



Rethinking Global and Area Studies: Insights from Caribbeanist Anthropology

ABSTRACT Recently, there has been an upsurge in the critical attention directed toward the area studies research paradigms that were institutionalized after World War II. This upsurge comes at a time when anthropologists are also developing increasingly sophisticated accounts of the intersections of global and local processes. Yet there has been less engaged consideration of the agendas propelling global studies over area studies curricula. In this essay, we argue that an analysis of the Caribbean and Caribbeanist anthropology allows us to trace the global in the local, thus illustrating the benefits of local area analyses for understanding global dynamics. We draw on theoretical assertions regarding global–local interactions in order to assess the relation of anthropology to Caribbean studies and to explore the implications of analytical trajectories and theoretical developments within Caribbeanist anthropology for social and cultural processes on a global level. [Keywords: area studies, anthropological theory, the Caribbean, transnationalism]

MANY U.S. UNIVERSITIES ARE RETHINKING the parameters and politics of disciplinary boundaries, raising valid concerns about the relevance of an area studies paradigm in the contemporary period of global restructuring (Harootunian and Miyoshi 2002). However, some question this trend. Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1997) reminds us that, in the past, area studies approaches have encouraged cross-disciplinary conversations about particular world regions, in some cases for the very first time; they also helped elucidate the importance of relating studies of the West to those elsewhere. Sidney Mintz (1998) similarly contends that although transnational processes exist (and have always existed), we should not toss out concepts such as region, area, and community because it is within these local sites that people create the specificities of their experiences. Further, although not a common practice, interrogating anthropological research within specific world areas has enabled us to see how the discipline has and has not influenced theories and methodologies in those areas (Farquhar and Hevia 1993). This interrogation has also facilitated consideration of political trends within anthropological practice and their implications for the possible trajectories of specific area studies (Starn 1994).

Yet, today, as many scholars critically examine contemporary global integration processes and the proliferation of neoliberalist paradigms, there has been less engaged attention turned toward illuminating the agendas propelling

global studies over area studies curricula. This seems curious given active work on intersections of global–local processes, seemingly a ripe model for considering assumptions about an area studies–global studies divide. Ongoing theoretical debates about globalization and transnationalism engage discussion about the extent to which global and local are distinct categories. Particularly instructive here are arguments among anthropologists regarding: (1) global interconnectedness and flows and center–periphery articulations (Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1997; Hannerz 1998, 1989), (2) the global system through which diverse local processes are structured and exist (Friedman 2000, 2003), and (3) the fallacy of the global as utterly homogenizing given the importance of local networks and meanings for shaping a global sphere (Ong 1999; Tsing 2000). Even with attention to the fluidity, politics, and arbitrary nature of national boundaries, these propositions—however diverse and at times contrasted—are useful tools for assessing patterns within individual world areas toward a broader understanding of the reach and nature of processes not confined to single locales.

In this essay, we argue that an analysis of the Caribbean and Caribbeanist anthropology allows us to trace the global in the local, thus illustrating the benefits of local *area* analyses for understanding global dynamics. Arguably, the Caribbean has always been globally oriented. Its particular history and development, therefore, problematize assumptions about moving in a linear fashion from a

locally rooted, area studies approach to a global-transnational one. Thus, we review Caribbeanist literature—especially in the areas of social stratification, creolization, colonialism, nationalism, globalization, and transnational migration—to examine major points raised by the research and to explore what these points reveal about the global-local dialectic. Theories of global-local interactions allow us to examine the relation of anthropology to Caribbean studies and to consider how analytical trajectories and theoretical developments within Caribbeanist anthropology connect with social and cultural processes on a global level. We will take stock of the theoretical and ethnographic contours of the discipline as a whole, while considering how and why specific analyses at the disciplinary level and at the local level have not always been mutually constitutive.¹ Our analysis will show that, while the Caribbean has often been implicitly and explicitly conceptualized as an “area,” it has simultaneously been understood as a site composed of and charted through global connections. The (sometimes thorny) intersection of these two conceptualizations provides much fodder for considering how local and global analyses have been interactive and mutually informing.

By parsing the tension within Caribbeanist anthropology between analyzing local specificities and foregrounding a transnational or global ethnographic area, we can come closer to assessing what anthropology brings to Caribbean studies. We illustrate that topics such as creolization, migration, and globalization have developed rich bodies of literature in Caribbean studies that have been significant to, and in continual communication with, theoretical trajectories and refinements with the larger discipline of anthropology. If a broader political-economic context shapes the questions we ask, the venues for our research, and the approaches we favor (Patterson 2001), then in an era of growing political conservatism, we should be critically self-conscious as we endeavor to refine our analytic approach. Therefore, drawing on the work of those skeptical about the arrival of a global era (Tsing 2000; Friedman 2000, 2003), we suggest that, although much of the criticism of area studies is warranted, we should be wary of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

THE CARIBBEAN AS AN AREA: DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

In an often-cited article, Sidney Mintz (1971a) argues that the Caribbean is a “sociocultural area,” distinguishable by specific social features yet not unified as a culture. Rather than emphasize commonalities across places, Mintz underscores the vast cultural heterogeneity of the region and cautions strongly against the attempt to arrive at a specific cultural model to characterize it. Yet he explicates several historical, ecological, and social structural features common to Caribbean people and places. Thus he argues that a set of sociological characteristics, rather than cultural traditions, typifies and unites the area.

