Education Reform in the Eastern Caribbean: Implications of a Policy and Decision-Making Program by an External Donor

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Dedication

To my sisters Judy, Joanne, Iola, and Angela and niece, Jeanine, who have been steadfast in their support of this work. They supplied much needed humour and friendship along the way. For my mother, Clara, who shared with me many moments of intellectual curiosity, not to mention daily prayers, throughout the research. You have lived to see the day.

For my late grandmother, Dulcina, and my father, Ivan, who encouraged me throughout their lifetimes to continue learning.

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This work is for all of you.

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Abstract

This study analyzes the participation of foreign donors in long-term education reform in the small countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Central to this reform is the development of suitable and sustainable policy and decision-making structures, a relatively new activity for the sub-region's planners and educators. This research seeks to investigate how Canada's input into strengthening and supporting these key policy and decision-making structures of the education reform project may affect the sub-region's expectations for a more indigenous and relevant education system.

The background for these issues arose out of my familiarity with the challenges facing OECS Ministries of Education in reconciling their own needs in education with the interests of the donor community. In addition, in colonial times, Britain had considerable influence on every aspect of education in the Caribbean, and, in the post-colonial period, Canada had long-term involvement in human-resource development in the sub-region. This raises questions of the viability of reform of the OECS education system to reflect its own development priority needs, culture and values, when a foreign force is significantly involved in funding the development of the key policy and decision-making structures. How dependent are the OECS countries on Canadian assistance to implement their education reform agenda? The dynamics between aid and sovereignty are also of critical importance, given the Eastern Caribbean's history of colonialism and dependency. These issues have frequently been debated in the context of international assistance in the OECS but, to date, there has not been much in-depth qualitative research on such topics, from the academic community.

Drawing on dependency theory, and on qualitative research techniques, this thesis critically examines the historical, social, and international development factors of significance in such an inquiry. The study also makes recommendations for future relationships between the donor community and the OECS in the education sector.

Résumé

La présente étude analyse la participation des bailleurs de fonds étrangers à la réforme de l'éducation engagée à long terme dans les petits pays de l'Organisation des États des Caraïbes orientales (OECO). Cette réforme s'appuie essentiellement sur l'élaboration de politiques et de structures décisionnelles pertinentes et viables, activité relativement nouvelle pour les planificateurs et les éducateurs de ces pays. La recherche examinera plus particulièrement comment la contribution canadienne au renforcement et au soutien de ces structures politiques et décisionnelles clés pourrait influer sur l'instauration d'un système d'éducation proprement national et plus pertinent, tel que le souhaite ces pays.

Une connaissance personnelle des difficultés auxquelles font face les ministères responsables de l'éducation dans les pays de l'OECO qui tentent de réconcilier leurs propres besoins et les intérêts des donateurs est à l'origine de mon intérêt pour les questions examinées. Il convient d'ajouter qu'à l'époque coloniale, la Grande-Bretagne exerçait une influence considérable sur tous les aspects de l'éducation dans les Caraïbes et qu'au cours de la période qui suivit, le Canada a longuement été associé au développement des ressources humaines dans cette sous-région. On est donc en droit de s'interroger sur la viabilité de la réforme du système d'éducation, réforme visant à refléter les besoins prioritaires en matière de développement, la culture et les valeurs de ce système, alors qu'un pays étranger est étroitement associé au financement des structures responsables de l'élaboration des politiques et de la prise de décision. Dans quelle mesure les pays de l'OECO dépendent-ils de l'aide canadienne pour mettre en œuvre leur programme de réforme en matière d'éducation? Ces questions ont souvent fait l'objet de discussions dans le contexte de l'aide internationale accordée aux pays de l'OECO, mais jusqu'à présent les milieux universitaires y ont consacré peu de d'études systématiques et approfondies. La dynamique de l'aide et de la souveraineté est d'importance capitale compte tenu du passé colonial et de la dépendance des pays de l'est des Caraïbes.

S'appuyant sur la théorie de la dépendance, et sur les techniques de recherche qualitative, la présente thèse examine d'un oeil critique les facteurs historiques, sociaux et liés au développement international qui pourraient être significatifs dans une telle recherche. L'étude fait également des recommandations relatives aux relations futures entre la communauté des donateurs et l'OECO dans le secteur de l'éducation.

Preface

My original interest for this study was to find out more about policy and decision-making processes in education in the Eastern Caribbean, and the role Canada, through CIDA, played. I had worked in the region, from 1982, first as a researcher and later as development consultant, and CIDA staff,[1] in the areas of education, training, human-resource development, and women's issues. Being born and raised in the Caribbean, before immigrating to Canada, I had a "natural feel" and knowledge of the region. My work brought me into contact primarily with government departments, but it often extended to meetings with the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector. On these assignments I was involved in the design, planning, and evaluation of several education, training, and human-resource projects funded through a variety of CIDA's departments.

From meetings with OECS staff in government ministries responsible for Canadian and donor projects, I often encountered first-hand examples of duplication and repetition of project activities between and among projects funded both by Canadian and other donor agencies. It was a reality familiar both to OECS and donor staff, and often documented in project reports for donors, or articulated in personal conversations in informal gatherings. It was also common knowledge that these kinds of projects, Canada's included, were great while they existed, but unsustainable once donor funding ceased.

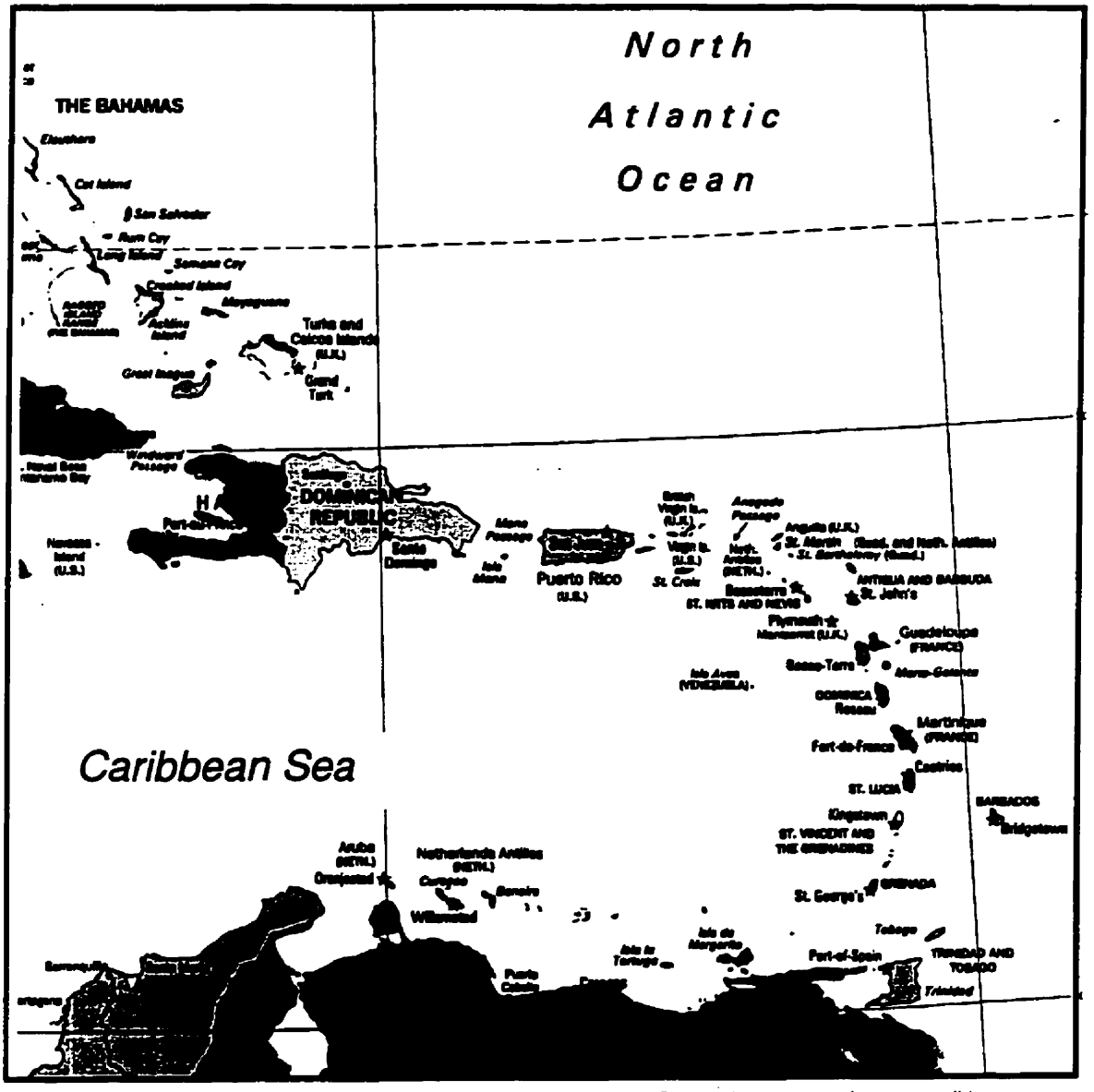
I first became acquainted with the OECS Education Reform Strategy during one of these assignments in 1992. By this time, it had become clearer to me that the inconsistencies encountered in projects funded by the donor community could, on one level, be related structurally to the region's colonial administrative history. It was also obvious that the whole process of sustainable policy making, leading to sustainable decision making for education, was not being approached in any systematic or strategic way.

