pentecostal church can be socially disadvantageous for 'saints' in relation to their position within the West Indian population as well as in the wider host community. This is because the life styles and beliefs of 'saints' are unacceptable to many West Indians. Respondents often made disparaging remarks about the 'saints' in Easton and it was quite common for the researcher to hear negative comments about these West Indians during the course of fieldwork. Indeed, many West Indians criticised the black churches and their members in Easton for much the same reasons as the local white population. The following comments from West Indians are typical. A Barbudan railway porter, for example, commented:

"These hot gospellers give us a bad name. You walk up Adelaide street and the singing and shouting comes right down the street. No wonder we are seen as peculiar by some people."

The Secretary of the J.W.A. said that:

"Anyone has a right to have their own religion but these people don't contribute to the community. They are told you can't do this and that and they just go back to their homes and rest easy in their beliefs without coming out to us."

Another Jamaican said:

"They're just a lot of simple minded people, what do you expect. At home they don't do no harm but some whites think all Jamaicans act like that."

Finally, a Trinidadian drew a parallel with the Shango cults in her island of origin:

"Back home you don't see this shouting and all in the towns. It's only the country people who still believe in that sort of thing and have their meetings in the bush."

These comments, which are typical of many made to the researcher, demonstrate that black Pentecostalism is also viewed with suspicion and hostility by many West Indians and not only by local whites. Therefore, 'saints' may find that their religious affiliations do act as a supportive agency against the hardships of everyday life in the host society but it also isolates them from large numbers of West Indians in Easton. Pentecostal doctrines do not only inhibit participation in 'English social life'. They also tend to isolate the 'saints' from the forms of recreation established by fellow West Indians. The abstemiousness of the life styles of the 'saints' may inspire respect from some West Indians but others view it as a form of 'stand-offishness' or priggishness. This withdrawal from both the host community and other West Indian communities may present the 'saint' with considerable problems of adjustment, both social and psychological. This point has been emphasised by Leonard Bloom, although he does not specifically mention relationships between West Indians when he discusses the implications of Pentecostal membership for 'saints'. He argues:

'This retreat tends, moreover, to be cumulative, which effectively prevents communication with other groups. This in turn encourages uncertainty about the meaning and motives of the behaviour of other groups, because only with contact can come understanding. There thus develops a spiral in which lack of contact exacerbates fear, anxiety and a sense of threat, and this inhibits contact .......'.

It can be seen that the life styles connected with black Pentecostalism can command respect from members of West Indian communities and the host community by, for example, the encouragement of legal marriage and 'clean living'. But it has also been shown that the adoption of these life styles also involves separatism and isolation from other groups in Easton. Thus, the 'respectability' of certain actions of the 'saints' in Easton may not be directly visible to those individuals who are not black Pentecostal members. Non-West Indian groups in Easton, moreover, have little or no direct knowledge of the 'saints' beliefs or life styles. The West Indian communities may be in a similar position, any knowledge often being based upon gossip rather than direct observation. Only the 'saints' themselves are direct observers of their form of worship but certain forms of display which precede and follow Pentecostal meetings are observable to outsiders, whilst, at the same time, the content of much of the ceremony within meetings is audible to a much wider audience. It has already been argued that the meanings which are imputed to these partial observations of Pentecostal worship may be all that is required for outsiders (both black and white) to form negative opinions of black Pentecostalism.27

Any person who strolls along Adelaide Street on a Sunday morning when Pentecostal meetings are taking place may form distinct negative impressions from the loud music and shoutings which emanate from these 'churches'. The loudness and brashness of their services gives no indication of the extreme sobriety of the beliefs which are being expressed. Similarly, the sight of many 'saints' in bright

27. See, p. 277
clothes may also be viewed as an unsober expression of religious beliefs. These supposedly loud, spontaneous and brash displays may be perceived as highly deviant forms of behaviour by both whites and other West Indians because they appear to contradict their expectations of what should constitute religious participation. White members of the host community may express fear or hostility because of the sight of sizeable numbers of West Indians forming a coherent, highly visible group. Black Pentecostal worship is one of the very few occasions which presents West Indians in this way. Members of the host community tend to base their criticisms of this form of worship on its cultural strangeness. Other West Indians who criticise the 'saints' also centre on its deviant character when compared with more traditional forms of worship which they subscribe to but they also perceive that the deviant actions of a specific group of West Indians could be transformed into general labels which are ascribed to all West Indians or 'coloured people' by other groups in the city. Therefore, many West Indians criticised the 'saints' because they not only stood apart from the rest of the West Indian population in Easton but also threatened to disrupt black and white relations in the city through their separatist and 'deviant' or 'strange' activities. Paradoxically, the retreatism of the 'saints' intruded into the life situations of other West Indians and this was widely resented by the latter.

28. The same negative evaluations may emerge from members of the host community observing the outward manifestations, both visual and auditory, of Asian forms of worship, West Indian 'house parties', or any activities which those members adjudge as 'deviant' and therefore 'undesirable'.

29. An example of how sectarian worship can influence social relationships with other, non-sectarian West Indians is given in Chapter 3, p. 189.
It can be seen that there is a direct link between religious beliefs, acts of worship and concomitant life styles for West Indian Pentecostalists. Black Pentecostalism provides both a complete Weltanschauung and a complete way of life for its believers. In common with a majority of the host community, traditional religious affiliations, that is those in the major denominations, do not affect most West Indians in this way. Religious participation is perceived as just another form of action in a whole complex of single stranded relationships. In short, for many individuals, religious belief is separated from other areas of everyday life. An interesting illustration of this phenomenon emerged from the data drawn from the Easton sample. It was noticeable that a number of West Indians had changed their religious affiliation since arrival in Britain. There appeared to be no consistent pattern in these changes. That is to say, some respondents who had been, for example, Anglicans in their home society, had changed to Methodism in Easton. Others had swung from Anglicanism to Pentecostalism, or from one particular denomination to another. There was, it appeared, a random change from one form of church allegiance in the home island to another form in Britain. This would seem to raise the possibility that, for some West Indians, the observable act of participating in religion is more important than the specific doctrinal beliefs.

Factors such as the degree of receptivity towards migrants of indigenous churches in the host society probably have some significance in reinforcing or changing religious affiliations among West Indians. This appears to be borne out by many of the reasons given by respondents for their change of religious affiliation. It was frequently mentioned, for example, that they often met with a cool reception in the local branch of the church they had supported in the
Caribbean. It has been shown that this has contributed to the fall in church attendance of West Indians in Britain. However, some West Indians when confronted with rejection in one church, moved to alternative places of worship, in some instances, of a different denomination. In many cases, the move was prompted by a friend or relative of a different religious persuasion who 'recommended' his own church. It would be interesting to discover whether this is a common feature of West Indian religious affiliation in Britain. Certainly it offers distinct possibilities for further research in an area which has not, so far, been given any great prominence. At this juncture, however, it is sufficient to suggest tentatively that many West Indians appear to view the social attributes of participation in any form of 'respectable' (as opposed to non-respectable Pentecostalism) religious organisation as more important than the doctrinal beliefs which underpin memberships of particular forms of worship.

Having analysed certain forms of religious membership and participation among West Indians in Easton, the links between religious and other forms of associational activity will now be briefly examined. The wider implications of Black Pentecostalism and its recent growth in Britain will be discussed first. Calley has commented on West Indian sects as follows:

'The sects impede assimilation because they are almost exclusively West Indian in membership ....... they emphasise a solidarity based on a manner of worship which is typical of some of the larger West Indian islands but appears exotic to the English.'

It has been shown that Pentecostalist beliefs and the life styles which stem from these beliefs, would be acceptable to many members

30. Calley, op. cit., p. 63
of the host society and hence might assist assimilation. However, it has also been demonstrated that the performance of Pentecostal forms of worship partly negates the acceptability of the values inculcated in this form of worship. This leads the 'saints' to:

'Retreat into a self-imposed ghetto (which) may be the only psychological defence against the unbearable pain of the abrasions of hostile social contacts, but it is dangerously easy for this self-defensiveness to merge into a state that is close to paranoia....'31

Therefore, despite the solidaristic nature of these forms of religious association and the apparent acceptability to the host society of the values expressed within them, the separatist nature of black Pentecostalism inhibits accommodation. In addition, because the 'saints' are isolated from many other West Indians, black Pentecostalism also inhibits group solidarity at a wider level among West Indians in Easton. It reinforces, that is to say, in-group/out-group distinctions both between and within West Indian communities in the city. The Pentecostal sects separate themselves from those West Indians who do not subscribe to the puritanical life styles which are requested or enforced by sectarian allegiance. Thus, separate attendance of traditional and sectarian forms of religious association tends to fragment the West Indian settlement because both forms of worship portray a form of 'respectability' which precludes others who do not adhere to such standards. The first type of respectability, which is largely found in the traditional forms of worship like Anglicanism, can be called status respectability for it uses church attendance as a criterion for status reinforcement. The second type, broadly equated with sectarian forms of worship, may be called

31. Bloom, op. cit., p. 148
doctrinal respectability because it uses the values inculcated in the member to reinforce sectarian positions. Both these forms of respectability are separatist because they reinforce in-group/out-group distinctions among West Indians.

These distinctions may also explain why some West Indians change from their religious affiliations in the Caribbean to alternative denominations in Britain. If religious association is seen by some West Indians as a form of activity which reinforces one’s class or status position, or as an acknowledged form of participation which raises the latter, general participation may be more important than specific beliefs. Therefore, some West Indians will be prepared to change their religious affiliation to a different form of worship if they meet rejection in Britain. Changes in doctrine may be less important than the act of worship and hence a change of affiliation can be reconciled with the benefits gained from participating in some form of worship rather than none at all.

Those West Indians, who for a variety of reasons, may feel the strictures of life in Britain rather more than some of their peers will perhaps seek solace in sectarian forms of religion which provide a set of beliefs and a regularised life style. Adherents to the value of status respectability are concerned with the present world and their status in it vis-a-vis other West Indians and the host society. Adherents to the value of doctrinal respectability, however, have shifted their emphasis towards a retreat from the present world and are seemingly quite prepared to weigh the benefits of this retreat against their isolation from the host community and many other West Indians.
The separatism of sectarian forms of worship and the fragmentary nature of West Indian traditional religious participation may be only transitory. Both sectarian and traditional forms could encourage other forms of communal association among West Indians in Easton. It has been argued, for example, that the lines of religious conflict within West Indian communities are much more subtle and less intrusive than those which separate Asian migrants in Britain. Banton, for example, has suggested that:

'The West Indian groups differ from the Asians in that they do not show the same mixture of political, religious, economic, kinship and other ties. They do not, as a rule have to bother so much about maintaining a good reputation with relatives and former neighbours in their district of origin, or among their fellows in Britain. They are more ready to keep separate different kinds of relationship as the English do. Thus, they lack the multi-purpose associations based on origin which have helped the first-generation Asian migrants.' 32

The central point concerning the contrast between Asian multiple and West Indian single stranded relationships is well taken. Within the Asian communities in Easton, the temple, mosque and gurdwara act as community centres as well as specialised religious institutions. These places of worship are multi-functional and they can be used for political meetings and so forth. Religious affiliations do factionalise Indian and Pakistani communities but they also provide a basis for solidaristic group formation33.

Unlike West Indian groupings, Asian communities are held together by a set of multiple obligations which cut across kinship,

32. Banton, op. cit., p. 147

33. These religious affiliations must be seen together with the linguistic-regional differences which fragment Asian settlements but produce cohesive groupings within particular communities in the latter. See Allen, op. cit., p. 88.
religious, economic and political relationships. Hence, religious affiliations are not perceived as separatist and individualistic forms of social participation. Religion and kinship ties commonly provide the basis for financial co-operation, for example, group house purchase or they can encourage the formation of political associations. At present, there is little evidence to suggest that the religious associations formed by West Indians are similarly multi-functional for their communities. As Banton suggests, West Indians tend to treat religious membership and attendance as a social activity which does not necessarily cross-cut kinship ties or economic and political relationships within West Indian communities. This would certainly apply to the majority of West Indians in Easton who are members of major denominations in the city. However, black Pentecostalism may be an exception, for this form of worship does embrace the whole lifestyle of its followers. But, compared with Asian religious affiliations, black Pentecostalism is still a minority form of worship which at present affects only a limited number of West Indians in the city. The Asian communities in Easton are dominated by major religions which affect the lives of the majority of Indians and Pakistanis. The Hindu, Sikh and Moslem religions which embrace the multi-functional relationships referred to previously, are majority forms of worship. Consequently, they provide a solidaristic basis for large, coherent social groups in contrast with the small, fringe associations which are the norm among the West Indian communities in the locality.

34. Banton, op. cit.
Nevertheless, it would appear that religious membership and participation among West Indians may have important repercussions for other forms of associational activity. This applies to both traditional and sectarian forms of worship. The experience gained by West Indians in occupying official positions within religious associations could provide the knowledge and, more importantly, the confidence, for participation and leadership in other forms of activism. This has been demonstrated in Easton where one or two West Indians who were members of local church councils, later became committee members of a housing project in Lowdale. Similarly, as one of the few forms of West Indian association which is not purely recreational, religious associations provide a formal context where West Indians from different islands and differing class and status positions can meet and exchange ideas. Church membership may perform a useful function in promoting group solidarity in this sense.

However, individual ministers and congregations in their respective churches will be a crucial factor in this respect. It has been shown that one Anglican minister in Easton openly encouraged West Indians to take an active part in the organisation of his church\(^\text{35}\). Furthermore, West Indians were also encouraged to participate in the running of youth clubs and welfare agencies connected with this church. These activities provided some links with associations outside of strictly religious affiliations. However, it should be remembered that such a level of West Indian participation within a traditional, indigenous church in Easton was exceptional.

\(^{35}\) See, p. 200
At present, the policy of the major denominations depends on the attitude of particular ministers and their congregations and many are apathetic if not hostile towards the issue of the integration of the West Indians in their parishes.

Gus John\(^{36}\) has argued, quite forcibly, that most churches and their members merely reflect liberal patronage or rejection in their attitudes to local black populations. He argues that the major denominations in Britain are too benign in their attitudes towards the social deprivations which many of their parishioners, especially black people, encounter in their daily lives. John calls for the churches to speak out against forms of oppression, racial or otherwise, and goes on to suggest that churches should 'fertilise the seeds of discontent' among West Indian adolescents instead of merely promoting 'moderate' sports and youth clubs. He points out that the church is in a unique position of being able to offer ample premises and financial aid to local self-help groups. The church, he says, could encourage a 'theology of revolution'\(^{37}\). However admirable these suggestions might be, they appear little more than utopian at present since John misses the vital point; namely, that it is likely that the majority of West Indian church members would reject this 'radical expression' by the church.