Both Mintz’s point about heterogeneity and the notion of the Caribbean as an area were developed in subsequent Caribbeanist anthropological research. Indeed, conceptualizations of the Caribbean as an area with specific identifying features often defined how and when research was conducted. For example, in the early 20th century, anthropologists did not see the Caribbean as relevant for serious study until after World War II (Mintz 1977). Because everyone who populated the region either came from—or was forcibly brought from—somewhere else, anthropologists viewed Caribbean territories as lacking true “natives” and without an easily discernable unified cultural ethos. Additionally, far from being isolated, pristine, and uncorrupted by modernity, the Caribbean region had extensive political and economic relations with Europe and North America because of its history of colonialism, slavery, and plantation-based export-oriented agricultural production (Trouillot 1992). As a result, the region was seen as distinct from other areas that anthropologists studied, particularly in terms of its scale of social, political, and economic “development.”

Within this rubric, North American folklorists conducted studies in the 1920s and 1930s that centered on varieties of folk life in individual Caribbean colonies or countries. This included research on the content and organization of village life, religion, oral and written stories, and music and dance forms in community- and country-specific studies (Andrade 1930; Beckwith 1929; Herskovits and Herskovits 1947; Hurston 1938; Jekyll 1907; Parsons 1933; Price-Mars 1983). From the 1940s–70s, anthropologists focused on the organization of Afro-Caribbean families. Such work offered material, social, and historical analyses of kinship and domestic life, citing the lack of access to land for African descendants, the legacy of slavery, the peripheral status that black men held in the wider society, religious doctrine, and structural inequality as causes of specific domestic arrangements among lower class Afro-West Indians (Clarke 1966; Rodman 1971; Safa 1974; Smith 1956). Although this work catalyzed an extensive literature on gender² and also attended to how Afro-Caribbean family structure reflected or fit into the organization of the wider national society, it remained research that was located in individual countries and centered solely on Caribbean kinship, Caribbean family, Caribbean gender ideologies, domestic patterns, and economic roles.

By contrast, Melville Herskovits’s work situated Caribbean social and cultural patterns more broadly. Indeed, an important origin of U.S. anthropological interest in the Caribbean is directly linked to the formulation of the “New World Negro” as a social and theoretical problem within the United States (Herskovits 1930). Through this approach, the Caribbean was contextualized in relation to social processes occurring for blacks elsewhere. Herskovits, one of Boas’s students, used the Caribbean as a living laboratory in order to explain particular instances of cultural difference. He was especially concerned with religion and

family structure in terms of the survival, retention, syncretism, or reinterpretation of African cultural elements. He developed what was essentially an acculturation model (Herskovits 1990) through which studies of African cultural retentions were influenced by, and simultaneous with, the resurgence of interest in Africa and the diaspora among African American artists and intellectuals. During the 1930s and 1940s, Herskovits's ultimate emphasis on African cultural continuities did not enjoy extensive currency as the majority of scholars were instead drawn to the sociological view of Negro culture advanced by Robert Park. This view was later elaborated by sociologist E. Franklin Frazier in his exegesis of culture contact under conditions of slavery (1939).³ Yet the contextualization of Herskovits's work within broader considerations of black American and African social and cultural patterns meant that he was one of the first to look at the Caribbean in its connection to other world areas. To be sure, tensions surrounding Herskovits's ideas existed partially as the result of his proposition that Afro-Caribbean institutions were connected to processes elsewhere.

The Puerto Rico Project also considered wider processes surrounding social and cultural dynamics within Puerto Rico. Coordinated by Julian Steward, the project produced rich ethnographies of diverse rural Puerto Rican communities; examined the political, economic, and environmental context surrounding peoples' lives; and considered the various dimensions of hierarchical arrangements in which they were positioned (Steward et al. 1956). Although focused on individual communities and peoples in one country, the study quickly became known for its arguments and theoretical demonstrations, for example, about the impact of colonial processes and plantation production on national integration. It also was instrumental in the development of peasant studies, labor studies, studies of plantation societies, and political economy within Caribbeanist anthropology. Indeed, Mintz's (1974) later elaboration of the concept of the "protopeasantry"—which explicated a clear pattern of Afro-Caribbean peasant development through skills acquired while working simultaneously on provision grounds and plantations—appeared in more general anthropological discussions of peasant societies especially during the 1950s.

Several points stand out about this early Caribbeanist research. First, much of it contributed to a growing understanding of the Caribbean as a heterogeneous yet specific area, defined and distinguished by certain historical, ecological, cultural, and social patterns—particularly colonization, plantation structure, family structure, religion, and folk life. Second, there were tensions surrounding this type of definition as some projects (especially Herskovits's) began to consider the connections between Caribbean practices and those found in other areas within the African diaspora. Third, it was because early Caribbeanist research occurred within the context of postwar decolonization efforts, industrialization, migration, the Cuban Revolution, and the subsequent intensification of the Cold War.