I wanted to explore, within a more structured academic and analytical framework, what gave rise to such disconnection among donor-funded projects in general, and Canadian

projects in particular. I felt, therefore, that the long-term nature of the current OECS education reform strategy, and the Canadian contribution through the CIDA-ECERP project, would be a good opportunity to look at the policy and decision-making environments, especially, in the public sector. The findings of my research, which took place from 1995 to 1999, have formed the substance of this present study.

[1] I was employed as an education specialist with CIDA from 1992-1995.

The Caribbean



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Chapter 1. Background for the Study

As the islands of the OECS contend with the challenges of unification and as they approach the twenty-first century they must come to a deeper understanding of themselves and the forces that are shaping their destiny... In choosing a path and shaping a vision, education is critical. (Education Reform Working Group, 1991, p. 9)

1.1 Introduction

A decade ago,[1] as newly independent countries faced with the full-time responsibility of running their own affairs, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) embarked on a process of education reform. This reform was not just about setting new educational goals and achievements. It was also an attempt, from a *sub-regional* standpoint, to establish new standards for national development among the OECS countries, create a focal point for regional co-operation in education within the English-speaking Caribbean, and develop broad parameters to co-ordinate the financial and developmental contributions of the international donor community.

This study focuses on how the OECS countries are meeting the policy and decision-making challenges of implementing this current wide-ranging education reform strategy. Specifically it examines how the policy-making bodies of the OECS influence on-going design and implementation of the current education reform strategy. Secondly, it analyzes the implications of the financial and technical contribution of Canada in this process, and lastly, the meaning of Canadian involvement to the authenticity of effecting change in an education system that historically was colonized and structured by Britain.

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[1] The OECS, known as the *sub-region* in the English-speaking Caribbean region, comprise Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands are associate states (OECS, 1998).

To provide the theoretical framework for the study, I drew on ideas from dependency theorists. Methodologically, I opted for techniques from qualitative research. Standard qualitative research tools such as interviews, document research, and participant observations were used for data collection and analysis.

1.1.1 The OECS in the Post-Colonial Phase

The history of the English-speaking Caribbean (hereafter referred to as the Caribbean) shows that, until the 1950s, access to all levels of educational endeavour was the privilege of a few. Today, however, the view that education can make a difference in accessing most social and economic opportunities, internally and externally, pervades much of the thinking and work of citizens and institutions in the region. Caribbean politicians, themselves fully aware of this reality, have made education a central focus of development planning, and have launched many initiatives aimed at restructuring and reforming the education system. Education's value to the economic well being of the region has been targeted by the leading regional Secretariat for the Caribbean, CARICOM, (Caribbean Community)[2] as a "critical factor in national and regional efforts to sustain and enhance productivity and economic growth" (Caribbean Community Secretariat, 1993, p. 3; Grant, 1991). Internationally, the same emphasis on education and training will be needed to seize the opportunities presented by the globalization of markets, resources, and services or, conversely, combating the accompanying negative pressures (Callender, 1998a; Goodine, 1994b; Henke, 1996). As Ezeala-Harrison (1999) writes, "the era of unrestricted rapid mobility of resources and products across the globe

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[2] CARICOM will be used interchangeably with Caribbean at times for greater clarification of the English-speaking Caribbean boundaries. CARICOM comprises Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Guyana, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Bahamas, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands are associate members. Haiti's full membership is still pending. Suriname, while a full member is primarily Dutch-speaking and is not directly included in my designation of "English-speaking". http://www.caricom.org/members.htm. Aug. 09/01 update.

is termed the era of globalization. ...It has led to widespread integration of economies in terms of investment, trade, monetary unions, currency affiliations, and economic agreements. In fact, globalization transcends even social institutional issues, giving rise to the need to integrate peoples and cultures" (p. 647).

Opportunities for viable social and economic progress for fragile small island economies, such as the OECS, often depend on a combined and regional approach. The OECS sub-regional grouping formed in 1981 was based on this knowledge and provides such a vehicle, consolidated now through a number of common political, economic, social, and cultural mechanisms. The OECS Ministers of Education Council, for instance, was the forum through which the current education reform strategy (OERS) was launched in 1991. As McIntyre (1997) noted: "The principal justification for regional cooperation in education is the increasing need for achieving critical mass in expertise, information and management, as the acquisition, generation, and utilization of knowledge throw up an increasing range of complex intellectual and technical activities" (p. 63).

Additionally, in view of the OECS' open and dependent economies, a historical legacy from European colonization, financing reforms in education involved heavy participation from the international donor community. Canada in particular has had strong links with the entire Caribbean, dating back to colonial times in trade, banking, tourism and private investment (CIDA, 1997).[3] Much of Canada's aid to developing countries comes through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which is the official overseas development and delivery agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the sixties onwards, Canada, through CIDA, increased its influence in the OECS in particular, mainly through education, training, and human-resource development projects (CTAP,

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[3] The main Canadian banks are the Royal Bank of Canada, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and the Bank of Nova Scotia.

1995). History and good relationships combined to create a situation where Canada/CIDA became the main financial contributor to the present *sub-regional* OECS education reform process.

Throughout the Caribbean region, the practice of developing sustainable policy procedures and environments for equally sustainable decision making in education could at best be described as fledgling and, conversely, ad hoc and fragmented. Sustainable, as suggested by Ali, (1990) can be defined in an economic and social sense as having an internal energy and drive with a high degree of self-support, self-reliance and maintenance. It also implies national pride, dignity, and self-esteem, and, lastly, having a sustainable competitive advantage in the international scheme of things (p.140). The Caribbean is not unique in this respect. Indeed, sustainability is known to be a serious problem for many developing countries with similar colonial histories and dependent economies. According to Brown (1996), "Much of the disappointment associated with policy failure in the region, as indeed elsewhere in the developing world, can be traced directly to the poor grasp of what the problems are, their precise nature, causes and effects. Resources are used to treat mere symptoms and not underlying root causes. In the end, the very solutions become problems" (p.12; Rokicka, 1999). Central to the ability to diagnose problems are well-resourced public and private policy and decision-making institutional structures, which are features singularly lacking in developing countries.

The lack of capacity to conduct effective policy and decision making has not escaped decision-makers at the sub-regional Secretariat for the OECS,[4] which recently noted that: "on the threshold of the new millennium, the regional economy is unmistakably at a

[4] The OECS Secretariat is the regional administrative institution for the OECS. Its headquarters are located in St. Lucia.

watershed as they face the difficult process of adjusting to a more liberalized international environment. The emerging international order is less accommodating, even hostile to small developing countries and hence calls for more astute policy-making based on a timely information" (OECS Secretariat, 1999a, p. 2; Charles, 1992). As De Grauwe (1991) observed, "politicians are allowed some rhetoric, but there is a need for a concrete and detailed description of objectives and strategies. In a word, policy is necessary" (p. 354).

This context of history, education, development, and international funding is the background for the main explorations of this study. In this context, I will develop an analysis of the *sub-regional* policy and decision-making process for education reform in the OECS countries. I will also examine the implications of the financial contribution and participation of Canada in the OECS' strategy to reform an educational system that, for almost one hundred and fifty years, was constructed and administered by Britain.

1.2 Research Area

1.2.1 The OECS Education Reform Strategy

Educational efforts and activities in the OECS must be seen in the context of developments at the regional level. From the 1960s onwards, when the larger CARICOM countries first gained independence, the move to make the education system more relevant to Caribbean needs took a big leap forward. The most notable area was curriculum reform, pioneered through the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), established in 1972. Other significant CARICOM educational initiatives included studies on technical and vocational educational training, a consultation on the Future of Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and a Report on Caribbean Development to the year 2000 (CARICOM Community Secretariat, 1993; Education Reform Working

Group, 1991). The findings focused on a host of recurring problem areas at all levels of the system, especially curriculum development, teacher training, student attitudes, construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure, management, finances and so on. At the same time, these reports also offered a blueprint for national and regional action in these critical areas of education, as well as the kind of education and human-resource development necessary to support various economic policy initiatives and employment needs (Education Reform Working Group, 1991).

These regional reviews in education were also a reflection of global trends in education from the sixties to the early nineties, led by international agencies such as the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO, for example, had collaborated with governments in Latin America and the Caribbean on projects for adult illiteracy and primary education. This was followed by the joint United Nations World Conference on Education for All, in Thailand in 1990 (Education Reform Working Group, 1991). The World Conference had targeted basic education as the agenda for the nineties.[5] Other multilateral and bilateral agencies including the World Bank, United States Agencies for International Development (USAID), the Development Foundation for International Development Caribbean (DFIDC, formerly the British Development Division), and CIDA were supporting projects in education, training, and human-resource development in the Eastern Caribbean (Forde, 1994).