The majority of West Indians who are members of the major denominations in Easton stem from the upwardly mobile working class in the local West Indian communities. The latter are more conscious than most West Indians of their status and the 'respectability' upon


\(^{37}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 346
which this status rests. It is likely that if traditional church members do enter other forms of association, particularly those of a political nature, they will adopt 'moderate' rather than 'radical' forms of action and belief. Hence, it is likely that reformist rather than revolutionary movements will originate from religious affiliation to the major denominations in Britain. However, traditional church participation, by possibly promoting West Indian activism in reformist associations, may lead to more radical alternatives. Perhaps even a 'theology of revolution' will be created in the future. In addition, sectarian forms of religious association, for example, black Pentecostalism, may take on a millenarian character in which religious fervour may be transformed into political activism. This last prediction is particularly pertinent if race relations in Britain is in any way comparable to the United States or the Caribbean or whether future changes in the host society may make it so.38

38. The 'civil rights' movement in the United States has been the platform for many negro religious ministers who have become political leaders of note, for example, Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson. The pattern has certain messianic features. Similarly, Garveyism and Rastafarianism in Jamaica may contain characteristics which have messianic and millenarian connotations. See, Nettleford, op. cit. However, there does not seem to be a similar link between religious and political association among West Indian Pentecostalists in Britain at the present time. For material on millenarian and messianic movements see, Vittoria Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed: a study of modern messianic cults, (New York, Mentor Books, 1965), and Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, (London, Paladin, 1970).
In a recent book, Chris Mullard compares the race relations situation in Britain at the present time with previous 'stages' in the development of race relations in the United States. He argues that events in Britain are closely following the 'racist spiral' which is observable across the Atlantic. The lines of conflict between black and white, he suggests, are becoming more and more tightly drawn. More specifically, Mullard equates the growth of black Pentecostalism among West Indians in Britain with the same conditions which produced organisations like the Black Moslems in the United States. Speaking of West Indian Pentecostalism in Britain, Mullard argues:

"These sects are completely insular, all black, the energy providing machine for struggling through another week of hostility. At the moment they are non-political but if the American experience is any indication of future trends they could become the nucleus, indeed the leadership, of a quasi-political movement." 40

There are also possible parallels between black Pentecostalism in Britain and certain religious movements in the Caribbean, for example, the 'Rastafarian' cults in Jamaica. Research carried out in the 1950's tended to dismiss the political potential of the latter. Rastafarianism was perceived as a form of religious revivalism remote from political expression. Thus, George Simpson 41 argued that the 'rastas' were more concerned with providing a limited kind of economic


40. Ibid., p. 139

co-operation among the many thousands of urban poor in Kingston than with encouraging political change. Rastafarianism, he suggested, only provided an escape from social deprivation. It did not involve a deliberate attempt to eliminate such poverty by political action. Indeed, Simpson noticed a marked tendency among the Rastafarians to reject any kind of formalised political activity. He argued:

'Because Rastafarians distrust all who are associated with politics and government, they say it is useless to attend political rallies, accept political assignments or vote.'

Nevertheless, recent events in Jamaica suggest that the Rastafarians have modified their views considerably. The 'rasta' groups were very influential in the election of Michael Manley to the Jamaican premiership in 1970. Manley used the Rastafarians as an effective 'voice' among the urban poor in Kingston and 'rasta' leaders have maintained their position as political spokesmen for the urban proletariat in Jamaica to the present day.

Rex Nettleford confirms that the Rastafarians are something more than a separatist, revivalist cult. He claims that Rastafarianism is becoming a revolutionary rather than a retreatist force and that its aims are positively political rather than strictly religio-separatist. The 'rastas' are now looking inward to seek change in their own society rather than continuing to look beyond the shores of the Caribbean to salvation in Ethiopia. Nettleford sees some similarity between the Rastafarians and Black Power groups in Britain in their common display of condemnation and fear of white oppression. However, at present, black Pentecostalism in Britain

42. Simpson, 'Political Cultism in West Kingston', op. cit., p. 146

is not directly linked with black power groupings. At least this was
the case in Easton. Indeed, all forms of religious affiliation among
West Indians in the city were firmly separated from any thoughts of
'black power'. The local B.P.G. were seen as highly disreputable
by church and sectarian worshippers alike. Much of this antipathy
is based upon inter-generational conflicts which pervade the West Indian
communities in Easton. Religious affiliation is predominantly a first
generation West Indian form of association. Black Power is very much
associated with the second generation at present. Consequently, in
order for religious activism to be transformed into political action
among West Indians in Easton, particularly through any connection with
'black power', numerous residual conflicts within West Indian
communities in the city will have to be resolved. At present, it
is rather difficult to envisage the puritanical Pentecostalist making
the leap into the youthful 'counter-culture' which is embedded in the
black power ethos!

However, much will depend upon the climate of racial or ethnic
relations in Britain in the future and how West Indians in general
will interpret their situation. There may be some points of
comparability between Rastafarianism, and other forms of black
cultism in the Caribbean, and the rise of black Pentecostalism in
Britain. The most crucial one is the fact that their doctrines and
forms of association have grown out of a common attempt to give some
meaning and voice to the reactions of the dispossessed and powerless.
The present study indicates that, at the moment, this expression of
discontent is being voiced within separate enclaves within the West
Indian population in Easton. Patterns of religious affiliation among
West Indians in the city reveal that religious associations form yet
another feature of the internal divisions within and between West
Indian communities. West Indian religious affiliations, that is to say, reinforce class and status distinctions in similar ways to those which family and household patterns have been shown, in the previous chapter, to do.

It has been argued that an 'upper working class' elite may be forming within the West Indian settlement in Easton and that intra-class distinctions among West Indians in Britain may be broadly following the inter-class distinctions which exist, or have existed, in the Caribbean. Thus, 'traditional' forms of worship still remain the prerogative of upwardly mobile West Indians who are still concerned with trying to establish a foothold within the limits placed on them by the host society, whilst sectarian forms of worship are the province of those West Indians who have opted out of the present world and seek solace in the thought of compensation in the next.

It can be seen from this chapter that the relationships between religious affiliation and class and status distinctions within West Indian communities have some important implications for membership and attendance of other forms of association. Similarly, patterns of West Indian religious association may have both present and future influences on political activism among West Indians in the city. These implications will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter which will be concerned with a detailed analysis of political activism among West Indians in Easton.

---

44. See, p. 172
Chapter Six

The Dynamics of West Indian Activism in Easton

The purpose of the present chapter is to examine the patterns of associational activity among West Indians in Easton in the light of the material presented in the preceding chapters. In particular, some attempt will be made to explain the apparent lack of formalised associational activity which stands in marked contrast to the rich and varied informal social relationships which exist among West Indians in Easton. It seems that a useful way of approaching this exercise will be to return to an examination of some of the possible explanations for this lack of formal associations among West Indians mentioned in the introduction to this thesis.

One possible explanation for the low level of associational activity centres on the notion of 'culture shock'. To briefly reiterate the point, West Indians arrive in Britain bringing with them a set of cultural norms from the Caribbean which conflict with those encountered in the host society. In its most dramatic portrayal, the initial experience of a West Indian migrant might be likened to an 'illiterate, rural peasant' confronted with the hustle and bustle of the 'sophisticated urban milieu' of the Western

1. See p. 10

industrialised, host society. It has been shown, however, that such a picture is at best stereotypical, with only a marginal essence of truth attached to it\(^3\). If it is accepted that the social structures of Caribbean societies have been shaped by a colonial history of plantation economies, the West Indian does not fit easily into categories such as 'rural' and 'peasant'\(^4\). Nevertheless, despite the partially pronounced 'urban' and Westernised characteristics of many West Indian migrants their arrival in Britain can be somewhat traumatic.

Many West Indians in Easton admitted that their expectations before arrival in Britain were utopian\(^5\). They were often surprised at the coolness of the welcome extended to them by the 'mother country'. The difficulties of cultural adaptation, compounded by the problems of finding jobs and houses in a possibly hostile community, may possibly provide sufficient evidence to explain the dearth of communal associations of a formal nature among newly arrived West Indian migrants.

However, it has been shown that many West Indians in Easton did not meet severe problems when they arrived in Britain. Most respondents acquired jobs and accommodation relatively easily. Furthermore, West Indian groupings in Easton were well established and most West Indians had lived in the locality for some years. Consequently, it seems reasonable to argue that the initial problems of settlement of West Indians in Easton should have receded and any

---

3. See p. 11


5. See p. 259
cultural adaptation to a new environment should have been at least partially accomplished.

The notion of 'culture shock' is often linked with the additional problems of social deprivation. The introduction of the latter concept brings in the argument that certain groups in Britain, including black minorities, face considerable day-to-day problems in simply maintaining a subsistence level of living. The hardships of daily existence largely negate the possibility for communal association. Poverty, with all its social repercussions, for example, unemployment, sub-standard housing, family disorganisation etc., dehumanises the individual to such an extent that any expectation of high levels of social participation in communal associations is unrealistic.

There would appear to be great validity in the 'culture shock' and 'social deprivation' arguments. Many West Indians, in a number of British cities, do seem to be faced with these kinds of social problems, and the social organisation of many West Indian communities

---

no doubt reflects such poverty. However, West Indian social organisation in Easton cannot be accounted for by the 'culture of poverty' thesis if this is interpreted in its strictest sense. The majority of respondents did not report harsh levels of poverty or deprivation. However, they can be seen as relatively deprived when the position of West Indians in Easton is compared with that of other groups in the city. West Indians, that is to say, are one of the most deprived groups in a highly affluent city where the types of social problems encountered by urban dwellers elsewhere in Britain are less severe. West Indians in Easton occupy some of the worst housing, and many are less favourably employed than the majority of residents in the city. Thus, within the context of Easton, West Indians do feel deprived even with a relatively higher living standard than many other black minorities in Britain. In short, it is important to make a distinction between areas of social deprivation per se, with all their connotations of subsistence living standards, and the relative deprivation of West Indians in Easton which compares quite favourably with the social situation of many West Indians in other areas of settlement in Britain.

The more favourable position of West Indians in Easton, one might have thought, would encourage the formation of voluntary associations and, possibly, political activism. Freed from the constraints of extreme poverty but perceiving their relatively inferior position in the social structure of Easton, many West Indians might have been expected to seek changes in their life situation. It has been shown that many West Indians in Easton did express considerable discontent.

7. See Coates and Silburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 138–143
which arose from their perception of the relatively deprived position of West Indians in the locality contrasted with the life situations of white and Asian members of the community. The absence of West Indian political associations, and the ephemerality of those associations which did exist in Easton, contrasts with the permanence and stability of local West Indian groupings. This suggests that explanations of the former must include social factors in addition to 'culture shock' and 'social deprivation'.

A further possibility which can be discounted is the proposition that high residential mobility, coupled with the temporary nature of West Indian migration, does not encourage high levels of associational activity. It could be argued that West Indians do not establish their own formal associations because they view their migration to Britain as transitional. In addition, a high rate of geographical mobility among West Indians would further reduce the probability of their forming permanent associations in a particular locality. Once again, the evidence as far as West Indians in Easton are concerned, would seem to cast doubt on these explanations. Most respondents revealed a low level of geographical mobility; many of them had lived solely in Easton since their arrival in Britain some years ago. Residential mobility within Easton was also low, the majority of West Indians living within a restricted area of the city and forming a reasonably compact settlement.

The argument which stresses the temporary nature of West Indian settlement in Britain confuses a desire among West Indians to return to the Caribbean with the likelihood of this eventuality. The

8. See p. 81
majority of West Indians questioned in Easton expressed such a
desire but most of them appeared to accept that an early return to
the Caribbean was unlikely, at least in any permanent sense. There
was little evidence to suggest that West Indians in Easton saw a
forthcoming re-migration to the Caribbean as a panacea for any
social ills they suffered from in Britain.

A further factor which could inhibit the formation of
associations designed to develop the interests of West Indians in
Britain, centres on how the latter perceive their position in the
host society along the lines of separatism or non-separatism. The
latter involves a consideration of a number of somewhat contentious
terms, namely 'assimilation', 'accommodation' and 'integration'.

These terms have generated considerable controversy because of wide
disagreement about the nature of West Indian intentions in Britain.
The debate rests on the desired degree of contact between West
Indians and the host society as perceived by both sides. It would
appear that, initially, most West Indians arriving in Britain wished
to establish amicable social relationships with members of the host
community which they were entering. However, this does not imply
that West Indians wished to become totally absorbed into the host
community either culturally and/or biologically in the near or more
distant future. Assimilation implies that West Indians would
gradually throw-off those cultural differences which distinguished
them from the host community until they had become fully 'acceptable'
to members of the latter. There is also, as hinted above, the

---

9* For a discussion and definition of these terms see, Patterson,
Dark Strangers, op. cit., pp. 21-26; also Rose et al, op. cit.,
pp. 23-25, in which the relationship and definitional problems
between 'assimilation' and 'integration' are described.
possible implication that a process of cultural homogenisation would lead ultimately to widespread miscegenation and eventual biological integration of black minorities and the white majority. The "melting-pot" thesis. 

This study of West Indians does not support the assimilationist-integrationist hypotheses, in part because most West Indians have voluntarily retained much of the culture of their Caribbean background. This culture is embedded within family and household structures, kinship and friendship relationships, distinctive cuisines, patterns of recreation and the social organisation of West Indian associations which have been examined in this study. There is a pattern of settlement among West Indians in Easton which is partly separatist and partly accommodative. On the one hand, West Indians seek to maintain cultural links with the Caribbean whilst, on the other, they wish to form compatible social relationships with the indigenous population in Britain in a variety of social situations, economic, political and recreational.

However, this desire on the part of West Indians partially to accommodate themselves to the expectations of members of the host community has often been met with rejection by the latter. It has

---


11. It is implied here that many West Indians occupy a somewhat ambivalent position in Easton and that this is reflected in the way most West Indians view their own position in relation to members of the host community. These views expressed a desire, on the one hand to establish some form of modus vivendi with local whites but, on the other, a strong wish to retain some vestiges of cultural separation.
been shown that, in a variety of social contexts, West Indians have been unable to establish on-going social relationships with local whites or Asians\textsuperscript{12}. These social contexts range from formal work situations or common church attendance to the more intimate areas of friendship and inter-marriage. This is not to suggest that all West Indians do not maintain amicable relationships with these groups. Most West Indians do mix peacefully with other groups in the factory or in church, but outside of these formal contacts most West Indians live separate lives within their own homes. This is partly by choice but often because there is no opportunity for more intimate social relationships with other groups in the locality.

Therefore, irrespective of the desires of West Indians to assimilate or integrate they are compelled to fit into a quasi-separatist position where the arenas for social interaction between black and white are stipulated by the latter. This also applies to social interaction between West Indians and Asians which in many ways is even more restricted. The relative social isolation of West Indians tends to influence associational formation among them in a number of ways. It may tend, for example, to make many West Indians more self-aware in a negative or positive way. In a negative sense, this will involve a retreat behind any number of barriers, whether social and/or psychological. In some cases, West Indians develop neuroses which severely inhibit contact with whites\textsuperscript{13}. More commonly, West Indians live out their lives in Easton within their own homes, providing their own entertainment, restricting their network

\textsuperscript{12} See p. 120

\textsuperscript{13} See Broom, op. cit., and Kiev. op. cit.
of social relationships to fellow West Indians. In a minority of cases this social isolation encourages the establishment of united, cohesive associations which seek to change the life situations of West Indians in Britain through communal action.