Consequently, postwar anthropological attention to Caribbean agro-proletarians and peasants, national integration, and economic development strategies reflected an emergent geopolitical context and attended to events and dynamics outside of the region. Finally, these points of origin in Caribbeanist anthropology were connected to mainstays of anthropology (e.g., kinship, religion), thereby ensuring that the subfield remained in conversation with larger disciplinary concerns. In addition, they generated extended trajectories within Caribbeanist research that would ultimately examine the pressing global issues of particular moments. These include decolonization and the dynamics of postcolonial socioeconomic and political development, nationalism and the politics of cultural struggle, migration, transnationalism, and globalization.

STRUCTURING PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF SOCIETAL (DIS)INTEGRATION

From the 1960s to the early 1970s, the emphasis within Caribbeanist anthropology on creating models of Caribbean societies reflected an attempt to translate a global preoccupation with the aftermath of post–World War II decolonization movements to local concerns regarding societal integration (or lack thereof). These concerns were rooted in the particular past of plantation-based slave production, especially in the Anglophone Caribbean. Debates about the nature of West Indian societies gained critical importance because the then-dominant social science view held that social systems needed to be integrated around a common value system in order to thrive without an overarching (external) system of power and control. The idea that West Indian societies exhibited an incompatible sociocultural pluralism was counterposed with ideas about a creolized stratification. In the former, anthropologists considered sectors of the society as institutionally and culturally distinct, unified only as the result of the overarching power exercised by racial and ethnic minorities; while in the latter, they deemed that groups shared values and norms but were, nevertheless, divided by class and race differences. Such analyses were used to assess the potential success or predict the foreseeable failure of nationalist projects designed to unify diverse sectors of West Indian populations.⁴ As in other regions across the globe, these debates became platforms for the development of a cultural politics of race, class, and gender during the mid-20th century and tied in with the platforms of emerging postcolonial political parties where race and class figured prominently.

Beyond the plural society debate, additional models describing the specifics of Caribbean history and contemporary social organization were also proposed. Chandra Jayawardena (1963) advanced a model of West Indian societies that was rooted in peoples' negotiations between conflict and solidarity, egalitarianism and hierarchy. Antonio Lauria (1964) used the tension between the embodied terms *respeto* (respectability, deference) and *relajo*

(familiarity, confrontational joking) in Puerto Rico to examine how specific meanings and behaviors, though varying by class and other social identities, could also form the basis for inter- and intraclass communication and therefore hegemony. Where these analyses privileged aspects of social structure, a more culturalist perspective also emerged with the development of the cultural duality thesis, most famously elaborated within Peter Wilson's *Crab Antics* (1973). Wilson's model positioned a code-switching duality between "respectability" and "reputation" at the core of both individual worldviews and society as a whole. This model, anticipated by Herskovits's (1937) idea of socialized ambivalence (Yelvington in press) and Roger Abrahams's (1970, 1983) work on Afro-Caribbean patterns of performance, linked political participation and economic mobility to cultural values that were familiar across groups, but that were expressed in variable ways according to gender and age.

The theoretical lens of creolization has also provided anthropologists with tools to pursue broader questions regarding social change, societal transformation, and the nature and origins of Caribbean culture. In other words, they have examined the processes whereby Caribbean peoples, especially Afro-Caribbeans, developed specific institutions and practices, and how these processes were shaped by (and subsequently shaped in turn) their encounters with diverse ethnic groups in the region. Originally used to flag a linguistic phenomenon, the creolization paradigm generated an emphasis not only on the form and structure of Creole languages, especially in Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and among Suriname's Saramaccans (maroons), but also on the sociohistorical contexts that structured the extent of language contact in specific contexts (Arends et al. 1995). It was also developed in Mintz and Richard Price's seminal text, *The Birth of African American Culture*, in which the authors argued that emergent Afro-Caribbean cultural institutions adapted to and were influenced by specific historical and material conditions (e.g., plantation slavery), as well as by interaction with European cultural institutions (1992). At the same time, the European position of domination necessarily shaped the ability of Afro-Caribbean people to retain cultural practices originating in Africa. Thus, "the institutions created by the slaves to deal with what are at once the most ordinary and most important aspects of life took on their characteristic shape within the parameters of the masters' monopoly of power, but separate from the masters' institutions" (1992:39). For Mintz and Price, issues of power were fundamental to the creation of Afro-Caribbean cultures.