[5] Basic education refers to education intended to meet basic learning needs. It includes instruction at the first or foundation level, on which subsequent learning can be based; it encompasses early childhood and primary (or elementary) education for children as well as education in literacy, general knowledge, and life skills for youth and adults. It may extend into secondary education in some countries (WCEFA, 1989). In the Caribbean, basic education is defined as the first nine years of formal education. This means that basic education goes beyond primary education to mid-secondary, 14-15 years of age (Callender, 1999d).

Prior to and after their independence in the seventies,[6] the OECS countries were active participants in all these initiatives and had begun to reflect and incorporate many of the ideas in their own education systems, but without the time and breathing space for reflection about the type of education system that might be best suited to redress centuries of colonialism. That said, by the time the OECS Ministers of Education made the decision to establish the current sub-regional education reform strategy (OERS) at their annual meeting in 1990, they were well aware of the problems that had to be tackled in education in their member states. They knew, for instance, that education was an area well suited for regional co-operation. However, at the same time, they recognized that there were many variations in the way education was processed in each country (Callender, 1999d; McIntyre, 1997). It was clear that some things could be done on a regional basis, rather than on a national basis, and that pooling some of the resources would help in building facilities and structures, beginning with education. The international dimension of donor assistance and its dependency characteristics were also sources of concern.

Cognisant of these realities, the OECS Ministers of Education reasoned that the creation of an education strategy, tailored to the OECS, would, broadly speaking, create the climate to support a more sustainable regional development, the limitations of size and dependency notwithstanding. Specifically, this strategy would serve several purposes. It would provide:

- the basis for national development;
- the framework for sub-regional initiatives;
- a focal point for regional co-operation in education within the Caribbean;
- the broad parameters within which donor involvement and development co-operation would be sought and co-ordinated (Education Reform Working Group, 1991).

[6] Dates of independence for the OECS: Grenada, 1978; Dominica, 1978; St. Lucia, 1979; St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1979; Antigua and Barbuda, 1981; St. Kitts and Nevis, 1983. Anguilla, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands are still British colonies.

To carry out this mandate, the OECS Secretariat established a Working Group, consisting almost entirely of Caribbean educators from the OECS. The Chair, however, was a well-known Jamaican and regional educator, Dr. Errol Miller, from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica. Philosophically, the Working Group was guided, in part, by the notion that "the reform of education must seek to devise a framework for inspiring noble visions of Caribbean society and the Caribbean person within the context of a global vision of human civilization and humanity" (Education Reform Working Group, 1991, p. 71). Rational and comparative perspectives shaped their conceptual framework. This combined approach, they argued, struck a balance among the range of rational, radical, political, and comparative perspectives put forward by the spectrum of stakeholders consulted. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used to collect data.

Between March and August 1991, the Working Group held national consultations, inside and outside the OECS, with a wide cross section of interests and individuals, soliciting their views and visions about the future of education in the OECS. Literature reviews and studies were also commissioned. Caribbean and foreign consultants, including Canadians, were hired for this part of the research (Education Reform Working Group, 1991).

1.2.2 Foundation for the Future

Approximately one year after the initial mandate, the Working Group produced its report, *Foundation for the Future*. This hundred-page document was and still is the foundation and vision document for the OECS education reform strategy. It was primarily based on a "technical analysis of the nature and needs of education within the sub-region" (p. 70). More importantly, it was the first comprehensive post-independent analysis of key aspects of the education system specific to the OECS. The analysis also included

commentary on the historical, social, political, economic, and developmental factors that had shaped and were shaping OECS countries. In this respect, it was a pioneer document for engaging a more critical discussion for change in education in the OECS, CARICOM. and internationally.

As much as *Foundation for the Future* corroborated on-going findings about problem areas in Caribbean education, the thrust this time was how these problems were manifested in the OECS. In essence, these problems, amounted to differences and inequalities in the education systems of each island, which would put barriers in the path of functional co-operation, such as differences in grade names, curricula, and in the way technical and vocational education was being developed. Additionally, education legislation for each island pointed to variations in school management and administration. and teacher training (Callender, 1999a). In essence, this meant that for any reform strategy to be effective there would have to be broad harmonization[7] of strategies to enable countries to integrate and benefit from economies of scale (Callender, 1998a). The institutional dimension of dependency on foreign assistance in education was identified as another weakness in the system. The Working Group observed that "the danger of the education sector becoming driven by uncoordinated externally funded projects seemed very real. Equally important was the danger of scarce resources through needless duplication or through misplaced priorities" (Education Reform Working Group, 1991, p. 2).

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[7] "Harmonization is seen as essential for transferability of qualifications, the efficient deployment of scarce human and financial resources, the sharing of educational experiences, efficient and cost effective delivery of training programs and the acquisition of goods and services from third parties on terms which all for the realization of economies of scale.
Harmonization is seen as crucial, not only with respect to the description of various elements of the education system, but as a sine qua non to the further elaboration of a regional approach to the development of programmes on the environment and language teaching. More importantly, harmonization is seen as a key element in the effective management of the sub-regional effort" (Charles, 1992, p. 2).

The sixty-five specific recommendations of the Working Group called for a broad reform agenda, covering early childhood education to tertiary education (Appendix 2). The Ministers of Education accepted the Working Group's report in principle, subject to national consultations, with a view that it would become the "centre-piece of future activities in the education sector especially in the negotiating of regional programmes/ projects involving assistance from the donor community" (Charles, 1992, p. 6).

The national consultations[8] eventually resulted in the selection of nine program areas for managing and administering the reform. These in turn evolved into several major projects, based on the core areas recommended by the Working Group, which were then funded by different agencies in the donor community (Appendix 3). In this way, the Working Group established a series of common long-term educational goals for education reform in the OECS, such as access, equity, quality, harmonization, management and administration, public participation, communication, and sustainability (Callender, 1998a). One of the key recommendations was to establish a strategic framework to set up the developmental, policy, legislative, and financial directives to guide the process. The Working Group noted that:

> Prudence requires that the reform strategy possess the capacity to benefit from hindsight, new knowledge, future agreements and fresh insight. An alternative to a detailed implementation plan is the proposal of a framework for the reform process and a mechanism to ensure that the process is carried out within this framework.
>
> The same broad process that created the strategy points to the approach that needs to be adopted to implement it. A framework and mechanisms which seek to ensure continuous review of goals, objectives, outcomes and achievements which allows new objectives, outcomes and achievements, which allows new components to be added and which promotes ongoing consultation among stakeholders in education in the sub-region are vital to the success of the entire reform exercise. (Education Reform Working Group, 1991, p. 97)

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[8] A report on the national consultations and work-plans was prepared by Hubert Charles, co-ordinator of UNESCO/CARNEID. The report, entitled "Organization of Eastern Caribbean (OECS) Education Reform Strategy: Report on Country Consultations and Workplan," helped to consolidate the work and recommendations of "Foundation for the Future" and lay the groundwork for the third implementation report by George Forde.

Three years later, the implementation report for the reform strategy elaborated this recommendation and stated that "at the heart of the reform is the development of the institutional capacity to formulate, analyse, and implement policy to manage, monitor, co-ordinate and support the reform process nationally and sub-regionally" (Forde, 1994, p. xx; Goodine, 1994). The implementation report at the time identified several interrelated structures, comprising political and senior bureaucrats, to shape the policy environment. These structures evolved into the following:

- The OECS Education Reform Council, the traditional political policy and decision-making body consisting Ministers of Education;
- The OECS Education Technical Committee (OETEC) currently comprising senior education representatives nominated from each OECS country. The OETEC advises on priorities, and provides advice to individual ministers on policy;[9]
- The OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU), responsible for implementation of the OERS strategy and policy as formulated by the Reform Council (see Appendix 4 for full details of each committee).

Each structure is key to the strategic framework and potential policy-making structures. The Education Reform Unit, however, is the most central mechanism because it holds the entire education reform project together, is funded by CIDA, and is the key link with the Canadian/ECERP project (OECS Education Reform Unit and Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 2000). The Unit was first established in 1992, with a director and two assistants. Today, it is fully staffed with a head and a team of education specialists and administrators (Forde, 1994; OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999c).

[9] The composition of the technical education committee is an iteration of national education councils and committees set up for the education reform strategy (Appendix 4).

The education reform strategy, arising out of the consultations in 1990-91, has been in effect for about eight years. Since then, there have been many accomplishments: harmonization of grade names, education legislation, progress on curriculum development, change management workshops, installation of electronic equipment, student surveys, among others (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999a). Politically, none of the OECS Ministers of Education who endorsed the reform strategy are still in their positions. However, most of the senior education officers who worked on the strategy are still employed with their Ministries of Education. Within the donor community, political and economic pressures at home, as well as new crisis areas in Europe requiring funding, have forced donor governments to cut back on their funding for developing countries, including the OECS. However, the role of donor involvement and the traditional project approach, often resulting in duplication of efforts and resources for the OECS, still remains a serious concern. In fact, the process launched by the Working Group has since become a list of projects that have been shared among international donors (Appendix 5).