This study has shown that most West Indians in Easton have chosen, or have been forced to choose, the second option, retreatism, whilst a few have sought to establish and maintain associations which are designed to change the social position of local West Indian communities.

The relationships between West Indians and members of the host community are governed by those sanctions placed upon West Indians by the latter which encourage separatism within well-defined formal boundaries. This separatism is also perceived within West Indian groups to a certain extent. The 'individualism' of West Indians was briefly mentioned in relation to social organisation earlier in the present study\(^\text{14}\). It was shown that individualism has often been seen as a psychological phenomenon which centres on an 'individualistic personality' which encourages self-hate, marginality and negates the formation of meaningful group identities which, in turn, encourage communal association. Whilst it was argued that the study of personality formation, particularly within the context of colonial history, was a fascinating and probably profitable area for further study, it was stressed that 'individualism' would be used in a sociological sense within the present study. Thus, individualism was viewed as a type of social organisation which may or may not have intrinsic links with what might be called an 'individualistic personality'\(^\text{15}\).

\(^{14}\) See, p. 13 and pp. 61-67.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
Within this context, individualism can be seen as a social phenomenon which derived from a colonial history of slavery and deprivation which is still nurtured within contemporary West Indian societies by neo-colonial constraints. It can be further argued that these deprivations have been maintained by the host society since the earliest settlement of West Indians in Britain. Within this type of theoretical framework individualism as a type of social organisation must be related to the colonial history of West Indian societies. Dilip Hiro, discussing the effects of slavery in the Caribbean on the various African tribes who were deliberately inter-mixed by plantation owners, states that:

"(The inter-mixing of tribes)...... dramatically ruptured the continuity of their social order, and destroyed their communal way of life. It also tended to encourage a 'go-it-alone' attitude among the slaves, though the cruelty of the system periodically brought them together to revolt.

The West Indian community in modern Britain manifests similar tendencies in a different context. In normal times, individualism among West Indians and the absence of the tradition of following a recognised leader - tribal, communal, or caste - which occurs in the settled societies of Asia and Africa, make it difficult to organise the community for the purpose of pursuing such positive objectives as, say, establishing community centres."16

This 'go-it-alone' tendency among West Indians has been mentioned by several other commentators. Thus, for example, Donald Hinds says:

"The average West Indian is a 'go-it-aloner'; despite the fact that he probably lives in close proximity with fellow migrants, he prefers ...... to fight racial prejudice as he meets it in everyday life as an individual citizen, rather than to help form a nation-wide movement after the American pattern."17

17. Hinds, op. cit., p. 136
Most West Indians in Easton fit into this social pattern. They are primarily concerned with their own families and view any problems encountered locally in a personalised sense rather than within a broader, 'West Indian' communal categorisation. The individualism of West Indians is most apparent in monetary transactions between them. It has been shown that, among West Indians in Easton, much suspicion and mistrust surrounds such transactions. It was also shown that the position of Treasurer in West Indian formal associations is an area of some delicacy. Many West Indians see participation in these formal associations in terms of personal gain for the activists concerned and are unwilling to impute altruistic motivations to them. Moreover, few examples of commercial organisation among West Indians could be detected. They did not establish their own shops, businesses or lending institutions designed to assist, for example, house purchase. Those economic associations which were formed, for example, credit associations, were highly informal and based upon kinship and island ties. Thus, it can be seen that the social organisation of West Indian groupings in Easton stresses individualism rather than mutualism, and that this tendency does not lend itself to widespread formal associational activity within or between West Indian groupings.

Where formal groups are established, they are influenced by a number of subtle cross-cutting lines of conflict. These conflictual divisions can be listed as follows:

18. See p. 151
19. These lines of conflict also cross-cut informal groups
1. Length of residence
2. Generation
3. Island and Region
4. Class, Status and Colour
5. Religion and Family Organisation
6. 'Political allegiances'

The length of residence of West Indian groups and individuals in Easton was an important determinant of associational activity. The pattern of West Indian settlement in the city has been briefly described and it has been shown that, whilst a number of West Indians settled in Easton immediately after the Second World War, the vast majority of migrants from the Caribbean settled in the locality during the late 1950's and early 1960's. The arrival of the latter was perceived with mixed feelings by the earliest West Indian settlers. These 'old-timers' were pleased to see the arrival of West Indian 'new-comers', especially if they included among them family and friends from the home island, but there were also many regrets and fears that this 'mass settlement' might be met with hostility from the white community. Any degree of acceptance which 'old-timers' may have achieved, they feel, might be jeopardised by the arrival of so many 'new-comers'. Furthermore, many of the latter were not from the same islands as the 'old-timers'; nor were they, in the main, from the same perceived class background. Most of the early West Indian settlers in Easton were from Jamaica and Barbados. The arrival of so-called 'low-class, small island people' was often not welcomed by 'old-timers' for these reasons. Length of residence, in isolation from other factors, does not necessarily produce conflict within West Indian groupings but reinforced by, for example, island or class distinctions, it is an important source of division between them. There were many instances when West Indians who had resided in Easton for some years expressed considerable regret that the racial
harmony which they believed existed in the city in the early post-war years, had been ruined by too many 'new-comers' who were 'less-accommodating' than themselves. The 'shortcomings' of those West Indians who were recent arrivals in Easton were often ascribed by the 'old-timers' to the "ignorance" or "couldn't care less" attitudes of the newcomers. Such attitudes, it was held, were what one would expect from "illiterate", "low-class", "small-island" West Indians.

Age distinctions within West Indian groupings are also potentially divisive. Many younger West Indians, particularly those who have been born or spent the greater part of their lives in Britain, may not accept status distinctions, acknowledged by first generation West Indians, which are based upon forms of prestige bestowed on individuals in the Caribbean. First generation West Indians commonly attribute status on the basis of kinship links, colour, occupation, education and other criteria which were established in the West Indies and still have some credibility among older West Indians. Younger West Indians, with little or no experience of the Caribbean, however, often refuse to acknowledge these status distinctions and the consequent withdrawal of prestige is resented by older West Indians.

Similarly, younger West Indians tend to be more radical than their older counterparts in their attitudes towards the host community. In part, this is due to their greater separation from Caribbean backgrounds which stressed the importance of European influences and the desirability of 'whiteness'. The experiences of younger West Indians within the British educational system are different from those which West Indians educated in the Caribbean encountered. Moreover, the social inequalities between black and white are often
more sharply experienced by second generation West Indians. The latter tend to compare themselves with their white peers who have better perceived life chances and this creates much resentment among younger West Indians. Many first generation West Indians have more limited aspirations and interpret the resentment among young West Indians as a feature of their youth rather than as a result of discrimination. Second generation West Indians, furthermore, are more affected by restricted job opportunities and spiralling house prices etc. because their education has prompted higher aspirations than those originally held by their parents. These aspirations conflict with the restricted opportunities met in areas of employment which are adjudged by white employers as unsuitable for 'black workers'. Older West Indians may have initially expected equal job opportunities but have long since become reconciled to restricted areas of employment, in part because the financial rewards from these jobs may have been better than those received in the Caribbean. Younger West Indians do not have this sort of perspective and can only compare their present position with their white and Asian contemporaries. Second generation West Indians also face the additional problems encountered in an economic climate which has deteriorated over the years of West Indian settlement. Easton in the 1950's and 1960's might not have offered West Indians equal opportunities with all other groups in the


21. This problem of comparison with peer groups is made more acute by the fact that Asian pupils, despite being from a coloured minority group, do substantially better than West Indians in many instances and compare very favourably with white pupils. See, for example, J. H. Taylor, 'Newcastle upon Tyne: Asian Pupils do better than Whites', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, December, 1973), pp. 431-448
locality but some jobs and houses were available. In more recent years, the housing and employment situation in Easton has rapidly deteriorated and, in a period, where all groups find difficulty in acquiring cheap housing or plentiful job opportunities, young black individuals are seriously disadvantaged.

The generational conflicts within many West Indian families in Britain have already been described. Traditionally, many West Indian parents display a Victorian authoritarianism towards their children which often leads to serious inter-generational rifts within the family. These problems are exacerbated by 'permissive' forms of discipline within the educational system in Britain which stand in sharp contrast to the often punitive forms of control common to many West Indian homes.

Second generation West Indians also face identity problems in Britain which are often more acute than those faced by their parents. It has been shown that most West Indians desire acceptance in Britain but that they also seek to retain links with their islands of origin. The retention of these Caribbean roots, albeit highly problematic ones, still affords some focus of identification. If the first generation West Indian was not treated as a black Englishman by the host society, he could at least still call himself a Jamaican or an Antiguan and so forth. The second generation, however, brought up in Britain, mixing with white peer groups, often speaking with an Easton rather than a 'West Indian' accent, have to reconcile the loss of their Caribbean roots.


23. See p. 152
with the refusal to be admitted as an 'Englishman' by white members of
the host community. This reconciliation means dealing with the
conflicts between home and school, the problems of colour and
discrimination and those misplaced aspirations previously alluded to.
Failure to reconcile these social pressures has led many West Indian
adolescents into aimless unemployment, homelessness, and forms of
association, for example black power groups, which are perceived by
the host community and older West Indians as highly deviant. Many
West Indian adolescents belong to a 'youth subculture' in Easton which
incorporates a type of life style which is totally unacceptable to most
first generation West Indians. This overt life style, which includes
distinctive fashions, speech patterns, musical forms and a leaning
towards political militancy is seen by older West Indians as a form
of expression likely to exacerbate relations between all West Indians
and the host society. These generational differences have an
important influence on formal associational activity. First generation
West Indians have tended to form 'Moderate', a-political associations
whilst 'Radical', highly political associations were invariably
dominated by second generation West Indians. The importance of these
divisions will be discussed later in the chapter.

One of the most important divisions between West Indians in Easton
is their island of origin and regional differences within their
respective island groupings. It has been stressed that first
generation 'West Indians' see themselves first and foremost as
Jamaicans, Antiguans, Barbadians etc., and that their common West
Indian background is seen as somewhat secondary. Most West Indian
respondents in the study had migrated directly from their home island
to Britain and few had been to other West Indian societies before
migration. It was shown that it is not unusual for West Indians from
different islands to have little knowledge of one another's societies. Geographical remoteness (Kingston, Jamaica is as far from Port of Spain, Trinidad, as London is from Moscow) and a West Indian educational system which stresses the links between particular Caribbean societies and Britain rather than those between the former, are important sources of island insularity. A recent history of island nationalism has reinforced this island separation. Island distinctions are typified by stereotypes used widely among West Indians to describe individuals from islands other than their own. Among them, the 'large island/small island' distinction is the most pronounced. In addition to inter-island distinctions in the Caribbean, there are also differences between city and town dwellers and those West Indians who have a more 'rural' background. These differences are most apparent in Jamaica or Trinidad. The town dweller in the latter will often refer to 'country bookies' who live in the 'bush'\textsuperscript{24}. These stereotypes are comparable to the caricatures drawn in British culture which portray the countryman as a 'backward yokel' with 'quaint' customs and dialects compared with the sophistication and modernity of his urban counterpart.

It has been shown that these island, and to a lesser extent regional, differences are pronounced among West Indians in Easton. Furthermore, these distinctions can form the basis of conflict within West Indian groupings in relation to formal associational activity. Island differences were one of the most important problems encountered by those

\textsuperscript{24} Trinidadians who live in the capital, Port-of-Spain, which is in the north of the island, often refer to fellow Trinidadians who live in the rural areas in the southern part of Trinidad in these terms. The use of these terms does not, of course, necessarily imply deep hostility but may simply indicate mild disparagement.
West Indian activists who sought to establish communal associations embracing all West Indians. The difficulties met by the J.W.A. have been described in some detail in this study\textsuperscript{25}. The mere labelling of this group as 'Jamaican' effectively negated support from a wide section of the West Indian community in Easton. West Indians from other, smaller societies interpreted the formation of the J.W.A. as an example of Jamaican status-seeking. Members of the J.W.A. in turn saw these criticisms as illustrative of small island pettiness.

The pattern of voluntary association formation among West Indians in Easton confirmed that most formal associations and many informal groupings were established within island delineations. The only exceptions were those associations formed or partly established by second generation West Indians who were less concerned with island and regional distinctions\textsuperscript{26}. Those associations formed by mainly first generation West Indians which did have memberships drawn from a number of islands invariably had formal committees composed of members with similar island origins. Thus the J.W.A., and the West Indian Sports Association which preceded it, and most of the recreational associations had committees which were island exclusive even if the

\textsuperscript{25} See pp. 120-125

\textsuperscript{26} The Caribbean Cultural Association, youth clubs and some sports clubs which were described in Chapter 3 of this study have a predominantly second generation membership. It was argued that island distinctions were less important in these associations but they still remained influential, for example, in the selection of committee members. It was further argued that the search for a 'self-identity' among young West Indians included an examination of their Caribbean 'roots'. It was suggested that this search might re-introduce island distinctions if adolescents identified with the island of their parents rather than with a general 'Caribbean' or 'West Indian' or 'black' label.
'paper membership' showed that the membership was drawn from a wider island base. The B.W.I. club was the only formal association which had a mixed committee (in terms of island affiliation) and it has been shown that this group managed to maintain itself only because of the informal and non-political nature of its activities and aspirations.

At the informal level, island distinctions were less important, although when associations centred on financial matters, for example, 'credit clubs' these were commonly formed along island lines. Most West Indians discounted the importance of island affiliations in forming friendships with other West Indians but 'closest friends' were invariably drawn from fellow islanders. The importance of island and regional affinities is to be expected among West Indians in Britain. Migrants, whatever their society of origin, tend to reproduce kin and friendship ties established in the home island as a basis of support in their new social and geographical environment. This is particularly true of West Indians from the smaller islands where social relationships are extremely intimate and fellow Barbudans and Montserratians in Easton, if not related by kinship, often come from the same village in their home island. This type of intimacy should not be overlooked when considering the nature of informal social interaction within West Indian groupings. Island and regional differences are extremely subtle at this level and overt conflict is not readily apparent. Most West Indians in Easton, irrespective of island affiliations, relate to one another amicably on an informal basis but all forms of intimate social interaction between West Indians tend to be within the household and/or social networks which are based upon island affiliations. Formal associations among West Indians are

27. See p. 177
generally island exclusive, and island and regional differences are crucial to the explanation of the lack or ephemerality of formal communal associations which attempt to transcend these distinctions.