Researchers of Caribbean and Afro-American societies explored these ideas further in studies of kinship and religion. They examined the development and transformations of these cultural institutions within specific contexts of European-African interactions. For example, Karen Fog Olwig (1981, 1985) pointed to the emergence of an Afro-Caribbean culture on St. John that is rooted in the development of postemancipation kinship patterns of exchange

in which extranuclear networking was crucial. In Jamaica, Jean Besson and Barry Chevannes (Besson and Chevannes 1996; Chevannes 1998) charted the emergence and transformations in the Myalistic Revival religion from the pre-emancipation period to the late 20th century. Their research demonstrates Revival's connection to 19th-century Spiritual Baptism in Jamaica, to African-derived practices especially regarding such features as burials, as well as to sociopolitical and religious developments within 20th-century urban Jamaica, such as Rastafari. The work here has been implicitly geared toward vindicating the racial humanity and demonstrating the complex creativity of people of African descent living under the oppressive conditions of slavery and colonialism. Caribbeanists' elaborations of these processes have contributed to our more general understanding of how the maintenance of an alternative and potentially oppositional worldview is often simultaneous to the adoption, adaptation, and modification of previously "foreign" cultural forms and practices.

Early research on creolization focused almost exclusively upon Afro-Caribbeans, thereby operating within a black-to-white racial continuum and excluding other significant populations. This occurred despite the fact that early research had been conducted on the cultural and social integration of ethnic minorities within West Indian societies. Morton Klass (1961), for example, held that East Indians in Trinidad had remained outside more general processes of creolization. He observed East Indian cultural institutions in a Trinidadian village and argued that, despite their increasing numbers throughout the 20th century, East Indians retained their "Indianness" and failed to become *culturally* Caribbean. Contemporary analysts of Trinidadian society, however, have problematized the political aspects of the creolization paradigm—aspects that have been promulgated both within and outside of the academy. For example, Viranjini Munasinghe (2001:135–140) critiques the ways scholars have conflated both analytic perspectives on creolization and political and ideological arguments about national origins and identity. Munasinghe also problematizes how many scholars have therefore focused on Indo-Caribbean acculturation to Afro-Caribbean cultural patterns rather than clarifying the analytical issues regarding culture change and interculturalization that were at the base of Mintz and Price's (1992) model of creolization.

Consequently, creolization continues to be a reworked and debated concept. Some scholars today defend or revise early creolization models, in many cases insisting on the importance of historical specificity when examining cultural processes (Bolland 1992; Mintz 1996; Price 2001; Trouillot 1998) or when explicating the dimensions of power in a creolization process (Mintz 1996). Linguistic anthropologists, following Mintz's (1971b) emphasis on the contexts structuring the possibilities for and the nature of contact between groups, have put forth a view of Creole languages as "developmental": That is, instead of seeing them as fixed and stable, Creole languages are

thought to be in a constant process of creation, recreation, negotiation, and contestation across social groups (Garrett 2000; Shieffelin and Doucet 1994). Other scholars have been more critical of the usefulness of creolization as an explanatory model for Caribbean social life (Khan 2001). Indeed, Bill Maurer (2002) has suggested that the kinds of Caribbean realities or facts that scholars highlight to signal the existence of creolization tell us as much about academic discourse and forms of analysis as they do about specific patterns of Caribbean social life and formation.

Nevertheless, the creolization paradigm redirects our attention from the elaboration of binary societal models toward a *process* that embodies a particular power struggle and that works through the dynamic articulation of gender, color, class, status, and culture. This is the essence of some of the most instructive critiques of Wilson's cultural duality thesis, which see his model as masking the processes by which the binary poles are mutually constitutive and exist within a single field of power (Barrow 1998; Besson 1993; Douglass 1992; Miller 1994; Sutton 1974; Williams 1996; Yelvington 1995). The creolization paradigm also opens the door for pan-Caribbean dialogue regarding the processes of interculturalization over time in different settings. It, thus, pulls Anglophone West Indian research into discussion with scholarship on the Francophone, Hispanophone, and Dutch Caribbean. Moreover, the links between a creolization approach within Caribbeanist research and the notions of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) and hybridity that have developed elsewhere might be fruitfully parsed. Although the concept of creolization has been applied to other world regions, we would do well to reflect upon Aisha Khan's (2001) critique of the (over)reliance on the creolization model for understanding cultural hybridity globally. Even in its local formulation, this model has at times obscured as much as it has explained, as well as privileged some groups, some acculturations, and some assimilations over others. Therefore, the various functions of the creolization paradigm require that we explicitly consider the challenges involved with conceptual translation across fields, both literal and disciplinary, in order to maintain analytic specificity within a global context.

COLONIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND NATIONALIST IDENTITIES

Because contemporary Caribbean societies were initially developed in the context of European expansion, Caribbeanist anthropologists have also become important interlocutors within anthropological debates involving the complex ways the past enters the present. Many scholars have sought to clarify the continued salience, both structurally and symbolically, of colonial hierarchies that were established along the intersecting axes of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and culture. At the same time, they have attempted to account for the ways these hierarchies have changed in the contemporary period—a period that is

postcolonial for some and neocolonial for all. Emphasis has been placed on the various levels of relationships between changes in local, national, regional, and global political economies on the one hand, and local meanings, value systems, and cultural practices on the other. By drawing such connections within these analyses, the assumption here is that the place of “the past” in “the present”—as well as people's consciousness and evaluation of this place—is never monolithic or immutable. Rather, it is always embedded in ongoing social process and structured within a context of unequal power relations. Further, people's consciousness and evaluation of this place may provide alternative (and sometimes oppositional) narratives of community and modernity (Price 1983, 1998).