Some of the intrinsic opportunities for further reflection on the what, the why, the how, the when, and for whom of change, especially the children of the OECS, have become secondary now to issues of management, administration, and funding, aimed at staff in the Ministries of Education and, to a lesser extent, the teaching establishment. Public education and media activities have only recently been implemented (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999a).

Nevertheless, the intervening regional and international changes prompted the OERU to hold a "re-visioning" in mid-1999 to reflect on changes to the reform strategy in the past decade and to fine tune activities for the years ahead (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999b). Interestingly, the visioning meeting was attended by all the OECS senior

educators who formed the Working Group in 1990-91, implying at the very least that an institutional memory of the initial work on the strategy was still in tact.

From my view point, the *Foundation for the Future* and the regional consultative and analytical process it initiated held a promise of forming the basis for a more critical approach to education as a means of change in the OECS, and of setting the stage for a conscious process of reconstruction and decolonization (Fergus, 1996). Hintjens (1995) notes that usually decolonization "is taken to mean the process by which former colonies, or non-self-governing territories, become self-governing states" (p. 28). Furthermore, I hoped that the Education Reform Strategy, which evolved out of that consultative exercise, would highlight clearly how policy and decisions were made in the education sector. However, from what has been presented so far, it was evident that the financial means of moving such a process forward were not readily available to the OECS economies, which historically had been dependent on Britain for financial support. They, therefore, had to rely on the historical practice of turning to external sources, Canada included.

1.3 The Canadian Input – ECERP

1.3.1 Phase One

There are three phases in the Canadian contribution to the OECS education reform strategy. The first includes events prior to 1990-91; the second from 1992 to 1996-97, the implementation stage; and the current phase in which the Canadian Executing Agency (CEA) Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., Montreal has full responsibility for the administration of the Canadian project, the Eastern Caribbean Education Project (ECERP).

Within the donor community, Canada has always been well regarded by Caribbean governments, partly because of because of its high level of aid and its flexible negotiating approach (Sanders, 1991). Over time, the OECS governments, in particular, had developed a good working relationship with the Canadian development staff at the office of the Canadian High Commission in Barbados, which serves the entire Eastern Caribbean. In fact, in the seventies and eighties, the Eastern Caribbean was receiving one of the highest amounts of Canadian foreign aid per capita in the world. The thrust at the time was in high capital infrastructure projects for building airports in the OECS (CIDA. 1992a). At this stage, it could be argued that building long-term capacity was not CIDA's focus. However, by the late eighties, based on a major policy review, CIDA's emphasis shifted to human-resource development, focus on the poorest countries and decentralization (North South Institute, 1995; CIDA, 1987; Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defense, 1982).[10]

Until the late 1980s, key decisions about project selection, design, and funding were made at CIDA's central offices in the Ottawa-Hull area in Canada. However, with the Canadian policy decision on decentralisation, CIDA's overseas programs in 1988-89 moved daily decision making from the Caribbean Regional Program, previously at CIDA's head office, to the development office in Barbados. Consequently, CIDA now had expanded staff capacity, including education specialists in Barbados. For the first time, local Caribbean personnel, with similar training, were added to CIDA's decentralized development program in Barbados. The move towards decentralization made development assistance available through different means. Specifically, instead of being at CIDA headquarters, the (expanded) technical resources were now in the region. This theoretically allowed for a Caribbean knowledge-based approach to the working relationship with OECS governments and educators. Decentralization also allowed

[10] The major changes are contained in the policy document, *Sharing our Future (1987)*. See also North-

Canada to be directly involved, from the start, with the thinking and work behind the OECS education reform strategy. More importantly, it paid for the consultative process of the Working Group, which led to the production of *Foundation for the Future*.

The issue of sustainability also became a key issue in this new policy era. At the time of decentralization, Canada had been providing project assistance for improving education systems, in general, in the region. Of these, the most significant was the Canada Training Awards Project (CTAP).[11] Briefly, CTAP provided long-term scholarship and short-term training from 1981 to 1996, to the OECS countries, in all areas except education. Other education projects, such as those run by the Organization for Co-operation in Overseas Development (OCOD) and the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF), provided issue-specific project support in teacher training to select OECS countries.[12] The work of these agencies, however, was not co-ordinated and lacked an overall structural approach to educational needs and priorities, already identified by regional studies as well as CIDA evaluations conducted during that period (Alan Etherington & Associates, 1987; E.T. Jackson and Associates, Ltd., 1987).

Such practices ultimately affect sustainability (Alan Etherington & Associates, 1987; E.T. Jackson and Associates, Ltd., 1987; McIntryre, 1997). However, it was through their

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South Institute, (1995).

[11] The Canada Training Awards Project (CTAP) was a CIDA project with the OECS, having its roots in earlier CIDA mechanisms for training and scholarships. CTAP actually commenced in 1981 and for the first five years was managed through the Canadian High Commission in Barbados. The ARA Consulting Group was contracted by CIDA as the Canadian Executing Agency (CEA) from 1986-1996. Between 1986-1996, with the objective of promoting sustained economic growth and development by increasing the regional base of skilled human-resources, CTAP provided over 1,000 awards to individuals for long-term studies in the Caribbean and Canada leading to degrees, diplomas, and certificates; and support for over 12,000 individuals to participate in short-term training and skills upgrading activities in the sectors of agriculture, tourism, education, and small business development (ARA Consulting Group, 1996).

[12] OCOD and the CTF offered summer training programs to a selection of OECS countries. Their work was not co-ordinated and at times duplicated training and resources. The CTF was eventually phased out. OCOD has also now ceased its operations in the region. Another project, the UWI institutional strengthening project, administered by the UWI, was the first to be handled entirely by a Caribbean institution.

experiences with CTAP and the other Canadian-funded education programs that CIDA's decentralized development staff now gained the insights and experiences that fed into deliberations with the OECS' Ministries of Education about creating an education reform strategy.

Linked to the issue of sustainability was the emerging international development paradigm of capacity development. At the time, the term "capacity development" was evolving. Morgan (1993) noted then at a series of CIDA workshops that the "older term *capacity building* like its antecedent *institution building* implies an infrastructure mentality and the putting in place of new structures. Some development groups use the term *capacity enhancement* to emphasize the importance of improving local structures and capabilities that already exist" (p. 7). CIDA's interventions at policy levels, for international assistance, at this point therefore, started to relate more to capacity development.

The other significant policy element was gender. In 1984, CIDA issued women in development (WID) policy guidelines aimed at the full participation of women as equal partners in the development process (CIDA, 1992b; Annette Isaac Consulting, 1988). The term "women" was eventually replaced by the term "gender," generally speaking, to more accurately denote the male/female dimension of social relationships. Gender is thus seen as a cross-cutting issue, affecting all CIDA's project and program activities. As many reports have noted since then, CIDA has had mixed success with full integration of its gender guidelines. Determining factors include background and skills in gender issues from its staff, consultants, and executing agencies both in Canada and overseas, cultural sensitivities, political commitment, funding and so on (ARA Consulting Group, 1997; E.T. Jackson and Associates, 1987; North-South Institute, 1995; Pat Ellis Associates & Annette Isaac Consulting, 1988).

In the Caribbean, the gender issue was seen to be quite relevant to the situation in education, albeit with a different twist. For the past decade, it was clear from school exam results at the primary and secondary levels that girls were outperforming boys. One result is that in recent years throughout the Caribbean, more girls than boys have been entering secondary schools (Education Reform Working Group, 1991; Ellis, 1986a; Harewood, 2000).

Despite the importance of gender in the education sector, it has not had a significant bearing on the elaboration of the OECS education reform strategy. CIDA-ECERP project documents include guidelines for developing a gender strategy (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996). To date, however, there has not been a clear-cut approach to the gender issue from the CIDA-ECERP project (Perris, 1998). Some of the determining factors just mentioned account for this situation.

Finally, there were the questions of ownership and leadership. From the very beginning, the OECS governments took the position that Caribbean people would develop the education reform strategy. CIDA agreed with this view, which resulted in the all-Caribbean composition of the Working Group. The timing was right under the decentralized program for the education reform strategy to be a totally Caribbean effort, albeit funded by CIDA. It was an historic opportunity to lessen some of the inequalities in aid relationships between richer and poorer countries.

1.3.2 Phase Two

When *Foundation of the Future* was completed, CIDA's Regional Program, both in Barbados and in Hull (Canada), considered it a thorough assessment of the OECS's education system (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996a). The report had realistically addressed

basic underlying problems; namely, the need to improve the quality of the management and the delivery of education (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996a). CIDA's Caribbean Regional Program further encouraged the Working Group's proposed co-ordinated approach to strengthen human-resource development, which was widely viewed as being crucial to any further development of the sub-region. CIDA also noted that "while many educational projects have been undertaken in the Eastern Caribbean, none have addressed education reform on a comprehensive sectoral and sub-regional level" (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996a, p.1). The two main features of the education reform strategy, human-resource development and institutional strengthening, were also part of CIDA's Caribbean regional strategy. CIDA's focus on greater self-reliance, capacity development, and sustainable development could be accommodated within a more integrated regional approach as outlined by *Foundation for the Future* (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996b).