Class, status and colour divisions are also important among West Indians, both in Britain and the Caribbean. It has been shown that West Indian societies are stratified by complex class and colour lines. Similarly, status distinctions are also highly complex and based upon innumerable criteria. In Easton, it can be seen that class, status and colour distinctions based upon the Caribbean pattern are reproduced in Britain, although with some modification. Class distinctions between West Indians appeared to be less important in Easton because most West Indians originated from the same, lower class background in the Caribbean. This in turn tended to reduce the importance of colour distinctions between West Indians in the city. Phenotypical characteristics and colour gradations are still used by West Indians in Easton when assessing the social position of another West Indian but colour appears to have diminished in importance as a status attribute because of the common class position of most West Indians in the

---

28. Both class and status are defined here in a Weberian sense and throughout the present study. Hence class position is associated with life chances in the context of the market situation in Easton; status is connected with the life styles of individuals and groups. Connected with the latter is the formation of status groups which are based upon varying degrees of prestige which stem from a common style of life and common ethical standards. For definitions of these terms, see, James Littlejohn, Social Stratification, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1972), pp. 22-30. See also, Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, trs. Gerth and Mills, (London, Routledge, 1948); and The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, trs. Parsons and Henderson, (London, Collier-Macmillan, 1947).
city. Members of the host community are unaware of the sophisticated phenotypical distinctions used by West Indians to differentiate themselves and label all West Indians as 'coloured' or 'black'. Consequently many West Indians recognise that they do occupy a common position as far as the host community is concerned and this lessens the importance of very subtle colour divisions between them. However, less subtle distinctions are still important and a lighter skin is still accorded a higher status in Britain than a very dark complexion. An additional reason for the lessening importance of subtle colour gradations between West Indians in Britain also stems from the sharp distinctions made between white and black by members of the host society. Many West Indians in Britain stress the greater degree of racial harmony in the Caribbean as compared with Britain and this also tends to decrease the importance of colour distinctions within West Indian groupings in Britain. It should be noted that this image of racial harmony is partly mythical. The Caribbean is not a racial paradise; it is merely the setting for a sophisticated pattern of colour distinctions which contrasts with the rather more 'crude' pattern of colour divisions in Britain. This is well illustrated by Gordon Lewis when he writes:

29. This statement implies that, whether one perceives West Indians as part of the working class in Easton (i.e. by measuring class independently of racial or ethnic differences) or whether one perceives them, along with other black minorities, as part of an 'under-class' (i.e. a social stratum below the white working class), West Indians in Easton are predominantly in a common class position with respect to life chances. This also holds for subjective or objective measures of class. That is to say, most West Indians see themselves and most other West Indians as working class and this was confirmed by the observations of the researcher.
'The racial harmony of West Indian islands is a myth. What takes place, is not that the migrant comes from a harmonious race relations system to a system of incipient racialism but that, rather, he moves from a classificatory system based on the fine detective recognition of 'shade' to an English classificatory system that has taken over the American black-white dichotomy, so much more brutal and insulting.'

However mythical the view of racial harmony might be among West Indians in Britain, it is a belief which is widely held and this study further confirmed the fact. Many West Indians in Easton described the 'openness' of West Indian societies in glowing terms! The retention of this myth does decrease the importance of colour distinctions among West Indians in Britain but it also places those few middle class West Indians in Easton in a very ambivalent position.

In the Caribbean, a middle class position is equated with light skin colour and 'good' (that is near European) facial features. It is also connected with skilled and professional occupations and, consequently with higher levels of income and wealth. There were very few West Indians in Easton who would have been accorded a middle class position by other West Indians in the Caribbean using all these criteria. In Easton, those few West Indians who did have middle class jobs and a higher standard of living than most other West Indians were in a marginal position between the host community and the latter.

In most cases, the host community would not accept any West Indian as middle class because of his colour. Other West Indians might also refuse to acknowledge the higher class position of a fellow West Indian because transfer to Britain was seen as altering the class distinctions which were used in the Caribbean. Similarly, 'lightness' of skin may not

automatically place an individual in a higher status position among West Indians in Britain because of the changes in the importance of colour gradations among the latter which have previously been described. Thus, many lighter skinned West Indians face acute problems of status deprivation in Britain because of the withdrawal of prestige from both the host community and fellow West Indians. This will be seen to have great importance when the problems of leadership are discussed later in this chapter.

It has been argued that class distinctions within West Indian groupings in Easton are relatively unimportant because of the common class position occupied by the vast majority of West Indians in the locality. Whether class is measured 'subjectively' in terms of how West Indians perceive their own or other West Indians' class position, or 'objectively' by the researcher, most West Indians in Easton would be categorised as working class. However, one of the most significant social processes perceived in this study is the formation of status groups within this common class base. Status groups may be formed on the basis of length of residence, age, island and regional background in the West Indies, occupation and education etc. Life styles attributed to certain types of family structure and particular forms of religious worship are also important indicators of status among West Indians in Easton. It has been argued that the household and family structure of many West Indians in Easton indicates a move towards intra-class divisions in Britain which are comparable to inter-class divisions within West Indian societies. There, intra-class divisions

31. See footnote 29.
32. Ibid.
33. See p. 172
are based upon the distinctions between 'stable' and 'unstable' family units. In the Caribbean, stable, legal family units are connected with a higher class life style whilst more loosely structured family units correspond to a lower class position. In Easton, stable or unstable family units accord with a higher or lower status position within a common working class base. Status groups are formed among West Indians in Easton along the lines of 'respectable' or 'non-respectable' life styles. A position within a stable family unit will accord with the former and therefore a high status position. A 'non-respectable' background in an unstable family unit is congruent with a lower status position. Respectability is equated by West Indians with a legal marriage partnership or a permanent common-law partnership which is expected to lead to eventual legal marriage. Non-respectability is defined in accordance with those negative prescriptions assigned to ephemeral sexual partnerships which are formed outside of a formal family or household unit. The latter are further influenced by condemnatory attitudes from the host community many members of which tend to label loosely structured family units as indicative of the 'immorality' or 'promiscuity' which they believe is typical of all West Indian sexual relationships. Therefore, respectability and non-respectability are measured by West Indians not only in relation to the social mores within West Indian groupings but also in terms of external evaluations of certain West Indian life styles by members of the host community.

34. See p. 158
Patterns of religious association also influence the formation of status groups. Distinctions are made within West Indian groupings between those individuals who are members of 'traditional' churches and denominations and those who belong to more sectarian religious associations. It has been shown that membership of traditional churches and denominations is connected with status respectability. Religious membership of this kind is equated with high status and complements other high status requisites which may include light skin colour, possession of educational qualifications, a skilled occupation, legal marriage, residence in a 'better area' and so forth.

Sectarian forms of worship, for example Pentecostalism, which, it has been argued, is more concerned with doctrinal respectability, accords with a low status position among most West Indians. Religious beliefs for the 'saints' were not additional status factors but the status factor which shaped their whole life style. In this sense, the 'saints' are comparable to 'black power' adherents who also adopt life styles which place them in low status positions as far as the majority of West Indians are concerned. However, the position of black power activists and the 'saints' is somewhat ambiguous as far as the overall status system (if one can talk in such terms) within the West Indian settlement in Easton is concerned. Whilst it could be said that, for example, a dark skinned labourer, living in the heart of Lowdale in a loosely structured family unit, would be accorded a low status position by the majority of West Indians; this individual

35. See p. 284
36. Ibid.
would be accepted within the status system of the West Indian
settlement in Easton. However, despite the fact that most 'saints'
and 'black power activists' would be assigned low status positions
by other West Indians, these two groups would be separated from the
overall status system. Both the 'saints' and the 'black power' group
had separate life styles which stemmed from their own particular
world views.

It would simplify matters if West Indians could be placed within
a dichotomy of respectability/non-respectability. There would be
positive attributes connected with the former and negative attributes
connected with the latter. Individuals could be placed in a high or
low status position within their common working class category.
However, this would be to assume that there is one status system
within the West Indian community and that individual attributes tend
to be congruent with the dichotomy outlined above. That is to say,
stable family units correspond with traditional religious membership,
skilled occupations, some formal education etc and unstable family
units are similarly aligned with sectarian worship, unskilled jobs and
a lack of education. Possession of the former set of attributes would
typify a high status 'respectable' position in the West Indian
communities, whilst possession of the latter set would indicate a low
status, 'non-respectable' position.

Whilst it is true to say that many West Indian individuals did
approach one polarity or the other and that therefore, this model has
some heuristic value, there are several points which make a dichotomous
model of this kind far too simplistic. One problem is concerned with
the fact that status groups measured in terms of attributional criteria
are not necessarily consistent with status groups measured interactionally. That is to say those status groups which could be defined according to 'objective' and external factors introduced by the researcher did not always remain congruent with status groups defined on the basis of which individuals interacted with others of the same life style within West Indian groupings.

Furthermore, if one introduces island affiliations, it can be seen that these cross-cut status lines. West Indians in Easton can be placed in attributional status groups irrespective of island affiliations but interactional status groups must be seen to form within island groupings. An additional problem is centred on formal association membership and participation. Status formation among West Indians in Easton was exceptionally fluid and inconsistent. Membership and participation in formal associations tended to blur status distinctions even further. Apart from forms of religious association and black power activity there were no West Indian formal associations in Easton which corresponded totally with status distinctions along the lines of respectability/non-respectability. Activism in formal associations, together with island affiliations, blurred consistent status lines which could be drawn across West Indian groupings in Easton.

For example, the committee members of the J.W.A. were middle aged, long term residents. They lived within stable family units and those

37. It has been argued, quite convincingly, that it is often difficult if not impossible to separate out attributional and interactional systems at the 'community' level. Far too often class distinctions are confused with status differences. This is in communities which are not necessarily ethnically or racially mixed. See, for example, Colin Bell and Howard Newby, Community Studies, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1971), pp. 186-189
who were church-goers attended non-sectarian places of worship. One or two committee members resided in 'better areas' and were representative of the very small number of middle class West Indians in Easton. All these members would accord with a high status 'respectable' position measured in terms of these attributes. However, the act of participation in the J.W.A. was perceived as 'non-respectable' by many West Indians because of the supposed 'political' nature of the association.

Committee members of the J.W.A. were viewed as respectable within their own island grouping but they were labelled as 'non-respectable' political activists by first generation West Indians in different island communities in Easton. Political activism was non-respectable because it was seen as a form of activity which might endanger harmonious West Indian/host community relations. It can be seen that the status position of J.W.A. activists is extremely ambiguous because of inter-and intra-island distinctions.

Recreational formal associations also tended to blur status distinctions. It has been shown that West Indians in Easton either chose or were forced to organise their own recreational facilities. This meant that dances and sports activities were attended by a range of individuals who may not have mixed socially in the West Indies. Apart from shebeens and some commercial parties which were perceived as non-respectable forms of entertainment, most forms of recreational association cut across lines of respectability/non-respectability. The more informal the interaction the less important status distinctions appeared to be. In recreational settings, all the lines of division

38. See, Lowenthal, op. cit., p.123
previously described may be important, for example, island
exclusivity may be maintained but within these delineations the
informality of the occasion appears to break down status distinctions.

The lack of recreational facilities for West Indians in Easton
appears to create a situation where status distinctions are partly
ignored. If separate recreational associations could be provided
by each island grouping, or by status groups within them, informal
associations might be as divisive as formal associational activity.
Certainly it would appear that, as soon as associations become
formalised, they take on a degree of importance among West Indians
which re-introduces status distinctions. These distinctions must
be seen together with other factors as being a crucial explanation
for the lack of formal association among West Indians in Easton.
The complexity and divisiveness of the status systems within West
Indian groupings prohibits at present the formation of permanent
communal formal associations. The inconsistency of many status
distinctions further negates the possibility of coherent group
formation.

If a dichotomous status system along the lines of respectability/
non-respectability existed among West Indians in Easton, this might
encourage the establishment of on-going formal associations because
of strong in-group/out-group feelings between 'respectable' and
non-respectable' members of the West Indian community. Consistent,
even conflictual, associations could be developed within these
polarities. However, it has been argued that West Indians in Easton
could not be placed within a single coherent status system. Status

See p. 301
group formation operated within a number of systems, both inter- and intra-island distinctions being particularly important. This inconsistency nullified the possibility of coherent associations being established along status lines.

Status competitiveness, combined with the individualism of West Indians in Easton, also had significant implications for the scarcity of 'leaders' within the West Indian community. The paucity of individuals who were able to establish on-going formal associations is another important reason for the relative lack of the latter among West Indians in the city. It has been shown that middle class individuals commonly occupy leadership positions in the Caribbean in all forms of formal association. The West Indian groupings in Easton contained few middle class members. However, it has been argued that, within the predominantly working class West Indian settlement in Easton, status group formation has some significance. Within high status groups, some West Indians have moved towards middle class positions within the West Indian communities. It might appear that these individuals would provide some leadership potential.

At this point it will be useful to mention two studies which have been concerned with 'immigrant leadership' in Britain. Sydney Collins has distinguished between what he calls 'instrumental' and 'model' leaders within immigrant groups in Britain. The former combine authority and control over fellow immigrants which are often based upon traditional authority ascriptions derived from the society

40. See p. 46

of origin. Instrumental leaders are also those individuals who occupy formal authority positions within local immigrant associations in Britain. Model leaders on the other hand exert no direct control through the occupancy of formal positions of authority in such associations. Their 'leadership' is based upon the influence they exert through their possession of prestige which is derived from their social position in society at large. Collins mentions the importance of black politicians, sportsmen or film stars as role models for the 'leaders' of coloured minorities in Britain. Thus, black individuals who occupy high status positions, in any society, may influence leadership patterns among immigrant groups in Britain. Collins' leadership typologies lose some of their usefulness when it is realised that they are supposed to relate to all coloured minorities in Britain. It appears unlikely that similar leadership models can be used to explain leadership patterns within West Indian and Asian groupings because of their cultural diversity and the distinctiveness of their respective colonial histories.

It is also difficult to utilise the concept of 'instrumental' leadership among West Indian groupings in Britain. It has already been argued that West Indian societies do not contain the religious and political 'traditional' leadership patterns which typify Asian communities in India and Pakistan. It is also questionable whether 'instrumental' leaders will have authority which is recognised throughout West Indian communities. It has been shown that 'leadership' within West Indian formal associations in Easton is only likely to be recognised within the different island groupings. Furthermore, whilst members of formal associations may occupy positions of authority

42. See p. 286
within particular associations, it remains problematic whether such authority is acknowledged outside of the structure of the formal association in question, even within an island grouping.

The idea of 'model' leadership is an interesting one but again it appears somewhat misplaced as far as West Indians in Easton are concerned. There seems to be some confusion of leadership per se with the influence of a role model which may inspire leadership in others. West Indian cricketers, African athletes, American negro civil rights leaders and so on, may be seen as role models for West Indians in Britain. These individuals may project feelings of negritude or black self-esteem which stem from their accomplishment in a particular field of endeavour, whether in a political or sporting arena. This level of achievement could inspire leadership among other black men throughout the world; but even Collins acknowledges that there is no direct link between the role model and immigrant leaders (or potential leaders) and therefore it is difficult to equate this type of influence with 'leadership'. It would appear completely fortuitous whether the prowess of the 'role model' is transformed into localised political activity within immigrant communities. However, it would seem profitable for further research to be carried out to examine the links between 'model leaders' and localised political activism.