This work has been framed, explicitly or implicitly, as an attempt to locate “resistance” to colonial or nationalist discourse and policy within the cultural memory of Caribbean subalterns. The broader questions, however, have interrogated how Caribbean people negotiate the modernist paradigm of progress, and how they use colonial tools to assert their own political and social visions (Price 1998; Price and Price 1997). For example, studying Afro-Caribbeans' formation of “free villages” through labor skills acquired during enslavement on sugar plantations was an initial way that anthropologists considered people's oppositional stance generated through colonial structures (Berleant Schiller 1978; Besson 1987). More recently, Mindie Lazarus-Black (1994) has traced resistance through everyday illegal practices such as miscegenation and concubinage that emerged within routine forms of social organization and interaction in Antigua but that challenged or bypassed colonial and later state laws defining family, class, and gender.

Caribbean particularities also matter here. Patterns of state development have been diverse in the Caribbean, reflecting differing configurations of ethnic composition, strategies of production, and colonialist projects. Out of these emerged independent nation-states beginning with Haiti in 1804, the Dominican Republic and Cuba in the mid-to-late 19th century, and the English-speaking territories throughout the mid-to-late 20th century, ending with St. Kitts in 1983. These specific patterns gave rise to varying models around which nationalist sensibilities and identities were mobilized. For example, it has been argued that, due to the later and more limited development of plantation economies in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, relations between African and European descendants were relatively more fluid than in the French- and English-speaking territories (Hoetink 1967). Some anthropologists also note that, in popular and scholarly contexts, *the idea* of racial integration is considered more pronounced in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. This is in part because of racial demographics but also stems from colonial ideologies privileging the idea of an unstratified society (Quintero-Rivera 1987; Safa 1987). As a result, race was considered less integral to national identity formation, while institutional practices and indices of Spanish culture such as

language and religion became integral referents for anti-colonial struggles. This was so because the socioeconomic order of the Spanish colonial hacienda and ideologies promoting racial mixing or lightening weakened the development of a racially based solidarity (Safa 1987; Torres 1998).

Within the Anglophone and some areas of the Francophone Caribbean, postindependence political leaders have often framed the struggle against racism as a struggle for national freedom and increased democracy. In these contexts, the role of the professional black middle class has been critical (Robotham 2000, 2001). However, as noted in the previous section, class and color hierarchies throughout the Caribbean overlap. Because they articulate strongly with the domesticizing gender ideology of respectability, the struggles for socioeconomic mobility among an emergent black bourgeoisie have often reproduced the links between colonial racial and ethnic ideologies and colonial parameters for progress and development (Foner 1973; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; see also Olwig 1993; Reddock 1994; Williams 1996; Yelvington 1995).

At the same time, processes of anti- and postcolonial nationalism reveal how political independence both reflects and shapes the politics of cultural struggle (Williams 1991). These struggles have framed the production of nationalist ideologies at various levels (Davila 1997; Duany 2000; Munasinghe 2001, 2002; Price 1998; Price and Price 1997; Robotham 1998; Segal 1994; Thomas 1999; Trouillot 1990, 1995; Williams 1990, 1991, 1996; Yelvington 1993). Because of the early Westernization of the region, attention to nationalist struggles has made exceedingly clear the processes by which identities and ideologies of belonging are socially constructed and politically motivated—that is, invented—everywhere. The literature clearly illustrates the racialized, classed, gendered, and generational dimensions of various nationalist projects. Some of these dimensions have been institutionalized, thereby exacerbating, reproducing, or transforming colonial systems of inequality. Meanwhile the competing nationalist projects—mobilized at grassroots and global levels—command particular kinds of loyalty and structure the range of possibilities available to people during any given period.

Caribbeanist research also has attended to local meanings of concepts such as “the nation” or “the state,” and how these may differ in ideological and instrumental ways from Western notions that may be more taken-for-granted. For example, in her ethnographic account of Nevisian nationalism, Olwig has argued that due to the particular experience of European plantation development and missionization, as well as a 150-year history of migration, what unites citizens of Nevis is a “common absentee orientation” (1993:2). As a result, she notes, neither nationalist sentiment nor a sense of racial solidarity have been located within a shared set of cultural symbols. Rather, Nevisians have viewed the achievement of independence instrumentally in terms of how statehood has facilitated

their interactions with the wider world—in particular their ability to bargain for international aid, membership in the United Nations, and greater access to immigrant status abroad (see also Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Young 1993).

Olwig’s work is part of a more general turn toward exploring local critiques of essentializing nationalist discourses (Carnegie 1996) and examining local meanings of concepts such as nation-states, nationalism, and modernity, which have previously been portrayed as universal (see also Munasinghe 2002; Robotham 1997; Trouillot 2002). This has helped provide us with careful outlines of how transformations in nationalist rhetoric relate to broader political and economic changes at the national and global levels (Price and Price 1997; Robotham 1998). Moreover, discussions regarding the distinctions between political economy, cultural production, and political consciousness have also helped to lay a foundation for more recent analyses of the links between nationalist ideologies, race, class, gender, generation, performance, and popular culture.⁵ Within this newer scholarship, there has been a continued emphasis on understanding local social and political visions—oppositional or otherwise—as embodied forms that are continually innovating as the result of ongoing and dynamic diasporic dialogue. The dialogue results from contemporary processes of intensified globalization and transnational connections and can be tracked through changing relationships among state formation, popular culture, and the political economy of globalization.

TRANSNATIONALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

Recent Caribbean scholarship explicitly considers the constitutive role of migration within the processes delineated above. Indeed, migration has been a hallmark of Caribbeanist anthropology, reflecting the initial development of the region via the voluntary and involuntary movements of people from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia that began in the 15th century, as well as the vast human mobility that characterizes the contemporary period. Within scholarship on migration, questions regarding identity, assimilation and acculturation, changing rural economies, and the development of ethnic interest groups became paramount.

Early on, social scientists and historians attempted to understand what was new about the “new migration” after World War II and particularly after 1965 when U.S. immigration policy became more liberal. Caribbeanist anthropologists were engaged in debates regarding the relationships between race and ethnicity, gender and generation, and how these various social conditions influenced immigrants’ experiences of the migration process. These scholars argued that post-World War II migration from the Caribbean challenged the assimilationist ideals of the United States. They did so by tracking rural-to-urban migration in Puerto Rico (Safa 1974, 1982), the “reverse colonial migration” of Jamaicans and Barbadians to

England and, later, the United States (Foner 1978, 1979; Sutton 1992; Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1975), or the ways Caribbean immigration related to U.S. participation in the economic and political development of the region (Bryce-Laporte and Mortimer 1976; Dominguez 1975). These early approaches considered how processes of ethnic identification that were subject to change as the result of both individual and generational transformations were socially and politically marked in the United States, sometimes in unexpected ways (Bryce-Laporte and Mortimer 1981; Dominguez 1975; Padilla 1958). Caribbeanists also examined how structures and meanings of race, class, status, gender, and culture in the new settings both affected and were themselves changed by migrants' own perceptions and processes of ethnic identification—which in turn were subject to change as the result of both individual and generational transformations (Foner 1978, 1979; Sutton 1992; Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1975). For example, the influences of panethnic movements like Black Power on the consciousness of migrant communities both at home and abroad were considered in relation to the dynamics of divergent racial experiences in the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as more generally to a heightened sense of political impact (Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1975). Finally, early researchers analyzed the deleterious impact of migration on the continuity of subsistence farming (Brierley 1988; Griffith 1988; Rubenstein 1987).

More recent research on migration has examined the ways U.S. citizens' changing conceptualizations of the relationships between ethnicity, race, and culture have been central in shaping West Indians' public presence and political life in the United States (Kasinitz 1992; Stepick 1998). Other scholars have explored processes of identity formation and negotiation among Caribbean immigrants, including the extent to which migration has altered gender and generational roles and, to some extent, class and status ideologies among Caribbean families (Basch et al. 1994; Duany 1994; Pessar 1995; Sutton and Chaney 1987). Scholars have also begun to pay closer analytic attention to intraregional migration within the Caribbean, exploring, for example: (1) how purported cultural similarity eases immigrant group adaptation among Cubans in Puerto Rico despite class and ethnic differences (Duany and Cobas 1997), and (2) how generational differences have affected eastern Caribbean women's assessments of their own migratory experiences in Aruba (Aymer 1997).

These various thematic thrusts have coalesced under the rubric of a transnational approach to migration, an approach that has necessitated an explicit conceptual reorientation of the ethnographic field so as to encompass events, processes, and social and institutional formations occurring in two or more locations (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992). The transnational framework draws on a central tenet of earlier migration work by emphasizing the simultaneities of change and continuity, and of rootedness and mobility. It is particularly attentive to the institutional

structures that facilitate such simultaneities (e.g., Basch et al. 1994; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Olwig 1993, 1999, 2001). These include both intracommunity cultural practices (such as family land, child fostering, occupational multiplicity) and national government policies (such as dual citizenship, membership in the United Nations, fundraising among diasporic populations). In recent years, Caribbeanists have further refined this approach, in some cases addressing multiple forms of border transgression and considering people's models of world community (cf. Carnegie 2002; Duany 2000, 2002; Foner 2001; Olwig 1993, 2001; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Moreover, researchers working in other world areas—indeed, outside anthropology—have also adopted and modified it to suit their own analytic insights.⁶

The work on transnational migration has had a decidedly urban emphasis. It has focused particularly on hubs such as New York, London, and Miami, as these cities have been the principal destinations of Caribbean migrants, especially since 1965. This "urban emphasis" supports some of the recent conceptualizations of New York and other urban meccas as "global cities" (Sassen 1991; see also Hannerz 1996:127–139). Yet, because Caribbeanist scholars have ethnographically interrogated the ongoing and fluid connections between, for example, New York and Caribbean rural communities, they have also delineated the ways New York exists in rural Haiti and vice versa. That is, they demonstrated how the global and the local are mutually constitutive, not only through the maneuvers of transnational corporations but also by the actions of individuals at grassroots levels (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Sutton 1987). Again, exploring the global–local dialectic in this way moves us beyond the binary categorizations that were dominant during an earlier period of research (urban vs. rural migrations, assimilation vs. cultural retention). It also allows us to conceptualize the Caribbean and the United States as overlapping historical, political, economic, and sociocultural fields. Anthropologists' ethnographic accounts, in particular, have helped us account for such fluidity between categories.