CIDA's endorsement of *Foundation for the Future* in 1992 resulted in an agreement with the OECS governments to implement the Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project (ECERP). ECERP would be a formal project structure between the OECS and CIDA, built around the idea of the strategic framework described in *Foundation for the Future*, and later re-articulated in the implementation report. Its purpose was to strengthen the capacity of the Eastern Caribbean states to plan and implement education reform through sub-regional co-operation. Its goal was to improve the quality of the human-resource base for development in the Eastern Caribbean. The project was expected to last approximately seven years. Projected outputs were:

- strengthened sub-regional policy and decision-making capacity;
- established sub-regional co-ordinating structures and systems;
- implemented educational reform initiatives;
- promotion and protection of OECS leadership and ownership of the reform strategy (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996a).

It is necessary to add here that the wording of this last input does not show up in later project documents. However, in discussion with project officials, it is clear that the intent of the OECS taking full ownership of the reform has not changed (OECS Education Reform Unit and Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1998, 2000).

By agreeing to ECERP, at one level, CIDA was providing the tools to help establish and strengthen an environment for developing the substance, data, and knowledge for the kinds of policies and decisions that OECS officials would need to guide the reform into the next century. This was a shift from the traditional project approach characterized by CTAP and OCOD. However, ECERP's project objectives and outputs still had to be shaped into concrete activities. With the momentum of decentralization, CIDA and the OECS continued to draw up plans to have ECERP implemented in the shortest possible time. The first stage was to establish the OECS Education Reform Unit to serve as the administrative and implementation body. The OERU was established at the OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia, in January 1993, with financial support from a CIDA contribution agreement with the OECS. This agreement funded the operations for the OERU and provided support in the early stages of the reform project (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996b).

In the midst of the planning for a detailed elaboration of ECERP, however, Canada cancelled its decentralization policy, meaning that the decision-making process in Barbados was now fully returned to CIDA's head offices in Hull, Canada. Changes in headquarters staff in Hull around this time and eventually in Barbados, a lengthy project-approval process by CIDA,[13] followed by another lengthy process of signing the official

[13] The Canadian government's procedure for granting aid is noteworthy in this context. Bilateral projects of this size were usually handed over to Canadian Executing Agencies, (CEA) through a tendering process.

Memorandum of Understanding by the OECS governments (with CIDA) meant the *full* ECERP, as it is now, did not get off the ground until 1996. Two different points of view emerge from interview data on the implications of the protracted process, for the *full* implementation of ECERP, in particular to the education reform process overall.[14] For some, it meant that the idea of reform was not fully cemented, soon enough, in the minds or practices of the teaching establishment, and the sub-regional population at large. For others, it was understood as part of the systemic challenges of financing change with foreign funding. Through this period, however, it must be noted that the Education Reform Unit was functioning, albeit with limited staff capacity.

In terms of the structure itself, ECERP was explicitly envisioned and planned as a dynamic partnership involving the Canadian Executing Agency and the OECS Education Reform Unit created mainly for this endeavor (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996b). In this arrangement, the OECS, through its Secretariat, including the Reform Unit, became responsible for implementing all the activities of the *strategic framework* (OECS Education Reform Unit and Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 2000).[15] Canada-CIDA, through the CEA, would provide assistance in daily management through financial assistance and providing Canadian expertise in education, as requested by the OECS. Implementation in the OECS case meant taking the leadership (mainly through Caribbean personnel) and looking after the daily administration and co-ordination of ECERP activities in the OECS countries (Appendix 6). Canadian management meant assisting in developing annual work plans, lining up the appropriate Canadian specialist resources to implement the

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This process can take up to 12 months or more. In this case it took approximately ten months to select and contract Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., Montreal.

[14] Other donor projects were being implemented in the meantime. However, ECERP is the project that is most central to this phase of the reform project given its funding of key activities discussed in this section.

[15] These activities target strategies 62-65. See Appendix 6 (OECS Education Reform Unit and Tecsult Eduplus Inc. 2000).

work-plan as needed, and overall funding (Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 1996b). ECERP was designed for seven years at a cost of approximately $12 million Canadian.

In view of the earlier issues raised about self reliance, sustainability, and capacity building, the OECS and the Canadians worked out a joint formula for cost-sharing. The OECS share of administrative costs for funding ECERP would gradually increase to 100 percent in the last two years. Canada, however, would continue to fund the project initiatives. That Canada would have such a central role in funding the reform strategy was not a *fait accompli* and was subject to deliberations on the part of the OECS. The basis for the joint formula came out of national consultations especially at the ministerial level. Writing about the formation of an education reform unit and its value to the independence of the reform process, Charles (1992) cautioned:

> from information available from the Central Secretariat it seems clear that January 1993 has been targeted as the formal commencement point for the reform programme. In view of the importance of the task of preparing for its commencement, it is crucial that the Unit be operationalized preferably before agency representatives arrive in the region for project identification and preliminary formulation. Ideally, the Unit should be financed by OECS governments from the outset, rather than being a component of the Reform Programme. However, if is not possible, OECS governments should commit themselves to taking on this crucial responsibility as soon as possible. (p. 22)

A unique feature of the ECERP initiative was the establishment of a structure of OECS counterparts. For every issue identified through ECERP, the Ministries of Education appointed one or more of their staff, with *specialization* in the subject area, to be the contact person in each island for that activity. To date this mechanism is linked to the ECERP project only. Whether this structure will be used for all donor projects is still to be explored.

1.3.3 Phase Three

Another important element in CIDA's association with the OECS education reform strategy was the Canadian government's more recent policy emphasis on results-based management (RBM). Essentially CIDA and other departments had to show "developmental impact results as a measure of cost-effective government spending to justify Canadian tax dollars going to CIDA-funded projects" (Nelles, 1999, p. 812). It was in this policy context since 1996 that the CEA, Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., from its offices in Montreal, has been fully responsible for the management of the Canadian financial contribution. CIDA-Hull plays a monitoring role in that it meets with the CEA and the Education Reform Unit to discuss payment schedules, approve work plans, and proposed studies. Likewise, the development staff in Barbados plays an advisory role, keeps the Reform Unit up to date on CIDA's regulations and policies, and attends meetings of the OECS Education Reform Council.

1.3.4 Donor Collaboration

The OECS governments sought the contribution of all donors once *Foundation for the Future* was completed and strategies outlined. Interview data reveal that initially there was consultation with other donors on links with CIDA in Barbados as well as through OECS Secretariat as part of national consultations. That consultation has not fully evolved yet as a strategic part of the reform effort. However, the donor community does have a stake regionally and nationally in the strategies recommended by the Education Reform Working Group. The projects run by the European Union (EU) and the German Government (GTZ) are housed in the same premises as the ECERP. The Head of the Education Reform Unit generally oversees the work of these donors.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study is significant for several reasons. While the Eastern Caribbean has had a history of educational reforms from early childhood to adult education, developing suitable *sub-regional* policy and decision-making environment is a new activity for development and education planners alike. I knew that little research had been undertaken on the specific aspects of policy and decision-making environments in the education sector in the OECS. I felt, therefore, that research into the present sub-regional policy and decision-making mechanisms guiding the education reform strategy would illuminate the possibilities, challenges, and limitations of constructing suitable and sustainable sub-regional policy and decision-making structures and environments for education.

Another important significance is that donor participation, while acknowledged as essential in the financing of new initiatives in education in small dependent countries, has received little systematic and in-depth research attention from the academic community. This study intends to start filling that gap by examining the historical, social, and power relationships between formerly colonized countries and the strong industrialized nations such as Britain, and how the structural underpinnings of that colonial relationship have extended into the practice of donor assistance between the international community and the sub-region.

This kind of inquiry has value for the education and development community in Canada and the Caribbean. The OECS education reform strategy is not only about changes in one sector, but affects regional strategy for healthy and sustainable economies capable of meeting the economic needs and social expectations of present and future generations. The kinds of issues explored in this thesis can add much to an understanding of the range

of educational institutional resources needed to further the sub-region's development objectives.

1.5 Objectives

My main objectives were to better understand the make up and dynamics of the climate for educational policy making in the OECS; the implications of the involvement of the CIDA-ECERP project in those processes; and what this latter input meant for ownership and leadership of the reform and, ultimately, for genuine educational change in view of the region's colonial history.

This study, therefore, proposed to examine the participation of foreign donors in long-term education reform in the OECS. Specifically, it seeks to investigate how Canada's input into strengthening and supporting the key policy and decision-making structures of the education reform project can affect the region's expectations for a more indigenous and relevant education system. The dynamics between aid and sovereignty are also of critical importance, given the Eastern Caribbean's history of colonialism and dependency.