Manderson-Jones in a more recent study criticises Collins for similar reasons to those given above. He partly rejects the notion of 'leadership' within West Indian groups mainly on the grounds that

the concept of 'leadership' was overwhelmingly rejected by his sample of West Indian political activists. Manderson-Jones equates leadership with positions of authority within formal or semi-formal associations and therefore argues that, because most West Indian political activism takes place outside of such associations, the concept of 'leadership' is misplaced. He states that:

'A considerable amount of the main current of West Indian dialogue - not only the interchange of ideas but practical organisation and planning for action - occurs outside the major formal and semi-formal structures and within small, completely informal groups, either locally closed or drawing together people with common interests from widely separate areas.'

Manderson-Jones' data are drawn from the Metropolitan area and are based on a sample which included activists from those few West Indian organisations which purport to be nationally based and which have their 'headquarters' in London. It is interesting to note that the present study, which only attempts to describe and comment upon West Indian social organisation within a limited geographical area, appears to correspond with these comments about West Indian associations at a national level.

Despite some reservations, Manderson-Jones suggests that West Indian leadership in Britain can be viewed as forming within two opposing ideological positions - the militant-radical and the conservative-moderate. The militant-radical position is typified by those West Indian political activists who reject European and white influences and align themselves with an international 'black cause'. Historical links with Africa and the universality of

44. Ibid., p. 198

45. The most prominent of these is the West Indian Standing Conference
negritude are emphasised and thus the position of West Indians in Britain is seen to be directly comparable with, for example, the contemporary position of the negro in the United States. Finally, militant-radicals do not rule out the use of violence in the quest for black equality in Britain.

The conservative—moderate occupies a position in polar opposition to militant—radicalism. West Indian activists of a conservative—moderate persuasion partially accept European influences and do not rule out the assistance of whites in their associations. They tend to view West Indian activism within a national rather than an international context and the use of violence is firmly disavowed.

Manderson—Jones’ study provides much useful material in a neglected research area but the militant—radical/conservative—moderate dichotomy would appear to be too simplistic. Certainly the present study of West Indians in Easton points towards this conclusion.

It is possible to place the Black Power group and West Indians who actively support its ethos within the militant—radical typology. Similarly, the J.W.A. could be placed within the opposite ideological category. Nevertheless, this does simplify the concreteness of these ideological positions and the supposed firmness of the links between them and particular West Indian formal associations. A more useful approach would be to examine the inter-meshing of these ideological standpoints. It is suggested that this inter-penetration of ideologies further exaggerates the ambivalence of most West Indian associations (both formal and informal) in Easton and the individual members within them. The position of middle class or upwardly mobile working class West Indians is a case in point.

It has been suggested that all West Indians face problems of identity, both in Britain and in the Caribbean. This is related to
the historical and contemporary culture clash of African and European inheritances, their relation to the social structure of West Indian societies and the social organisation of West Indian groupings in Britain. The way in which West Indians evaluate their own and other West Indians' status and class position is a graphic illustration of this 'cultural ambivalence'. West Indians in Britain must decide whether to measure their status in relation to other West Indians, the host community or both.

Middle class and upwardly mobile West Indians in Britain face the most acute problems of identification because they occupy social positions of the greatest status inconsistency. It has been shown that high status may be acknowledged by the West Indian settlement (or at least an island group within it) but not by members of the host community. Status inconsistency is related to political activism or formal association membership in a number of ways which tend further to confuse the status position of the individuals concerned. Middle class and upwardly mobile working class West Indians may decide to measure their status in relation to the host community and this will tend to reduce the possibility of political activism from the former. This is because the host community may perceive political activism among such West Indians as a sign of hostility towards them and they will therefore not acknowledge a higher status position.

With this eventuality middle class and upwardly mobile working class West Indians are unlikely to participate in any associational activity which they believe to have any political connotations. Indeed, they may withdraw both socially and residentially from any contacts with other West Indians who are seen by them to be from a lower class or

46. See p. 245
status position.

However, it is problematic whether this type of separation will result in upwardly mobile West Indians being accepted by their white neighbours. In which case the former may react by involving themselves in political activity even to the point of militant-radicalism. Paradoxically, this overt political activism will be perceived as a 'non-respectable' activity by most other West Indians and this will result in further status loss. Consequently, the majority of middle class and upwardly mobile working class West Indians disassociate themselves from participation in any type of formal association except those highly informal recreational associations in which status distinctions tend to be less important.

Where activism within a West Indian political association does occur it commonly takes a conservative-moderate form. The latter, tends to produce formal associations which are often ephemeral unless they are primarily concerned with the provision of recreational facilities rather than directly concerned with overt political action.

Militant-radical associations are labelled as deviant by members of the host community and by most West Indians, particularly first generation migrants. Therefore, at present, political associations of this type are few and tend to be even more ephemeral than more 'moderate' West Indian associations. Faced with hostility from both host and West Indian communities, the difficulties of formation and maintenance of militant-radical associations are acute. Similarly, the number of West Indians who are prepared to adopt 'leadership' roles within militant-radical associations and face such hostilities, is, not surprisingly, small. However, the position of second generation West Indians in Easton is highly significant for future political activism and this will be briefly discussed in the following, concluding chapter.
The presence of other ethnic groups in Easton also has a marked influence on associational activity among West Indians. The substantial Indian and Pakistani communities in Easton are particularly pertinent to the latter. It has already been indicated that Indian and Pakistani communities are cross-cut by numerous national, regional, linguistic and religious differences to name only a few major divisions within them. However, the degree of social interaction between West Indians and Asians in Easton is extremely limited. In consequence, the internal divisions within Asian communities are not readily apparent to West Indians. Hence, the stereotypes which West Indians commonly use to describe Indians and Pakistanis in Easton, emphasise the closeness and unity of the Asian communities. The profusion of Indian and Pakistani businesses and places of worship tends to reinforce these beliefs, as the communal organisations connected with these activities are readily visible to West Indians.

The apparent success of Asians in establishing numerous organisations and associations stands in sharp contrast to the dearth of West Indian associations. This situation reinforces the feelings of inferiority which many West Indians expressed during the study. Whilst many respondents, and other West Indians questioned during the study, expressed a not inconsiderable hostility towards Asians in general, there was also an undisguised admiration of the degree to which Indians and Pakistanis were able to organise themselves and provide numerous facilities for their respective communities. Whereas the West Indians were still struggling to attain some unity which could enable them to establish a community centre for themselves,

47. The total Asian population in Easton is approximately three times the size of the West Indian population
48. See p. 286
49. See p. 121
the Asians had long since acquired several premises for this purpose in addition to the elaborate buildings which were used for religious ceremonies and recreational activities\textsuperscript{50}.

The demise of West Indian formal associations and the lack of success in establishing a community centre became a self-fulfilling prophecy for many West Indians in Easton. Associations were not formed by West Indians because it was felt by them that they would inevitably fail. If associations were hopefully established they were often dissolved through lack of communal support. The latter was not forthcoming because many West Indians foresaw failure!

Thus, there existed a cycle of associational fragmentation which was partly generated by the lack of confidence which many West Indians had, either in their own or in other West Indians' ability to form on-going formal associations. The presence of other ethnic communities in Easton who had established a wide range of such associations, despite being faced with similar types of rejection from the host community, compounded West Indian beliefs in their own inferiority and reinforced the cycle of associational fragmentation within West Indian groupings in the city. Recognition of this cycle turned many West Indians towards self- and group depreciation which further reinforced the type of psychological and social individualism previously alluded to in this chapter\textsuperscript{51}.

It can be seen that the formation of West Indian formal associations

\textsuperscript{50} In addition to a Hindu Temple and a Sikh gurdwara which had been specifically built for these purposes, there were numerous converted houses and other premises which were used for religious and recreational purposes by the various Asian groups in Easton.

\textsuperscript{51} See p. 286
in Easton is rendered highly problematic by a number of social contingencies. These contingencies which influence communal formal association must be viewed within the contemporary and historical framework within which West Indians and other members of the host community are placed. Some of the social dimensions which have shaped relationships between Britain and the various West Indian societies have been briefly described throughout this study. It has been constantly stressed that the social configurations embedded within these societal relationships have had a profound effect on the structure of relationships between and within West Indian groupings in Easton, between West Indians and adjacent ethnic minorities, and between West Indians and the host community.

It has been shown that the twin heritages of Africa and Europe have historically shaped societies in the Caribbean which are still seeking to forge their own unique identities. The social organisation of West Indian groupings in Easton reflects this quest and the innumerable complexities surrounding it. It would be erroneous to state that patterns of association among West Indians in Easton are simply a reproduction of Caribbean forms. What has occurred is an inter-penetration of social factors which partly originate from the Caribbean cultural background and partly stem from those contingencies which West Indians are confronted with in the host society. Most of the problems which surround West Indian formal associations arise from this inter-meshing of cultural differences and the continuation of a colonial relationship between Britain and the West Indies which has rendered many West Indians powerless both within their societies of origin and in Britain. It has been shown that the history of the black lower classes in the Caribbean has been marked by a tendency towards informal association and spontaneous uprisings.
rather than formalised political activism.\textsuperscript{52} In more recent years, whilst the lower classes in West Indian societies have maintained a vigorous interest in political change, they have only recently been enfranchised and the leadership which originally came from white elite members is still largely within the hands of those coloured middle-class elites which replaced the latter.

In Easton, West Indian social organisation is also primarily informal and largely characterised by primary rather than secondary associations. Leadership patterns and the belief among West Indians of their tangential position to the formal trade union and political party system also demonstrates the continuation of structural features which are common to both West Indian societies and West Indian groupings in Easton.\textsuperscript{53} The lack of formal association within the latter can be attributed to a number of factors which have been described in this chapter. The most striking feature of West Indian social organisation in Easton is the prevalence of ambiguous and ambivalent social relationships between West Indians and other groups in the city. West Indians occupy a position of consistent marginality in Easton which is similar to, and an extension of, the ambivalent nature of group relations within West Indian societies. The marginality of black or coloured groups is by no means unique to the Caribbean but it could be argued that West Indians are a classic illustration of this social and psychological phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{52} See Nettleford, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{53} See discussion of trade union and political party activities in West Indian societies in Chapter 1.
Marginality has been described in a number of ways. It can be used in a biological sense to refer to mixed 'blood' or half-caste individuals and groups. The use of marginality in this sense is best illustrated by the work of Robert E. Park and Everett E. Stonequist. Park was primarily concerned with the racial inter-mixture of negroes in the United States and the supposed psychological and social 'problems' which such marginality produced. Stonequist elaborated on this to include any racial or cultural hybrids. Park and Stonequist were particularly concerned with personality traits and the idea of a 'marginal personality'. It has been argued that this concept of marginality must be distinguished from a social position of marginality and the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' marginality. The most useful way of conceptualising marginality in its various forms, however, would appear to be that of R. M. Turner.

He argues that racial, social, cultural and psychological features


must be separated when using the concept of marginality, although he stresses that several or all of these features may be present at any one time. Jack Mann has elaborated succinctly on some further aspects of Turner's approach. He writes:

'Turner has suggested that there are three ways of identifying marginality. By the objective criterion, someone is marginal because he is a member of two different groups, that place contradictory demands and so put him in a marginal position. By the experiential criterion, someone is established as marginal because he experiences the conflicting demands of being in a marginal position. By the symptomatic criterion, someone is marginal because he possesses characteristic features of personality. A person could be in a marginal position without experiencing conflict; and he could have the symptomatic attributes without being otherwise marginal, seeing that circumstances other than marginal ones can bring out some of these attributes.'

Mann goes on to suggest that the concept of marginality has been abused, for example, by being indiscriminately used to describe the social position or psychological dispositions of any number of groups.

Nevertheless, this concept, if used in the manner that Turner suggests, may enable one to gain a more complete explanation of West Indian social organisation in Easton.

West Indians in Easton can be seen as individuals and groups of individuals which possess many of the attributes of the objective, experiential and symptomatic forms of marginality. It was argued earlier that the colonial history of West Indian slave and plantation societies may have shaped 'marginal' personality traits among black West Indians, and that these, in turn, may have produced certain types of social correlates, for example, 'individualism'. Similarly, the nuance of phenotypical differentiation are perceived in very sophisticated

59. Mann, op. cit., p. 216

60. Ibid., p. 217-218
ways in West Indian societies and these perceptions are an important determinant of stratificatory patterns and status distinctions within the Caribbean islands. This form of differentiation is partly reproduced in Easton and further complicates the reconciliation of the ambiguities in status attribution between the West Indian and host communities.

West Indians in Easton also occupy marginal positions because of the nature of black-white relations in Britain. The 'colour line' in this country is not totally rigid and hence some degree of movement across colour lines is possible. Consequently, many West Indians are placed in an ambivalent position because of the marginality of the cultural differences between them and members of the host community\(^{61}\). Paradoxically, the desire among many West Indians to accommodate themselves to the host community has partially negated the formation of political associations. It has been shown that the contradictions between how West Indians view their position in Easton and the perceptions of the host community has had important repercussions for associational activity and West Indian leadership.

A further major problem for West Indians in Easton is their occupancy of a marginal position between the indigenous white community and the migrant Asian communities in the city. West Indians and Asians

---

61. Whilst West Indians are culturally distinct from the indigenous white community in Easton they are sufficiently similar in language, dress and customs etc., to afford some West Indians the possibility of achieving a degree of social acceptance with the latter, which enables them to cross the 'colour line'. Thus, West Indians in Easton had to decide whether they wished to continue to aspire towards white acceptance or concentrate on forging a separate 'West Indian' or 'black' self-identity. Complete rejection by the host community would encourage the latter but the likelihood, albeit a limited one, of some mobility across the colour line tended to reinforce the marginal position of many West Indians in the city.
occupy similar minority positions vis-a-vis the host community.
Furthermore, it has been argued that members of the latter perceive West Indians and Asians as 'black immigrants' and hence both groups are subsumed under the same label. However, it has also been shown that West Indians and Asians are culturally distinct and that social interaction between them is extremely limited. They do not assist one another in forming joint representative associations. Therefore, the West Indians in Easton occupy a minority position within the much wider migrant-indigenous, black-white dichotomies which describe social and colour divisions in the city. The West Indians are a minority within a minority! West Indian groupings and Asian communities are in direct competition for scarce resources in Easton, for example, housing, employment and recreational facilities. The social organisation of West Indian groupings does not lend itself to the formation of communal 'self-help' associations of a formal nature, whilst the structure of Asian communities would appear to do so. Therefore, West Indians are rendered powerless not only by actual or believed acts of discrimination on the part of the host community but also by the presence of neighbouring, non-indigenous groups, whose social mores favour communal rather than individualistic types of association and place them in a more advantageous position than their West Indian counterparts.