The attention to migration and transnational processes has always been framed within the sociopolitical and economic context of a changing global capitalism, itself one of the most explored areas of research within anthropology since the early 1990s (Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Kearney 1995). In their considerations of contemporary processes of neoliberal capitalist globalization, Caribbeanists identified the relationships—at local, regional, and global levels—between a changing political economy, the racialization of political rhetoric, and concepts of belonging (Carnegie 1996; Maurer 1997; Robotham 1998), and the gendered dimensions of power, authority, and economic mobility (Bolles 1983, 1996a, 1996b; Safa 1995). They have also explicated the complex ways race, class, and gender have articulated with one another at various moments throughout the second half of the 20th century.

This has occurred within the context of intensifying forms of global economic integration that have privileged transnational capital over the socioeconomic and political well being of the majority of Caribbean populations. Like anthropologists working elsewhere in the world, Caribbeanists have addressed: (1) the implications of the proliferation of free trade zones (Safa 1995), (2) the elaboration of globalizing agricultural industries (Andreatta 1998; Moberg 1997; Slocum 1996), (3) the intensification of the tourism industry (Benoît 1999; Kempadoo 1999), and (4) the imposition of structural adjustment programs and other formulae for reducing state services (Bolles 1996b; Deere et al. 1990; Harrison 1997; Safa 1995).

Questions surrounding the purported newness of globalization and the concomitant decline of the nation-state have a particular resonance within the region, as the history and political developments of the Caribbean belie the novelty of global connections and the disintegration of the nation-state (Maurer 2000; Trouillot 2002). Although scholars have often emphasized how contemporary globalization processes and the establishment of a "new world order" have constituted threats to democracy and a crisis of legitimacy, they have not always underscored the reduction of the states' power to provide direction and needed social services for their populations. This point is especially strong in many of the feminist critiques of global economic restructuring in the Caribbean (Bolles 1996b; Harrison 1997; Safa 1995). Other work emphasizes how contemporary globalization processes have reinforced old hierarchies of races, ethnicities, cultures, and nations without necessarily undermining the power of nation-states that continue to shape people's everyday material and symbolical experiences of global change (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Robotham 1998, 2000). For example, the contemporary restructuring of Caribbean agricultural industries from domestic and subsistence production towards the promotion of undiversified export crop production illustrates how nation-states actively collaborate with transnational corporations to chart local economic development (Andreatta 1998; Moberg 1991).

While attending to the role of the state and the power of global forces, anthropologists studying the Caribbean have also charted the various dimensions of local agency, thereby challenging popular theses about global domination. There has been refreshing documentation of how women remake themselves as they move between emerging and restrictive global economic and political processes, and local categories of class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationality (Freeman 2000; McClaurin 1996; Safa 1995; Yelvington 1995). Carla Freeman's (2000) astute analysis of Barbadian women workers in offshore data processing firms illustrates how despite the constraints posed by the strictures of a globalized factory setting, the women developed a new kind of status consciousness through which they were able to refashion their social identities. Other scholars are also investigating (1) emergent patterns of social mobility and autonomy

among lower-class Jamaicans (Thomas in press), (2) counterdiscourses among St. Lucian smallholders regarding economy and work (Slocum 2003), and (3) processes of identity formation and negotiation through the consumption of mass cultural products among West Indian youth in Brooklyn (LaBennett 2002). Although the various negotiations foregrounded in this work may not catalyze wholesale shifts in local or global power relations, they do emphasize the need to recognize contemporary struggles as lenses for reframing hegemonic understandings of globalization.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A CONVERSATION

Clearly, an analysis of processes in, through, and around the Caribbean has not been exclusively local. Because of the historical particularities of the region, it requires constant boundary crossings—disciplinarily, analytically, conceptually, and categorically. Even when looking at the Caribbean as an "area," Caribbeanists' analyses rarely have been strictly bounded. Examination of the Caribbean's connections with other areas—particularly through the movements and relations of Caribbean people, places, and state structures—has been a significant way that Caribbeanists have made this point clear. At the same time, Caribbeanist scholars have also been in conversation with larger inter- and interdisciplinary concerns, queries, and theories. Their work reveals attention to social and political processes, history, an active nation-state, and synergies between global and local frames. Moreover, Caribbeanist research on globalization balances macrostructural accounts of the nature, extent, and force of global processes with ethnographic treatments of "globalization from below" that also emphasize how people mobilize local history and meanings to negotiate—and indeed shape—their available avenues within current configurations of global power.