1.6 Research Questions

My research questions evolved out of my personal interest, born out of actual work experience in the OECS, in understanding how policies and decisions were made in the education sector. The wording of the questions was finally refined after my major fieldwork phase in 1999. The reality of a long-term OECS education project presented the opportunity to investigate these concerns in depth. The significant contribution of Canada created a further dimension in the exploration of sovereign aspects of ownership and leadership in post-colonial states in the context of policy and decision making.

Drawing on the theoretical roots of dependency theory, the following research questions guided the analysis of my study:

- To what extent does the work of educational policy-making bodies of the OECS influence on-going design and implementation of its current education reform strategy?
- To what extent has the involvement of Canada, through ECERP, influenced the policy and decision-making processes of the education reform project?
- What are the implications of the Canadian contribution for promoting and protecting OECS ownership and leadership in policy and decision-making aspects of the education reform strategy?

Embedded in these questions are issues of the institutional capacity for policy and decision making, including the human, technical, and financial resources dedicated to this process. The knowledge/research capacity and infrastructure are also key elements, as are the political, economic, including foreign aid, and cultural factors shaping and informing policy and decision making in the public sector.

1.7 Limitations of Study

While I will draw on experiences and activities at national and CARICOM levels, my primary focus is on the *sub-regional* grouping of the OECS. As much as I seek to investigate the historical, international, and dependency factors affecting policy and decision making in education in the OECS, there are limits to this study. The first relates to geography. The analysis is concerned with the *sub-regional* realities and challenges of education reform in the OECS.

A related point is my selection of countries for the study. Time and resources did not permit a visit to each of the nine OECS countries. From experience, I wanted to avoid

the "quick research" method, covering as many islands as possible, within a limited time frame and focusing solely on project-specific details. Instead, I chose to concentrate in more depth on St. Lucia and Grenada, countries which were known to be making headway with the reform strategy, and which were in close proximity to each other.

Given the wider regional and international nature of the OECS education reform project, other field sites in the Caribbean included Trinidad and Tobago (my research base for the major six-month field phase), Barbados, and, in Canada, the Ottawa–Hull region, the headquarters for CIDA and other interviewees, and finally Montreal, where the Canadian Executing Agency was located. Sampling methods and rationales are discussed further in Chapter 2.

My study is first and foremost geared towards policy and decision making in education in the OECS. At the same time, in view of Canada's financial contribution, the aspect of donor assistance, with all its intricacies and contradictions, cannot be overlooked. However, these merit a study in themselves, and have been well addressed in international development and comparative development literature. Issues from the international donor debate, especially as they relate to Canada, will be included only to the extent that they shed light on the primary points of policy and decision making in education in the OECS.

Although my main interest is exploratory, a broader objective is to add to the emerging body of qualitative research and knowledge on policy and decision making in education in the OECS. I do not want to generalize even to the wider Caribbean, although I understand that, given the similarity of history and society, many of the findings could be applicable to other CARICOM countries. As such, the study could help to produce the kind of textured knowledge that could provide new reference points and analytical tools

for those engaged in educational planning. In this regard, my inquiry could also be useful to development planners in Canada and to other foreign funding institutions with programs in the Eastern Caribbean.

1.8 Terminology

1.8.1 Education Reform

While the OECS education reform strategy and the ECERP have been presented in detail, there still remains the task of establishing working definitions for the key concepts of education reform, policy and decision making. There is rarely a consensus in the literature on a common definition for these terms. It is important to note that reform can have a negative connotation, especially in education. In South Africa for example, education reform was synonymous with the discriminatory policy of apartheid, resulting in different systems of schooling for whites, blacks, and other groups (Mandela, 1994). Authors like Fagerlind and Saha (1989) suggest that though the term "reform" itself is frequently used in a "vague and diffuse way," when placed in the context of educational reform, it usually refers to a thorough change for the better in the structure of the educational system of a country (p. 145; Boich, 1990; Camps, 1997; Henchey, 1990). Speaking from the African experience, Obanya (1989) states that it is not always clear what is meant by educational reform, "except that every government has sought to modify the inherited colonial system of education" (p. 333). Critical theorists, on the other hand, like Paulo Freire (1996), who speaks from a history of colonialism in Brazil, see education as a liberating process. Education can have a "problem-solving" nature in which "men develop their power to perceive critically, *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (p. 64).

Definitions of education reform usually take their full meaning and life from the specific contexts. In the case of the OECS reform strategy, the Education Reform Working Group (1991) did not so much define reform as describe aspects of it. The Group noted that: "the intentions of the OECS Ministers of Education seemed to have focused on the need for a comprehensive, integrated, long term collective approach to education within the context of national, sub-regional, regional and global imperatives" (p. 2). Because this was a regional strategy for education reform, the idea of "harmonisation" also formed part of the description. The Working Group explained that:

> Central to the reform of education within the OECS is the harmonization of the education systems of the member states. By moving towards a common system of education the sub-region would be positioning itself to benefit from economies of scale, more efficient deployment of talent and freer internal movement... pooling of resources in the effecting of some critical educational development functions in such areas as planning, research, curriculum development, testing and evaluation (Education Reform Working Group. (1991, p. 71)

Although clarity may not be the hallmark of education reform, I concur with the definitions of Weiler (1984) that "reform, while subject to a variety of meanings, is basically part of an agenda of change. In the case of educational reform, it represents that agenda to the extent that the interdependence between educational changes and changes in the rest of society is recognized and acknowledged" (p. 447).

1.8.2 Policy and Decision Making

I will use the terms "policy making" and "decision making" separately in this study, although in theory and in practice they are often used interchangeably (Debeauvais, 1990; Rist, 1994; Yeakey, 1983). Briefly, the art and practice of policy and decision making are not new (Weiss, 1992). These practices have mushroomed since the last World War, stimulated by a vast growth of public and private institutions developed specifically for these purposes in North America and Europe. Such detailed development of the

institutional machinery for policy and decisions, however, was not equaled in the developing world (Brown, 1996; Cohn and Rossmiller, 1987; Debeauvais, 1990; Rondinelli, Middleton, and Verspoor, 1990). Some of the reasons derive from a restricted economic base, low incomes, high population density, and the accompanying competing demands for basic needs, which leaves little room for the financial, research, and institutional resources needed to develop a strong policy environment. The use of policy to guide decisions at all levels in all sectors is now a firmly entrenched practice worldwide, and virtually every document dealing with reform is usually framed by some kind of policy directive.

Similar to education reform, the definition of policy, especially "public policy" is an umbrella term. It can be used to describe and define choices, decisions, and adoptions made either at the public or private levels (Laswell, 1951). Issues of power and control are frequently couched in the term "policy." For example, Downey (1988) observes that "a policy is an authoritative determination, by a governing authority, of a society's intents and priorities and an authoritative allocation of resources" (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Haddad and Demsky, 1994). Ghosh (1996) similarly states that policies made by bureaucrats and administrators are "formal means of implementing and directing change in society and its institutions" (p. 69).

There are also loose definitions of policy. Brown (1996), for instance, states that in theory, "a policy is a solution to an existing or anticipated problem" (p.11). Yet, he continues, "all too often, somebody's 'good idea' becomes policy. Careful and detailed analysis of problems is considered time wasting, given very low priority, or by passed altogether. The result: policy failure, with the accompanying waste of scarce resources" (p.12). Bringing the donor perspective into the picture, Goodine (1994) observes that

"each player has an agenda – sometimes called a 'policy' and the net result is confusion and inefficiencies" (p. 8).

I wanted a more pragmatic approach for policy making, which I saw as a systematic building up of ideas and decisions, and renewal and revisions of these ideas and decisions, in terms of what does and does not work and what doesn't work over time (Brown, 1996). Choices arising out of this on-going process come, as Yeakey (1983) contends, to be adopted finally as policy (Anderson, 1990; Gelpi, 1985; Thourson-Jones. 1982). Decision making at this point, based on this policy-making process, would then involve the "choice of an alternative from among a series of compelling alternatives" (Yeakey, 1983, p. 3; Debeauvais. 1990; Rist, 1994). Implicit in this definition is the understanding that there are different kinds of decisions. Some have to be taken immediately, in a crisis or disaster, while others require more thoughtful research and consultation. This latter process is what I consider an element important in policy making, leading to the decision-making process in the OECS.

In relation to the OECS education reform strategy, the need to develop and, by implication, define more clearly the nature and work of policy and decision making in the OECS is the task assigned to the *strategic framework*, funded by Canada, through the ECERP. However, within the context of the reform strategy, there is little substantive discussion on definitions, either of policy or decision making (Thomas, 1996). I would argue therefore that, based on the foregoing definition, much of what is described as "policy" making in the OECS is really decision making.

1.9 Organization of Study

Chapter 1 provides the background for the study and research topic, focusing specifically on the evolution of the OECS education reform strategy and ECERP. This background provides initial insights into the policy and decision-making environment, institutions, and other factors in education in the OECS. The research questions and other details of the study are included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 deals with the research design, methodology, data collection and analysis. The methodological presentation addresses qualitative research, and its application to education reform, policy and decision making in the Eastern Caribbean. General definitions of qualitative research and my rationales for selecting this approach are key issues in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the socio-historical characteristics that have shaped present-day education systems and structures in the OECS. In particular, I examine regional, social, political, economic, and international donor factors in the OECS.

Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework of the study. I analyze the applicability of dependency theory for the OECS. The challenge is that while these small islands are still very much in a "dependent" mode, the work that flourished so well by Caribbean writers in the sixties and seventies about Caribbean dependency, simply petered out in the eighties to become almost non-existent in the nineties. Yet all the manifestations of dependency development are still there. Chapter 4 therefore revisits notions of dependency and its continuing potential for analyzing educational developments in the OECS.

Chapter 5 analyses, in detail, key issues in policy and decision making in the OECS, drawing especially on interview, project, and literature data. Chapter 6 summarizes the research findings and makes suggestions for future work.

1.10 Summary

The Canadian-OECS arrangement through the ECERP represented a turning point in the historical Canadian investment in human resources in the sub-region. ECERP was an attempt to move away from the traditional model of short-term and long-term training of the CTAP and OCOD projects. The education reform strategy provided the opportunity for Canada to shift to an intellectual approach, so to speak, by investing this time in the skills the OECS themselves identified to strengthen their human resource base. The ECERP model attempted to do this by focusing on the strategic framework and providing financial support for activities to strengthen policy and decision-making mechanisms. These included financial support of the Education Reform unit, change management, education and curriculum workshops, electronic management systems, student surveys, public education campaigns, and more.

However, project documents also reveal that both the OECS and CIDA were well aware of the need to break the cycle of project dependency. Establishing a process therefore to take full ownership of the Canadian funded ECERP initiatives was an objective and output fully agreed to by both parties from the very beginning. Balancing the need for full autonomy as independent states, while recognizing the many limitations of size and dependent economies, is a challenges that confronts the OECS perpetually when dealing with donor communities with their own agendas. Against the background of the Canadian ECERP, the rest of this study will analyze the implications of these competing

realities for achieving genuine change in the sub-region's education system, as well as lessening the burdens of dependency inherited from centuries of colonial occupation.

Chapter 2. Research Design and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

With the details of the OECS education reform strategy and the CIDA-ECERP project before us in chapter one, this chapter will deal with the research design, focusing on fieldwork, rationale for my research sites, sampling methods and procedures, the methodological arguments, and data collection and analysis.

In terms of the research design, it is useful to restate the research questions. These focused on three key issues: the extent to which the work of educational policy-making bodies of the OECS influences ongoing design and implementation of the current education reform strategy; the extent to which the involvement of Canada, through the CIDA-ECERP, influences the policy and decision-making processes of the education reform project; and the implications of the Canadian contribution for promoting and protecting OECS ownership and leadership in policy and decision-making aspects of the education reform strategy.

As regards the methodology, in this chapter I take the point of view that a qualitative approach is most appropriate to analyzing issues of educational policy and decision making in the OECS, as an alternative to traditional quantitative approaches. Qualitative methods also work well with theoretical frameworks like dependency theory, which focus on in-depth examination of historical and cultural forces that impact on education systems in post-colonial societies.

2.2 Research Design

2.2.1 Preliminary Fieldwork

From my work in the 1980s, I had developed a strong network of colleagues and resource persons in education and related areas, both in the Caribbean and in Canada. The initial process of shaping the research questions about the policy and decision-making environment in education and the role of a foreign donor like Canada began informally through phone calls in Canada and in the Caribbean to colleagues who worked on ECERP and were familiar with Caribbean education reform projects. From this first phase, together with my own knowledge of the region and literature search, I developed the research proposal. This period lasted approximately twelve months (Appendix 7).

2.2.2 Gaining Access

The next stage related to gaining access. Although I knew the OECS thoroughly, I realized that I was facing what other qualitative writers have described as the "insider/outsider" phenomenon (Burgess, 1984; Carspecken, 1996; Louisy, 1993; Maguire, 1997). I was an insider in the sense that I had a common shared knowledge and experience of the region, but an outsider in that my research agenda, although personal, was shaped from my work as a Canadian education and development specialist. Furthermore, as I was no longer associated with CIDA's Caribbean program, I did not have direct access to those officially involved in the ECERP project either in Canada or in the Caribbean. And, since this group was critical to the interview process, the issue of gaining access to them had to be addressed before any field work could take place.

I therefore approached this problem from two fronts. First, I went through the protocols of informing the institutions involved. I met with staff of the CIDA's Caribbean program

at the time, to advise them about my research. This formally cleared the way for introductions to the Canadian Executing Agency in Montreal, who in turn referred me to the Education Reform Unit in St. Lucia.

2.2.3 Fieldwork

The next step was to undertake a period of fieldwork in the OECS, for I knew that was one important way to gain a first-hand knowledge of the issues I wanted to research (Erickson, 1986). The fieldwork was subsequently conducted in two phases: two preliminary field visits in 1998 and the major data gathering work in 1999. The objectives of the first set of visits were:

- to meet with many of those who had worked on ECERP/or were familiar with education reform matters in the OECS;
- to widen and update my knowledge on current education matters in the CARICOM region;
- to conduct preliminary library research at the University of the West Indies;
- to decide on the location of my research base.

During the first visit in 1998, I spent one week each in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively. I had intended to visit the Education Reform Unit in St. Lucia during this March trip. However, at that time the OECS Secretariat was in the process of hiring a new Head for the Unit. As a result, this part of the trip was postponed until November 1998, after the Head was appointed.

This initial fieldwork phase was critical to understanding first hand the status of the projects, and concerns about education reform and the ECERP project from the OECS and the wider regional population. I was thus able to adjust the research questions, data collection instruments, and travel schedules and lay the groundwork for the second major data gathering phase in a way that would not have been possible had I remained in Ottawa. The second phase took place between May and October, 1999. On my second

field trip, I spent five weeks in St. Lucia and Grenada, between June and July, ten days in Barbados in September, and the rest of the time in Trinidad and Tobago.

2.2.4 Questionnaire Design

The first period of fieldwork was also instrumental in my decision to use a question format for the research issues, as opposed to hypothetical statements. Because I was breaking new ground, I felt that the question approach would allow greater latitude for exploring the multi-faceted dimensions of policy and decision making in education in the OECS (Aronowitz, 1992; Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997; Louisy, 1993; Stake 1995). Hypothetical statements, I felt, would lock me into a more rigid line of questioning and block opportunities for a more open and free exchange with interviewees. Through my initial contacts with the key resource persons I tested out variations of the questions. After the field trip in 1998, I eventually settled on the final parameters and wording of the questionnaire.

The research questions were then used to develop a list of open-ended questions, which served as an interview guide (Appendix 8). The guide was an integral part of the formal taped interviews. The first two formal interviews served to test the guide. This was helpful in briefing the remainder of the interviewees about the length of the interview, as well as reconfirming again the validity of the research investigation. It was also used as the basis of discussion for the informal interviews. In hosting the informal meetings, through the guide, I would have a structure within which to explore the wider regional contexts of education reform, policy, and decisions making and so minimize the distortions and variations that a completely ad hoc or unstructured approach could create. At the same time, I was not hindered if the informal interviewee wanted to comment on one point in depth, as frequently happened.

Essentially the guide sought to elicit opinions, feelings, and experiences within the context of policy and decision making in the OECS, the nature of the Canadian contribution, and aspects of OECS ownership and leadership of its entire education reform strategy from 1991. Moreover, given the dialectical interplay between aid and sovereignty, questions to this effect were at the end of the guide to capture interviewees' reflections on these issues in the light of their comments.

2.2.5 Sampling Procedures

2.2.5.1 Countries

Drawing on the information I had gained from the preliminary phase of research, and given the specific context of the ECERP project, and the fact that I was familiar with many of those who were involved in the overall education reform strategy, I elected to use a purposeful sampling approach both for selecting countries and interviewees. Patton (1990) notes that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p.169).

One of the very real challenges with any regional project in the OECS is that one is dealing with nine countries, all connected by sea. In setting up the parameters of the research design, I knew that time and resources did not permit me to visit each of the nine OECS countries. I chose to concentrate in more depth on St. Lucia and Grenada in the Windward chain. From my consulting experiences, I had come to appreciate the value of spending more time in fewer countries. I also wanted to avoid the "quick research" method, of covering as many islands as possible within a limited time frame, usually two or three days, and focus solely on project-specific details. This pattern of work often

resulted in hurriedly collected data and missed appointments. By selecting two islands, I hoped to avoid this hurried approach, and to concentrate on exploring the research questions in more depth. At the same time, I realized that by not covering all the OECS countries, I would miss some of the obvious and subtle differences among the countries in terms of their styles and procedures for policy and decision making. However, I attempted to address this limitation by including in the formal and informal interviewee pools, persons who had knowledge about policy and decision making mechanisms of the sub-region as a whole. As well, I had identified a few key resource persons who could fill in gaps about the sub-regional mechanisms in the islands not visited. Project and literature sources also provided relevant information.