The implications of relative power distinctions within the supposed 'black community' in Easton will be remarked on in the concluding chapter. At this juncture, the present chapter can be brought to a close by briefly illustrating how the nature of West Indian formal association relates to those very limited opportunities which the host community provides for the amelioration of the social problems encountered by black minorities in Britain.
It has been argued that, for a number of reasons, West Indians in Easton do not perceive the trade union movement or the political party system as representative of their needs. Consequently, the formal political machinery of local government or local trade unions in Easton are, in the main, not seen by West Indians in the city as possible avenues for West Indian political expression. The only alternative organisation provided by the host community is the local Committee of the Community Relations Commission and its officers. The shortcomings or otherwise of the latter have been described elsewhere. The sole purpose of this brief examination of the position of the Community Relations machinery in Easton is merely to describe the relationship it has to local West Indian groupings and how it influences the associational activity of the latter. This is best illustrated by returning to the difficulties which West Indians encountered when attempting to establish their own community centre in Easton. This was briefly touched upon earlier when the activities of the J.W.A. were described. The Community Relations Council and its related committees represent one of the very few platforms where West Indian and Asian 'leaders' meet each other in Easton. However, it has already been established that, at the time of the research, only the J.W.A. were represented on the Board. This meant that only a small section of the West Indian population in Easton was seen by other West Indians to be represented, namely the Jamaicans.

The non-representativeness of the J.W.A. was also recognised by the local Community Relations office but it took the view that some

West Indian representation was better than none at all! Paradoxically, the 'egalitarian' policy of the Easton Borough Council and the Community Relations Council towards local black communities seriously disadvantaged the West Indian groupings. Both the Council and the Community Relations Office claimed to treat all groups equally but this tended to disallow for the fact that there were distinct inequalities between Asians and West Indians in Easton. For example, West Indians were not able to rely upon separate commercial and financial organisations such as had been established locally by the Asian communities, but West Indians and Asians were treated equally with regard to housing provision and so forth by the Easton Borough Council.

The Council did not appear to be aware the West Indians in Easton had unique problems of organisation which prevent them from achieving the same degree of communal association as other groups in the city, both black and white. However, the island distinctions within the West Indian community were certainly visible to the Borough Council because the application of the J.W.A. for financial assistance towards the building of a community centre for West Indians was rejected on the grounds that the J.W.A. (quite accurately) was unrepresentative of all West Indians in Easton. The Easton Borough Council took the view that, if Indian and Pakistani communities in the city were able to establish their own community centres without financial assistance

63. The significant point to make here is that many West Indians in Easton believed that the Borough Council did not differentiate between the respective, differing needs of West Indians and Asians in the city. Most West Indians perceived the Asian communities as more self-sufficient than themselves in areas such as housing provision and finance etc. They felt that the Council should compensate for this by giving them more assistance than their Asian 'neighbours'. The Council's refusal to adopt this kind of policy was viewed by many West Indians as unfair and directly discriminatory against them.
from them, the local West Indians should be able to do the same.

This policy of the Council placed West Indians in yet another vicious circle\(^\text{64}\). Many West Indians felt that a community centre would be highly desirable because it might encourage some degree of unity among West Indians in Easton. However, it was recognised that West Indians, on their own, could not possibly raise the necessary finance for such a project hence the application to the Council for assistance. The Council required evidence of West Indian unity before the Council would sanction the financing of a community centre which was designed to bring about this kind of unity! There was more than a touch of irony in the situation!

The majority of local West Indian 'leaders' interpreted this position as confirming their belief in the obstructive and discriminatory nature of Council policies. They also rejected the Community Relations Board because it was seen as either supporting the Council or as not in any position to alter Council policy on their behalf. During the period of fieldwork the lack of rapport between West Indian leaders and the Council effectively ruled out any assistance from external formal political organisations in Easton\(^\text{65}\). The desirability of internal West Indian political associations was never

---

64. There is no direct implication here of a conspiracy thesis against local West Indian communities as far as Council policies were concerned. Whether by accident or design the nature of these policies in relation to the social organisation of local West Indian groupings combined to produce the vicious circle which is described below.

65. External, formal political organisations would include the local trade unions, local political party organisations, the Borough Council and the Community Relations machinery. It has been shown that the J.W.A. and B.W.I had some assistance from white activists but such co-operation was minimal.
more graphically illustrated than by the recognition among West Indians in the city that they would have to organise themselves in the face of little external assistance!

It can be seen that a number of factors prevent or inhibit the formation of formal communal associations, particularly of a political nature, among West Indians in Easton. These factors include the external contingencies which West Indians are faced with in Britain, the internal divisions within West Indian groupings which take a number of forms, and above all the subtle and complex ways in which these external and internal contingencies inter-penetrate and, in turn, produce additional constraints on formal associational activity. Thus, it becomes apparent that, despite the fact that many West Indians in Easton have achieved a standard of living which lifts them above the harshest levels of social and economic deprivation; despite the existence of upwardly mobile West Indians who might act as leaders of political activism; and, above all, despite the expressed desire for change among West Indians in Easton, this inter-penetration of social contingencies has so far produced few results in the way of formal political association. The concluding chapter which follows, will seek briefly to comment upon a number of points which have emerged from the present study and which will hopefully provide the basis for further research and discussion.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This study has been concerned with the social organisation of a West Indian settlement in a British city and with the nature of formal and informal associations within and between the various West Indian communities within that settlement. The data which have been presented and analysed in the preceding pages have hopefully served a dual purpose. On the one hand, original, detailed ethnographic material about West Indians in Easton has been presented and, on the other, a fuller explanation than any yet available of the paucity and ephemerality of West Indian formal political associations in the city has been provided. In both cases, it is hoped that these specific findings have provided a basis for introducing a research framework which will have a much wider application in the host society and, even perhaps, beyond it.

In the Introduction, it was suggested that West Indians, together with other groups in Britain, both black and white, are relatively powerless, with only limited control over their life situation. In addition, they live within a society in which many members and institutions are directly or indirectly, deliberately or unintentionally, discriminatory against 'powerless groups', in particular, against ethnic and racial minorities. Previous studies had confirmed these presuppositions and had further argued that West Indians in Britain would need to organise themselves in order to ameliorate their disadvantaged position in the host society. The present study sought to explain why this organisation has not been forthcoming, by relating the social organisation of West Indian communities to a theoretical framework which stressed the need for a historical, developmental approach to the study of race relations situations.
A brief examination of the social structure of West Indian societies was provided, in Chapter 1, in order to illustrate the nature of West Indian social organisation in the Caribbean. This appraisal revealed that, at least among the lower classes in the West Indies, formal associational activity is minimal. It was further suggested that this structural feature of West Indian social organisation in the Caribbean is crucial to a more complete explanation of patterns of association within West Indian communities in Britain.

In Chapter 2, a detailed analysis of data drawn from a sample of West Indian respondents in Easton was presented. This analysis indicated that, despite the relative permanence and 'stability' of West Indian communities in the city, there is a noticeably low level of West Indian membership and participation in local formal associations. However, a profusion of informal recreational associations were discovered. Those few formal associations, recreational and non-recreational which had been established by West Indians in Easton were described in some detail in Chapter 3.

Subsequent chapters examined the family and household organisation of West Indians, both in Britain and the Caribbean, and some links were drawn between these more intimate areas of West Indian social life and more formalised, secondary associations. A similar attempt was made to describe the possible connections between West Indian membership and participation in religious associations and the formation of other types of voluntary association. Throughout the study, the nature of West Indian social organisation in Britain was related to the social structure of West Indian societies. Thus, the present life situation of respondents in Easton was constantly compared with their life situation in the Caribbean prior to their migration to Britain.
Finally, the penultimate chapter provided a number of explanations which accounted for the paucity and ephemerality of West Indian formal associations in Easton. It was argued at this point that the establishment and maintenance of formal, communal associations among West Indians in the city is seriously affected by a number of internal and external contingencies which prevent or inhibit the formation of on-going formal associations, particularly of a political nature, at the present time.

The following, concluding remarks will be concerned with the likelihood, or otherwise, of West Indians in Easton establishing on-going political associations in the near future. In addition, some comments will be addressed to possibilities for future research suggested by this study.

One of the major problems of the type of sociological study which has been presented in this thesis is the ephemerality of the social relationships which have been examined. The transformation of social life is a rapid, continual process which any sociological study cannot hope to fully translate onto the printed page. However, it is suggested that some of the structural components of West Indian social organisation outlined in preceding pages will shape the future pattern of West Indian political association in Easton and probably elsewhere in the host society.

The present study has concentrated mainly on first generation West Indians and the types of associations which they establish and participate in. However, many second generation West Indians were included in the study, and material was drawn from local youth clubs, sports associations and certain groups, for example, the Black Power and Caribbean Cultural Groups; which are/or were exclusively or predominantly second generation associations. It is among these 'black
Britons' that one must look for significant social and political changes within West Indian communities in the future. It has been suggested that many first generation West Indians in Easton might be content to accept the relative increase in prosperity which migration to Britain has brought them. They may be content to seek change only through moderate, reformist political associations which still seek to accommodate to the host society. It has been demonstrated that first generation West Indians in Easton have established forms of association which do succeed in partly overcoming social isolation by re-affirming cultural beliefs and values originating from the Caribbean.

Similarly, formal associations have been set up which go some way towards providing for the recreational needs of West Indians in the city. However, there are signs that younger West Indians, born or largely brought up in Britain, are growing impatient with the moderation and accommodation of their parents. Many second generation West Indians reject the 'making the best of a bad job' attitude which they believe the first generation West Indians uphold. This growing discontent among young West Indians is remarked upon by Leonard Bloom:

'The first and second generation of immigrants have probably not yet found the psychological means to fight from within a society which in part rejects and in part accepts them; they have two equally distressing alternatives. One can Uncle Tom or one can reject the host society. It is increasingly obvious that the numbers of young non-white immigrants who are emotionally satisfied to Uncle Tom is diminishing; and a generation of disappointed, disillusioned, estranged and alienated young people is growing. It seems increasingly improbable that the older generation's solution of becoming culturally assimilated and yet able to fight on racial issues will attract many young people.'

1. See p. 308
Much will depend upon social changes in the host society and the climate of race relations at any one time. At present, Britain appears to be entering a period of rapid inflation, coupled, perhaps, with economic depression, all of which may restrict the access of black people to, for example, better jobs and houses in the near future. Thus, those constraints which are placed upon racial and ethnic minorities in Britain at the present time may soon be exacerbated by an economic climate which will affect all groups in the host society. In Easton, a recent upsurge in house prices seems likely to prevent any further dispersal of West Indians from 'Lowdale' and other 'twilight areas' in the city.

This deterioration in local economic conditions may bring to the surface racial antipathies between black and white (or indeed, between West Indians and Asians) which, in the past, have tended to be covert in Easton. More overt forms of discrimination against the local West Indian population may encourage further retreatism on their part or it could initiate a more solidaristic expression of communal action, either through the establishment of communal political associations or by means of spontaneous demonstrations and hostilities between different racial and ethnic groups in the city.

The likelihood of some form of 'separatist' political expression within West Indian communities is more likely in 'crisis' situations because of the lack of alternative forms of political expression provided by the host community. West Indians in Easton, in common with many of their compatriots in other parts of Britain, have rejected the idea of formal representation through local political party organisations or trade union branches. In addition, assistance from local government or the C.R.C. is largely discounted at present because of the growing disenchantment among West Indians with the 'race
relations industry' in Britain.

Ira Katznelson, among others, has seriously questioned the role of those organisations set up by a series of past governments to handle the 'race problem'. Katznelson argues that the C.R.C. and the similar organisation which preceded it, have merely acted as 'racial buffers' between black and white in Britain. He views the establishment of bodies like the Race Relations Board, the C.R.C. and the Voluntary Liaison Committees as the 'institutionalisation of political consensus'. Katznelson argues that:

'In the critical period of migration of Third World people to Britain, the most critical structural decision made was the establishment of national and local institutions outside of the traditional political arenas, to deal with the issues of race. The structural arrangements announced by the political consensus White Paper did not integrate the Third World immigrants into the politics of institutionalised class conflict that characterize the liberal collectivist age, but rather set up alternative political structures to deflect the politics of race from Westminster to the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, and from the local political arenas to voluntary liaison committees. As a result the Third World population has been structurally linked to the polity indirectly through buffer institutions.'


4. Katznelson also refers to the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants which was established in 1964 and was replaced by the Community Relations Commission in 1968.

5. The white paper cited here is *Immigration from the Commonwealth, Cmnd. 2739*, (London, H.M.S.O., August, 1965), Part III.

Similar criticisms have been made by Chris Mullard who refers in a recent study of the position of black Britons to what he calls the 'bureaucratization of race'\(^7\). Whether one accepts these interpretations of the establishment of 'conciliation' bodies or not, evidence from the present study confirms that many West Indians in Easton reject these organisations as possible avenues for the expression of their particular needs in the community. They (that is to say the Borough Council and the C.R.C.) are believed to be unrepresentative of the views of the majority of local West Indians. At the same time, since they are supposed to assist all groups in the city, they are perceived as powerless to help particular disadvantaged groups. It has been shown that, apparently paradoxically, by attempting to adopt policies which did not discriminate against any one group in the city, the Borough Council and the C.R.C. disadvantaged the less powerful in Easton, including the local West Indian communities.

It can be seen that a deteriorating 'race relations situation' in Britain, combined with the growing discontent among second generation West Indians, could stimulate a form of political activism approaching 'militant-radicalism'. This brings us inevitably to the question of 'black power'. This concept has been touched upon at various points in the thesis. It has been shown that, at the time of the research, the Black Power Group in Easton had few active supporters among West Indians in the city. Indeed, the majority of first generation West Indians in Easton rejected the Group as disreputable, and totally unacceptable to them. However, this is to overlook a point which was made in the Introduction, namely that the

\(^7\) Mullard, op. cit.
influence of any West Indian formal or informal associations may extend beyond those possibly very few active participants in these associations. Thus, the existence of an association which symbolises a particular ethos, for example, 'black power', (which could contain the seeds of 'black' or West Indian solidarity) gives it a potential importance beyond that indicated by the size of its active membership. Hence, the suggestion that, certainly for second generation West Indians, this ethos could have a significant influence on the pattern of future political organisation within West Indian communities.

However, 'black power' is an amorphous concept which covers a wide range of ideas and associations connected with those ideas. Therefore, some distinctions should be made between different aspects of the ethos and the widely differing forms of political association which could be established within the concept. Alexander Kirby has usefully distinguished between three different aspects of the phenomenon, namely Cultural, Integrationist and Revolutionary forms of 'black power'.