Similarly, Caribbeanists' work on creolization and structuring principles underscores the critical importance of historical specificity in relation to social ordering processes, which in turn has informed broader anthropological questions regarding the relationships among race, class, status, and culture. Because analyses of creolization have been reworked and updated across several decades, pivotal questions about the relationships between social structure, culture, and context have been revisited and refined. Moreover, since the processes of creolization also invokes the process of diaspora, this work makes important connections between comparative studies and diaspora studies (Gordon and Anderson 1999; Holt 1999) and between area studies and global studies.

Caribbeanists' conceptual reformulation of migration has also been a critical contribution to the discipline as a whole. This has been perhaps fueled by the way population development throughout the region has been rooted in continual movement, both forced and voluntary. Ethnographically grounded accounts of this movement have provoked exceptionally rich theoretical developments

regarding the contexts, catalysts, and consequences of migration. Thus, our review of these and other specific trajectories within Caribbeanist anthropology shows that, although anthropological concerns and theories found their way into particular research areas, anthropology continually is built “from the ground up.” In other words, the production of a theoretical canon within anthropology as a discipline always has been and continues to be dialectical. However, we do not mean to suggest that the Caribbean is the only, or even one, of the primary areas, from which to illustrate this point. Indeed, although it is clear that Caribbeanist research has been integral in addressing broad disciplinary questions regarding migration patterns, for example, research from Latin America and South Asia on this topic has been equally central to the discipline.

At the same time, we might ask why specific questions engaged elsewhere in anthropology have not found their way firmly into Caribbeanist anthropology. For example, why have anthropologists not examined Caribbean women’s movements as extensively as in Latin America and parts of South Asia? Beyond cursory attention paid to the Cuban revolution, why are contemporary social movements and diverse forms of social protest not explored by anthropologists working in the Caribbean to the extent that they have been in other parts of the world (see, e.g., Alvarez et al. 1998; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Fox and Starn 1997)? Although Caribbeanists have been important analysts of globalization, why have anthropologists not paid more specific attention to the experiences of refugees, or to the intensification of drug-related and other forms of interpersonal violence that clearly swell within and around globalizing processes? Further, an expanded focus on the issues of change and continuity, especially in relation to second- and third-generation Caribbean migrant and returnees, might facilitate our attempts to write against the various binaries—global–local, tradition–modernity—that continue to infiltrate social research. These, among many others, are fruitful directions that Caribbeanist anthropology might take as it continues to be central to the discipline.

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NOTES

Acknowledgments. All work on this essay was shared equally between the coauthors. A version of this essay was presented at a session entitled “Imaginable Futures: Caribbeanist Research and the Foundations of Anthropology” that we organized for the Centennial meetings of the American Anthropological Association in New Orleans, November 2002. We would like to thank the 12 panelists from this session (A. Lynn Bolles, Charles Carnegie, Nancy Foner, Nina Glick-Schiller, Antonio Lauria, Karen Fog Olwig, Richard Price, Donald Robotham, Helen Safa, Constance Sutton, Arlene Torres, and Kevin Yelvington) for their helpful feedback on our paper; Bill Maurer for encouraging us to pursue this essay for publication; and Lee Baker, John Jackson, and Catherine Lutz for insightful comments

on a more recent draft of this essay. We also would like to thank the editors of the *American Anthropologist* and three anonymous reviewers for their useful suggestions. We thank especially AA reviewer #3 for redirecting us toward Sidney Mintz’s (1971b) article and to general literature on global processes. Karla Slocum held a fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation that helped support work on this essay. This essay is part of a larger set of diverse and sustained explorations of Caribbeanist research that we are organizing over the next two years. Please contact us if you are interested in participating in these discussions. We assume full responsibility for the limitations of this essay.

1. Given the purpose of this essay, it is neither completely comprehensive nor particularly detailed. For review articles that cover particular aspects of Caribbeanist research in more detail, see Mintz 1977, M. G. Smith 1966, Trouillot 1992, and Yelvington 2001.
2. Much work has already addressed this topic. See, for example, Mohammed and Shephard 1988; Barrow 1998; Berleant-Schiller 1999; and Trouillot 1992.
3. Herskovits’s problematic was later picked up and applied to research on Caribbean religions (Crahan and Knight 1979; Simpson 1965), public performances (Abrahams 1970), patterns of land tenure (Carnegie 1987), and language (Alleyne 1988).
4. We are alluding here to the “plural society debate,” whose main protagonists were Michael G. Smith (1965) and Raymond T. Smith (1956; see also Braithwaite 1953). For important reformulations and critiques, see Austin 1983; Hall 1977; and Robotham 1980.
5. This is a growing body of research. See, for example, Averill 1997; Balliger 2001; Cohen 1998; Daniel 1995; Davila 1997; Godreau 2002; Maurer 1991; McAlister 2002; Miller 1994; Munasinghe 2001; Pacini-Hernandez 1995; Reddock 1998, 1999, 2001; Segal 1994; Stolzoff 2000; Stuempfle 1995; Thomas 2002, in press; Ulysse 1999; cf. Guss 1993, 2000; Wade 1993; Wilk 1996.
6. For a few recent examples, see Bender 2002, Chen 2002, Kaplan et al. 1999, and Ong 1999.

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