Cultural black power is the most basic and potent form for Kirby and it incorporates the black nationalism which is already stirring in the Caribbean. He suggests that many second generation and some first generation West Indians will perceive these political changes in West Indian societies as an encouragement to organise themselves in Britain. It has been shown in the present study that the links between West Indians in Easton and the Caribbean are still strong, so there may be

great strength in Kirby's argument. However, it was also suggested that this 'looking-back' to the Caribbean among younger West Indians may re-introduce island divisiveness and thus continue the fragmentation process which appears almost endemic in West Indian political associations in Britain. Much will depend on whether the course of political change in the Caribbean encourages federation or at least a high degree of co-operation between the various island societies or whether island insularity will be maintained.

Integrationist black power is defined by Kirby as a movement among West Indian middle class professionals to promote pragmatic, reformist associations. This type of black power suggests that middle class, and possibly upwardly mobile working class, West Indians will perceive their situation in Britain, not in terms of individualistic status seeking, but in the sense of forming a vanguard of the 'black movement'. However, leadership is shaped within moderate rather than militant associations. The J.W.A. group in Easton probably approximates to this position. Many activists within this association argued that black consciousness could be used as an effective means of achieving a degree of solidarity among West Indian communities. But change must be acquired through moderate and peaceful means.

This ideological standpoint was certainly the most widely accepted among first generation West Indians in Easton and many second generation youngsters also disavowed militant forms of 'black power' which utilized violent means towards the promotion of political ends. A moderate reformist type of black consciousness could appeal to West Indian religious and recreational associations. A widespread adoption of these beliefs could encourage a gradual move from the present apolitical associations, towards the
establishment of organisations which are more directly related to
the task of actively striving for changes in the life situations
of West Indians in Easton.

However, the internal divisions within West Indian communities
are considerable at the present time and it may take a dramatic
expression of overt hostility towards West Indians on the part of
the host community to engender a level of communal solidarity which
can reconcile these competing forces. At present there is no
West Indian 'community' in Easton but a series of island communities
and a number of ill-defined status groups.

Revolutionary black power, as its name suggests, seeks the
overthrow of 'capitalism' and 'neo-imperialism' on an international
scale. At least that is how many political activists who adhere
to this ideology define it. It is almost impossible to predict
the nature of an international 'black revolution' or to bring
together the myriad strands of political expression on a world-wide
scale. John Rex aptly states:

'We cannot know what the outcome will be, but any discussion
of race relations, whether in Birmingham or Chicago, in
Johannesburg or Peking, will be meaningless unless the
fact of the gathering forces of black and colonial revolution
is taken into account.'

The broader implications of this perspective do not come within the
remit of the present study. However, in relating this ideology to
the situation in Easton, it can be seen that this aspect of black
power was given some credence by members of the Black Power Group but

---

9. For a stimulating statement on the international scale of 'black
nationalism' and 'black revolution' see, Ronald Segal, The Race

10. John Rex, Race, Colonialism and the City, op. cit., p. 297
it was rejected by the vast majority of West Indians in the city, both first and second generation, for a variety of reasons. Many West Indians expressed considerable fears of this form of association and decried its connections with prostitution, drug abuse, clashes with the local police force, and so forth. Irrespective of the truth of these allegations, most West Indians in Easton perceived the Black Power Group as a highly deviant form of separatist association which threatened to disrupt any harmony which did exist between West Indians and the host community.

Furthermore, despite the realisation that full acceptance into the host community is now unlikely, most West Indians in Easton did not wish to separate themselves from local whites. Although many young West Indians now readily adopt the label 'black' as a means of self-identification, a great many older West Indians prefer the term 'coloured'. Therefore, 'black power' may have negative connotations of 'blackness' and 'militancy' which are still unacceptable to the majority of first generation West Indians in Easton.

An additional problem associated with the notion of revolutionary black power is the, at least implicit, suggestion that a black social movement in Britain will include all black people irrespective of their racial and ethnic origins. Therefore, it is argued that, for example, West Indians and Asians will join forces when the revolution takes place. The present study has only sought to examine the social organisation of West Indians in Easton but the significance of neighbouring Asian communities has been frequently alluded to. Bearing in mind that many West Indians and Asians occupy similar powerless positions in the host society and that they co-exist in close proximity in Easton, could not a 'black alliance' of West
Indians and Asians prompt revolutionary changes in Britain?

Both the evidence from the present study and previous studies of multi-racial organisations at the national level suggest otherwise\(^\text{11}\). One of the most significant features of inter-ethnic relations in Easton was the hostility between Asian and West Indian communities in the city. It was found that West Indian attitudes towards Asians were often more antagonistic than towards the local white population. Whilst this antagonism generally remained on a covert level it brings into question any arguments which suggest that joint political associations established by West Indians and Asians are a likely event at the present time or in the immediate future.

West Indians and Asians are in direct competition for, for example, jobs, houses and places of recreation in those specific areas of employment, residence and entertainment which are perceived as suitable for 'coloured immigrants' by the host community. Within these constraints it has been shown that local Asian communities are more self-sufficient and more capable of organising their own political associations than the local West Indian groupings. This discrepancy is due to the cultural differences between Asian and West Indian communities. Whilst all racial and ethnic minorities in Britain can be said to be relatively powerless, it has been argued at various points in the thesis that the nature of the kinship, religious, economic and political relationships within Asian communities and the systems of multi-obligation which surround them, encourages the formation of solidaristic communal associations. The present study has indicated that West Indian communities are not

\(^{11}\) See, for example, Banton, Racial Minorities, op. cit., pp. 165-166
constructed in this way and that this places them at a distinct disadvantage.

The social organisation of Asian communities and the nature of their relationships with the host community is a vital area for further research but one or two comments can be made at this point in relation to the relative power positions of Asians and West Indians in Easton.

The presence of larger and more self-sufficient Asian communities reinforces the powerlessness of West Indians in the city. In a direct sense, this can apply to those constraints placed upon West Indians who are wholly or partly reliant on Indian or Pakistani landlords, mortgage and insurance brokers and to a lesser extent, shop-keepers. In a more indirect way, the development of Asian communities, which entails direct competition with the white host community for houses and business premises in more desirable areas of the city, reinforces the constraints placed upon all coloured people in Easton. The visible spread of Asian-owned businesses and shops and the ability of some Indians and Pakistanis to purchase houses in suburban areas outside of Lowdale and other 'twilight areas', is perceived by many members of the white community as evidence of an immigrant 'take-over' of previously exclusively white areas.

In many instances, this fear and resentment of Asian community development is transformed into a composite 'anti-immigrant' feeling among local whites which is also directed against West Indians in the city. The recognition of this process by the latter further exacerbates an already declining relationship between local West Indian and Asian communities. The nature of this relationship is reflected in the pattern of immigrant association in the city which is strictly confined within ethnic and racial divisions rather than
across them. This includes the Black Power Group whose acceptance of the revolutionary black power ethos should have encouraged a multi-racial membership. However, as was shown, with the exception of a number of local white students and some prostitutes, the membership was exclusively West Indian.

Therefore, all the evidence from the present study suggests that multi-racial associations which include both West Indian and Asian members are unlikely to be formed in the near future in Easton. Indeed, several West Indian activists in the city argued that overt conflict between Asians and themselves was at present more likely than between West Indians and the local white population.

In addition to the above evidence which relates to the local level, previous studies of attempts to establish multi-ethnic or multi-racial organisations at the national level also reflect the divisions between racial and ethnic minorities in Britain. It remains problematic whether a form of 'revolutionary black power' could unite disparate groups both within and between the various coloured minorities in Britain in the future but the signs at both the national and local levels certainly advise caution in making this sort of prediction. Certainly a more thorough appraisal of the social organisation of particular coloured minorities and how they inter-relate to one another would seem to be a necessary pre-condition for such predictions.

12. It was also pointed out to the researcher by several local school teachers that they often had difficulties with fights between West Indian and Asian children and that these were more of a 'problem' than antipathies between West Indian and white pupils.

13. See in particular, Heinemann, Banton, and Allen, op. cit.
The present study has confirmed that black power in all its many guises still remains in Easton, a potential rather than established form of political expression as far as active West Indian participation is concerned. However, it has also been acknowledged that the ethos of black power has very far-reaching implications for social change within coloured minorities in Britain. Changes in international relations, political changes in Asia and the Caribbean, developments within West Indian and Asian communities in Britain should all be considered in relation to the 'politics of the powerless'. West Indians in particular, have a tradition of political awareness in the Caribbean to look towards, and this may prove to be a vital source of self-identification.

The following comment from Gordon Lewis is possibly a little too generalised but it does serve as a neat concluding statement on the present state of West Indian political association in Britain:

'What may be styled an immigrant political theory is discernible but as yet it remains nothing much more than a series of variations on the imported American slogan of Black Power. Too many of its leaders are self-appointed messiahs, leaders of committees without rank and file members, full of an eloquent confusion of ideas and relatively intellectually unsophisticated. Most West Indian organisations oscillate between rejection, root and branch, of the 'host society' and a search to make the best of its better radical tradition.'

The complex and delicate nature of the research area and the constraints placed upon more elaborate and sophisticated research programmes have inevitably necessitated a somewhat tentative appraisal of West Indian social organisation within the present study. Nevertheless, it was firmly emphasised in the Introduction that this thesis was more concerned with developing further questions rather than providing complete answers in its particular field of investigation.

14. This phrase is taken from Heinemann, op. cit.

15. Gordon Lewis, 'Race Relations in Britain - A view from the Caribbean', op. cit., p. 80
This being the case, it is suggested that a number of fruitful areas for future research have emerged from the present study. It has been demonstrated, for example, that the links between formal and informal, recreational and non-recreational West Indian associations are complex and subtly drawn. Whilst family and household organisation, friendship patterns and informal recreational associations within West Indian communities were given some prominence in the study, further research into the nature of West Indian primary associations (or what Rex calls 'primary communities') would seem to be an essential task for further elaboration of the social organisation of these groupings. There is also a need to examine other coloured minorities in Britain in a similar fashion.

It was suggested in the Introduction that an emphasis would be placed upon formal voluntary associations among West Indians in Easton, not only because these associations were more directly accessible to the researcher but also, and more importantly, because it was argued that West Indians would need to develop such forms of organisation in order to enter as an effective force in the institutionalised political structure of the host community. That is to say, in order for political change to be accomplished by West Indians, some relationships between themselves and external groups had to be achieved through, for example, the establishment of formal political associations. Those associations which are not formalised or not directly concerned with relations between West Indians and the host community would be outside of an institutionalised political structure which encompassed both minority and majority groups in the host society.

16. See, Introduction, p. 21
However, the present study indicates that West Indian primary associations do have a great bearing on the formation of more formalised political associations and on the ability or inclination of many West Indians to participate in those political associations or organisations established by the host community. Similarly, primary associations have a particular relevance to the nature of West Indian 'leadership' and how it relates to formal and informal associations.

The present study suggests that West Indian leadership and associational patterns in Britain are both primarily informal and based upon a number of factors, for example, kinship obligations, island affiliations and status distinctions which are dependent upon highly personalised social relationships. These, in turn, are associated with the social mores embedded in 'primary communities' within West Indian settlements in the host society. This suggests that many aspects of the social organisation of primary communities in the Caribbean are still being reproduced within West Indian communities in Britain. It was suggested in a previous chapter\(^{17}\) that one could not assume a sharp delineation between middle and lower class leadership potentialities, although it was recognised that the former group have a higher potential because of their greater economic stability, which provides a likely basis for prestige within a given community. Nevertheless, at a high level of generality, it was suggested that one could discern certain class differences with respect to different types of West Indian leadership. Thus, middle class leadership was seen as formal and bureaucratic whilst lower class leadership appeared to be more informal and ephemeral.

---

17. See, Chap. 2
These suggestions pertained to patterns of leadership in the Caribbean but it can be seen from the present study that West Indian associational activity in Britain reveals similar leadership patterns. Those few moderate, reformist voluntary associations which had been established by West Indians in Easton were dominated by members of the middle or upwardly mobile working classes. But the informal associations, such as, for example, loosely structured recreational associations which were found to be relatively numerous in Easton, had working class committees and memberships. This reflected the overwhelming number of working as opposed to middle class West Indians in the city. However, it was further suggested that an upwardly mobile working class group of West Indians was forming within West Indian communities in Easton. The emergence of this group may provide an important source of political leadership.

Further research is required to discover whether the emergence of an upwardly mobile working class elite is a general feature of contemporary West Indian settlements in Britain or whether it is a phenomenon which is restricted to those cities in which West Indians have been able to rise above the harshest levels of social deprivation. If the latter is the case it may indicate that, as West Indians improve their social position in other cities, the emergence of an upwardly mobile working class elite may provide a platform for eventual political activism.

However, the evidence from this study suggests that the emergence of such an elite group does not lead immediately to the formation of coherent West Indian political associations. One of the
most significant obstacles to this development would appear to be
the marginality of many West Indian individuals and groups both in
relation to the social organisation of West Indian communities and
the position of those communities in relation to the host society.
It would appear extremely profitable for the nature of this
marginality to be further studied both in relation to the nature
of the social structure of Caribbean societies and with regard to
West Indians in Britain. It is possible that the nature of the
colonial and post-colonial constraints which have developed
historically in the Caribbean may be directly comparable to the
constraints placed upon coloured minorities in Britain. Thus,
West Indians may be rendered marginal by a continual struggle to
reconcile black/white biases both in their societies of origin and
in the host society. An investigation of this proposition should
be extremely rewarding.

The formation of voluntary associations within West Indian
communities in Britain becomes an important area for further study
when this concept of marginality is emphasised. If West Indians
occupy a marginal position, tangential to the institutionalised
political structure of the host society, then voluntary associations
may come to represent crucial intermediate associations which
link West Indian primary communities to the formal political
structure of the host community. Thus, voluntary associations
may be the forerunners of social movements and political parties
among coloured minorities who are partially excluded from the

18. This is not a particularly original suggestion as was stated
in the Introduction, see pp. However, the present
study indicates that voluntary association formation among
many groups in Britain could be an important area for further
investigation. Unlike the situation in the United States
where both 'classical' and contemporary pluralism has led to
some concern with voluntary associations, Britain with its
supposed strong class divisions and 'two party system' has
tended to be ignored by students of voluntary associations.
However, there have been recent arguments which suggest that
sectors of the white working class are excluded or feel
themselves outside of the formal governmental system in
Britain. See, for example, Barry Hindess, The Decline of
has been a move towards a more pluralistic political
structure in Britain, which is also ethnically differentiated,
then voluntary associations and other forms of pressure
groups may become increasingly important in British politics.
See, Hannan Rose, 'Race Relations in British Politics', in
Benewick and Smith, op. cit., p. 149, also Dilip Hiro, op. cit.
political power structures of the societies in which they reside. If this is the case, greater numbers of West Indians (and members of other 'powerless' groups) may be so constrained by their low economic and social position in society that it is possible that they may feel compelled to participate in some form of so-called 'voluntary' association. Thus, voluntary associations may be the only form of association, other than primary associations, which can contribute towards communal goal achievement and political change within coloured minorities in Britain. Certainly this would seem to be appropriate to West Indian communities and worthy of further investigation.

It has been suggested that the role of second generation West Indians and relationships between West Indians and Asian communities in Easton are typical in many ways of other urban areas in Britain. However, it would appear that the internal composition

---

19. This opens up a vast field for further research centred around the political activism of migrants, both coloured and non-coloured, peasant and proletarian, throughout the world. Thus, the voluntary associations formed by coloured minorities in urban settlements in Britain could be compared with the urban associations of the various tribal migrants in West and Central Africa or the 'squat settlements' surrounding most Latin American cities or similar settlements in other parts of the world. The material on these various areas is substantial. For an overview of the literature taken from a variety of countries, see Smith and Freedman, op. cit., pp. 86-115. For Africa, Kenneth Little, West African Urbanization, (London, Cambridge U.P., 1965) is particularly important. Out of an enormous literature for Latin America see William Mangin, (ed.), Peasants in Cities, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1970), and 'The Role of Regional Associations in the Adaptation of Rural Migrants to Cities in Peru', Sociologus, (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1959), pp. 23-36. See also, Henry Landsberger, 'Trade Unions, Peasant Movements, and Social Movements as Voluntary Action', in Smith, Reddy and Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 135-159. For other parts of the world, an article by Janet Abu-Lughod, 'Migrant Adjustment to City Life: The Egyptian Case', American Journal of Sociology, (LXVII, July, 1961), pp. 22-32, is particularly relevant.
of coloured minority settlements and the relationships between them and the respective host communities may vary significantly between particular cities in Britain. Thus, for example, the island composition of West Indian settlements may have a major influence on the nature of associational activity within West Indian communities. Those West Indian settlements which contain few island distinctions in their composition may produce more solidaristic communal associations than those settlements, like Easton, where many islands are represented. A comparison of variations in this respect in a number of cities should provide a useful measure of the divisiveness of island affiliations. Similar inter-city comparisons could include studies of the importance of the relative sizes of different ethnic and racial groups. Does one get a higher level of associational activity within West Indian communities where they outnumber other coloured minorities rather than as in Easton, where the West Indian population is a minority grouping in every sense?

The uniqueness or otherwise of the class and status divisions within West Indian communities in Easton could also be measured by bringing in material from future studies of other West Indian settlements in Britain. There are innumerable comparisons of this nature which could be made if inter-city research programmes were instituted. However, these studies should be placed within the type of research framework which was described in the Introduction and has been partly implemented in the present study.

The present study has attempted to demonstrate how a specific empirical problem, the ephemerality of West Indian formal associations in Britain, can be traced through a number of analytic levels. A reiteration of this framework will provide a fitting conclusion to the thesis. In the Introduction it was argued that
the sociology of race relations in Britain, with some notable exceptions \(^{20}\), has tended to be concerned with three approaches, the attitudinal, the community and the stratificational perspective. It was argued that these perspectives had considerable merits but that they all contained particular shortcomings.

The attitudinal approach tends to be over concerned with notions of colour prejudice and discrimination and thus, de-emphasises the structure of interpersonal and group relations which have, both historically and at the present time, shaped the attitudes held by both black and white groups in Britain. The community approach tends to be somewhat static and ahistorical, often ignoring the wider, intra- and inter-societal constraints which impinge upon coloured minorities within a particular community setting. Finally, it was argued that the stratificational perspective tends to overlook the importance of the degree of ethnic and racial differentiation of individuals and groups within a particular stratum. Thus, for example, it was argued that placing different racial and ethnic groups within a common class position does not explain the often conflictual relationships between these groups.

It is not suggested that the present study proves or disproves the validity of these criticisms, for it has been rendered problematic whether the findings from this study can be extrapolated to wider interpretations of other race relations situations elsewhere in Britain. However, it is argued that the preceding pages do indicate that a number of analytic levels must be included within a

---

fuller and more satisfactory investigation of coloured minorities in Britain.

These analytic levels move from the micro- to the macro-, from personality formation to inter-societal relations. Thus, it can be seen that an examination of the social organisation of West Indian groupings in Easton necessitated some attention to individual personality formation, the nature of interpersonal relationships and the characteristics of West Indian group formation, whether they were placed within island, class and status distinctions or whatever.

In addition to an analysis of the internal structure of West Indian communities or groupings, some investigation was undertaken of relationships between West Indians and other groups, notably the host community and other coloured minorities. At an even broader level, the nature of host-migrant group relations within Britain was mentioned. Finally, the contemporary and historical connections between coloniser and colonised, between the host society and West Indian societies were included in the research framework.

At the present time, the construction and utilisation of a research framework incorporating the above analytic levels is a daunting prospect. Nevertheless, there are signs that this form of historical, comparative and developmental approach is gaining ground and can be placed beside those approaches previously mentioned\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{21} See footnote 20.
Hopefully, the present study has added to the stock of sociological knowledge about coloured minorities in Britain, in particular about the various West Indian groupings, whilst at the same time making a few tentative steps towards suggesting further avenues for exploration into the labyrinth of ethnic and race relations in Britain and elsewhere.
Research Appendix

The study included a period of fieldwork in Easton carried out between October, 1971 and July, 1973. Research was based on three broad areas of study.

First, all West Indian voluntary associations which had been formed prior to, or during, the period of fieldwork were studied intensively. This involved participation and/or observation in these associations and their various activities. The researcher attended committee and general meetings, examined the records of associations (if such records were kept) and participated in the recreational life of the respective groups. Dances, parties and sports events were attended on a great number of occasions. In addition, all committee members who were prepared to co-operate, and many general members of these associations, were interviewed extensively.

Interviews were conducted informally and were largely unstructured, although certain topics were focussed on with all interviewees. Some activists were interviewed on only one or two occasions, for periods of at least an hour, but many interviewees were questioned many times throughout the period of fieldwork. Interviews were held in interviewees' homes, in pubs, and at recreational events. Some interviews were tape-recorded where informants became very well-known to the researcher and notes were taken during interviews whenever this was possible. However, in the majority of cases research notes were written-up immediately after the interview. The use of tape-recorders and note-taking during interviews was tested in a pilot study carried out in the initial stages of fieldwork and it
was found that these techniques tended to inhibit 'rapport' between researcher and respondent.

The second area of research was a sample survey of a number of West Indian households. This technique was used in order to study a number of West Indians who might not be active in voluntary associations. Respondents who were active in voluntary associations were not assumed to be 'representative' of all West Indians in the area. Thus, activists in the West Indian settlement could be compared with non-activists. In common with previous studies of coloured immigrants in Britain, it proved difficult to find a suitable sampling frame from which respondents could be randomly selected. Electoral Registers, Rating Lists, etc., were either inappropriate (these lists do not indicate birth-place or nationality) or unavailable (for example, the Easton Borough Council denied access to any lists of immigrants which they held).

A sample was finally constructed by using the files of a local vicar and, in addition, from a list of West Indian parents which was obtained from a local junior school. The vicar had frequent contacts with many West Indians in the city, both parishioners and non-parishioners. The headmaster of the junior school was a Jamaican and was able to provide the addresses of all West Indian parents who had children at his school. All these parents were contacted, so no selection procedure was utilised. The addresses from the vicar's files were selected completely randomly with the exception of island of origin. Previous knowledge of the area and advice from informants enabled the researcher to attempt to allow for the differences in size between the West Indian communities in Easton. Hence, West Indians
from the larger communities, for example, the Antiguans, formed
greater proportion of the sample than West Indian households
from smaller communities.

Each household was sent a letter either from the vicar or
the headmaster. These letters gave a brief indication of the
research area, vouched for the trustworthiness of the researcher
and also made a point of mentioning that the researcher's wife is
a West Indian. The letter was followed by a visit from the
researcher, accompanied by either the vicar, the headmaster, or
another West Indian who was known to the household. At this
meeting, further explanations were given for the nature of the
research and each member of the household over the age of 18 was
asked to complete a questionnaire. These questionnaires were
collected a week later and, on this visit, all respondents were
asked whether they were prepared to be interviewed. A very high
response rate was obtained by these methods. Initially 83 houses
were visited. Only 7 outright refusals were encountered but
in 28 households one or more respondents refused to complete a
questionnaire, in many cases on the grounds that the questions
would be duplicated if all members of the household completed them.
However, all of the non-respondents agreed to be interviewed.
A further 8 households could not be contacted because they had moved
away from the area. The combined refusal and non-contacted total
of 15, left a sample of 68 residential units, 43 from the headmaster's
addresses, the remainder from the vicar's list.

Interviews were informal but more structured than those with
voluntary association members. Questionnaire responses were
used as the basis for interviews, although many discussions covered
a very broad area. Most interviews were group affairs with, for
example, both husband and wife present. However, no rigid
game pattern was adhered to because many household members were not
available at the same time. Indeed, some households required
constant re-visiting. No attempt was made to use a tape-recorder
or to take notes during these interviews. Notes were written up
immediately after an interview had been conducted. Most
interviews lasted at least an hour but many were prolonged.
Several respondents were interviewed on a number of occasions as
they became well acquainted with the researcher.

The final part of the research programme was concerned with
participation and/or observation in and around the Lowdale area.
Throughout the period of fieldwork many hours were spent in pubs
and cafes, on street-corners and in informants' houses. Research
was not restricted to West Indians but included discussions with
many local residents, for example, Asians and local whites. In
addition, local councillors, local government officials, social
workers, teachers, journalists etc., were consulted and interviewed
at various times. This constant attention to becoming known in
the neighbourhood and participating in local events enabled the
researcher to acquire a great deal of information about the
research area and the individuals and groups residing within it.

No one of the techniques used could be said to be adequate in
itself, but taken together they enabled the researcher to construct
a composite picture from the inter-related data acquired. The
nature of the research precluded the use of highly quantitative
methods. The sample, for example, is not claimed to be
statistically representative of all West Indians in Easton.
However, the researcher is quite confident that the results obtained by the use of various techniques do provide a useful appraisal of the social phenomena which were studied. Given the 'delicacy' of race relations research of this kind a high degree of pragmatism is required when considering suitable research techniques. Hence, the use of what some might call 'subjective' and 'impressionistic' techniques. The researcher can only state that the level of response was sufficient to indicate that the methods used in the study were appropriate to the research area and the material presented is hopefully indicative of this.
Bibliography


BAKER, Peter., Attitudes to Coloured People in Glasgow, (Glasgow, Survey Research Centre, 1970).


BOTTOMORE, Tom., 'Social Stratification in Voluntary Associations', in Glass, op. cit.


FITZHERBERT, Katrin., West Indian Children in London, Occasional Papers on Social Administration, No.19, (London, Bell and Sons, 1967).


HUMPHREY, Derek and JOHN, Gus., Because They're Black, (London, Pelican, 1972).


HYLSON-SMITH, K., 'A Study of Immigrant Group Relations in North London', Race, (Vol.IX, No.4, April, 1968), pp.467-476


JAMES, C.L.R., Party Politics in the West Indies, (San Juan, Trinidad, Vedic Enterprises Ltd., 1962).


KIRBY, Alexander., 'Black Consciousness', in Benewick and Smith, op.cit., pp.150-162


MACK, Raymond W., 'Race, Class and Power in Barbados', in Bell, The Democratic Revolution, op.cit., pp.140-164


MANDERSON-JONES, Dr. R., 'Minority Group Leaders', in Abbott, op.cit., pp.194-217


MANGIN, William., 'The Role of Regional Associations in the Adaptation of Rural Migrants to Cities in Peru', Sociologues, (Vol.9, No.1, 1959), pp.29-35


MATTHEWS, Dom Basil., The Crisis of the West Indian Family, (University of the West Indies, 1953).


PARK, R.E., et. al., The City, (Chicago, Chicago U.P., 1923).


PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS., 1932-33., Cmd.4383., Report of the Closer Union Commission (Leeward Islands, Windward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago), April, 1933.


REX, John., 'The Sociology of the Zone of Transition', in Pahl, op.cit., pp.211-232


ROSE, Hannan., 'Race Relations in British Politics', in Benewick and Smith, op.cit., pp.143-150


SMITH, Raymond T., 'The Family in the Caribbean', in Rubin, op.cit., pp.67-75


WAGLEY, Charles., 'Plantation-America: A Culture Sphere', in Rubin, *op.cit.*, pp.3-13


WILLIAMS, Eric., 'Race Relations in Caribbean Society', in Rubin, op.cit., pp.54-60


ZIMMER, Basil G. and HAWLEY, Amos., 'The Significance of Membership in Voluntary Associations', American Journal of Sociology, (Vol.65, 1959), pp.196-201

THE PRESENT STUDY IS AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE
SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF A WEST INDIAN SETTLEMENT IN AN URBAN
AREA OF BRITAIN. IT IS CONCERNED, IN PARTICULAR, WITH
PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS
WITHIN THAT SETTLEMENT. IT SEeks TO EXPLAIN THE DEARTH OF
COMMUNAL ASSOCIATIONS—ESPECIALLY THE PAUCITY AND EPHEMERALITY
OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF A FORMAL CHARACTER—AMONG WEST
INDIANS. ITS FINDINGS ARE USED AS A BASIS FOR SUGGESTING
FURTHER DIRECTIONS WHICH RESEARCH IN THIS AREA MIGHT
FRUITFULLY TAKE IN THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER 1, BRIEFLY OUTLINES THE STRUCTURE OF WEST INDIAN
SOCIETIES AND THE NATURE OF THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF VARIOUS
GROUPS WITHIN THEM. PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE
NATURE OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN.

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF DATA DRAWN FROM A SAMPLE OF WEST
INDIAN RESPONDENTS IN EASTON, A MIDLANDS CITY, IS PRESENTED IN
CHAPTER 2. THIS MATERIAL RELATES TO NUMEROUS FACETS OF THE
LIFE SITUATION OF THESE RESPONDENTS IN BRITAIN AND TO THEIR
PREVIOUS SITUATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN.

CHAPTER 3, IS CONCERNED WITH AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE FORMAL
ASSOCIATIONS, RECREATIONAL AND/OR NON-RECREATIONAL, WHICH WEST
INDIANS HAVE ESTABLISHED IN EASTON. SUBSEQUENTLY CHAPTERS 4
AND 5 EXAMINE THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION OF THE SAMPLE,
AND PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION AMONG THE LATTER. CHAPTER
5, EXPLORES THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WEST INDIAN MEMBERSHIP AND
PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS FORMS OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION AND THE
FORMATION OF OTHER TYPES OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION.
In Chapter 6, a number of points are made, based on the preceding data, which serve to describe the dynamics of West Indian activism in Easton. Particular attention is given to the nature of West Indian associational activity and to those 'explanations' of the ephemerality and paucity of West Indian formal associations mentioned earlier in the thesis.

Finally, a brief Conclusion is presented, concerned with re-assessing some of the problems and intentions which are described in earlier chapters.