To return to the selection of islands, St. Lucia was the first and logical choice because it was the site of the Education Reform Unit, which also housed the ECERP and other donor projects. It was also in easy reach of the OECS Secretariat, the main sub-regional institution with overall responsibility for the Reform Unit and the ECERP project. It was therefore easy to meet key project personnel there. St. Lucia and Grenada were both known to be making headway with the ECERP project and many of the education reform initiatives in general. What distinguished Grenada, however, was that politically it offered a chance to see what lessons could be learned from its own brief history with a revolutionary government, and whether trying to transform colonial structures had informed discussion on the education reform process at the regional level.

The rationale for including Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados in the sample related to the wider regional and international nature of the OECS education reform project. My research base for the major fieldwork in 1999 was the School of Education at the St. Augustine Campus, at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago. Even

though important information was going to be collected from interviews, mostly at the core OECS sites of St. Lucia and Grenada, rich data also existed in documents in libraries at the UWI. These included Caribbean education and development journals, and special collections on the OECS, not obtainable outside the region or even in the OECS. As well, access to the Faculty at the School of Education in St. Augustine widened the scope for understanding the current regional context of policy and decision making in education in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago was also affordable and central for travel to other research sites (see Map).[1]

Barbados, on the other hand, has an especially close relationship with the OECS for most regional activities. The Faculty of Education at the Cave Hill Campus of the UWI offers a B.A. in education to OECS nationals. Furthermore, the OECS governments over the years regularly consult staff members at the Faculty at this School of Education on many aspects of the education reform process.[2] Meeting with university staff therefore in Barbados was another key part of my data collection strategy, not just for direct interviewing but also to understand more clearly the role of the UWI in the education sector in the OECS.[3] Finally, given the Canadian dimension, the rest of the research was

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[1] Financial considerations are always part of the work in the OECS. I had originally considered Barbados as the primary location, but on the first set of visits in 1998, the costs of establishing a base for a few months were prohibitive, likewise for St. Lucia. Being originally from Trinidad and Tobago, I was able to secure free accommodation in Trinidad, which meant that the expense of actually living in the Eastern Caribbean had been eliminated. That consideration in effect allowed me to stay longer in St. Lucia and Grenada and make the trip to Barbados.

[2] One member of the Faculty of Education or a related institution, the Tertiary Learning Institute, attends the Education Reform council meetings. UWI is also the Executing Agency for the British project in the reform strategy.

[3] Barbados is also the main location of other foreign donors, who have contributed to the OECS education reform project. The Caribbean Development Bank, which has given funds to the OECS for the reform project, is located in Barbados. Time did not permit full visits to these institutions. However, information on the current roles of these organizations was obtained through interviews and project documents.

carried out in Ottawa-Hull, and Montreal, the headquarters for CIDA, the Canadian Executing Agency.

2.2.5.2 Interviewees

The same process used for selecting the sample countries was used for identifying interviewees. I wanted to get a range of perspectives from persons from the OECS who had been, previously or currently, directly associated with the OECS education reform project, as well as with the ECERP project. To construct the list of interviewees, especially for the OECS, I drew on suggestions provided by staff from the Education Reform Unit and the Canadian Executing Agency. The issue of gaining access was also crucial in this part of the research, for, without the introductions from the OERU in particular, I would not have been able to access key ECERP resource persons as easily. However, it is important to note that there was no authority relationship between the Education Reform Unit, the CEA, and the interviewees they recommended. I made the final decisions about the interviewee sample, and this was often determined by people's availability, or whether they were in the country.

The formal sample pool eventually included 27 individuals: 18 from the OECS, one each from Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, and seven from Canada. The need to protect the identity of formal interviewees in small countries such as the OECS where people know each other well, even just by a description, is a challenge well known to researchers in this region (Louisy, 1993). However, it is also important to note that the responses I received from the formal interviewees came from a wide range of backgrounds and positions such as permanent secretaries, chief executive officers, education analysts, curriculum specialists, retired cabinet ministers and senior officials, principals of colleges

and schools, teachers, financial officers, development personnel and consultants, and university academics.

The pool of informal interviewees was much wider, 34 altogether, reflecting a similar mix of skills. The selection process, however, was more fluid in that I drew first on my previously established network of primary informants in the Caribbean and in Canada to set up the informal group. To select the rest of the interviewees, an "on-the-spot criterion-sampling" approach was used, drawing on suggestions from this network, and the formal interviewees, as the fieldwork progressed (Burgess, 1984; Patton, 1990). Outside the formal and informal interviewee groups, there were several more opportunities for spontaneous meetings. Two such examples were a group session interview with high school students in St. Lucia, and informal visits to a few schools in Grenada.

2.3 Research Methodology

2.3.1 A Qualitative Perspective

The field of qualitative research has been largely dominated by North American and European writers who have shaped the epistemological and ontological developments in that field (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1995, 1997). Nevertheless, the methods and techniques of qualitative research are such that they can be universally applied. This segment, therefore, focuses on the salient features of the qualitative research useful to analyzing the dimensions of policy and decision making in the OECS and, in the process, contributing to the growth of new knowledge in the region around these issues (Louisy, 1993).

The term "qualitative" has been increasingly used in the educational research community (Eisner, 1991) as a methodological approach, and in some areas of social science, as the dominant approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Hopkin, 1992). Miller (1997) contends that qualitative research is an empirical exercise involving the "close study of everyday life in diverse social contexts" (p. 3). In this sense, she argues, the main objectives of qualitative research are to "describe and analyze both the processes through which social realities are constructed, and the social relationships through which people are connected to one another" (p. 3). Practically speaking, Patton (1990) suggests that a qualitative method of inquiry is one that "refers to those research strategies that allow the researcher to gain first hand knowledge of the problem and to study selected issues in depth and in detail" (p.13; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a; Chen, 1997; Merriam, 1988; Spindler, 1987). Carspecken (1996) takes the position that "qualitative social research investigates human phenomena that do not lend themselves, by their very nature, to quantitative methods" (p. 3). Indeed, one of the first points qualitative researchers often have to address is the qualitative-quantitative paradigm debate.

Historically, qualitative research has had to compete for recognition and acceptance in the research world. Denzin and Lincoln (1994a) believe that the positivist[4] and post-positivist traditions linger over qualitative research. At one point, they contend, qualitative research was "defined within the positivists paradigms, where qualitative researchers attempted to do good positivist research with less rigorous methods and procedures" (p.5). Hammersley and Aitkinson's view (1995) is not as generous. They

[4] Abercromby, Hill and Turner's (1994) explanation of positivism is that it is characterized mainly by an insistence that science can only deal with observable entities known directly to experience. The positivist aims to construct general laws or theories that express relationships between phenomena. Observation and experiment will then show that the phenomena do or do not fit the theory. The authors state that critics have

argue that "today, the term 'positivism' has become little more that a term of abuse among social scientists, and as a result its meaning has become obscured" (p. 3; Abercromby, Hill and Turner, 1994.). Eisner (1991) argues that the "difference between qualitative inquiry and quantitative research pertains mainly to the forms of representation that are emphasized in presenting a body of work. The difference is not that one addresses qualities and the other does not" (p. 5). Guba and Lincoln (1994) maintain that "from our perspective both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm" (p.105). Simon and Dippo (1986) go a step further, adding that qualitative methodology does not "preclude the importance of quantitative data but the strength of qualitative data lies in the fact that it provides access to the practices, i.e. the words, the actions, the personally appropriated signs that mark one's place in social space of social actors" (p.198; Avis, 1993).

Notwithstanding, Denzin and Lincoln (1994a) and others insist that the academic and disciplinary resistances to qualitative research illustrate the politics embedded in this field of discourse. As a result:

> qualitative researchers are called journalists, or soft scientists. As opposed to quantitative researchers, their work is termed unscientific, or only exploratory, or entirely personal or full of bias. It is called criticism and not theory, or is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism, or humanism.... Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables, not processes. Inquiry is purported to be within a value-free framework. (p. 4)

The qualitative-quantitative dilemma is one of the staples of intellectual debate among the sciences. However, a comfortable middle-ground position would be that there are

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argued that positivism tended to stop at producing quantified facts and did not go deeper towards genuine

research situations that better lend themselves to the qualitative approach and vice versa. Ultimately, as Borman, LeCompte and Goetz (1986) so aptly cast it, "criticisms leveled at qualitative research and analysis can be applied to all research paradigms; the really crucial problems are how to select research methods [and questions] appropriate to the task at hand and how to implement them" (p. 42; Finch, 1988; Patton, 1990).

A commonly held view is that qualitative research transcends disciplines and is applicable to other fields of research, including evaluation (Borman, LeCompte and Goetz, 1986; Eisner, 1991; Fetterman, 1988; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995). Denzin and Lincoln (1994a), for instance, state that qualitative research is used in many separate disciplines. They see it as a "set of interpretative practices which does not favor one methodology over another" (p. 3; Erickson, 1986). However, they recognize the difficulty in defining qualitative research, as it has no specific theory or paradigm that is clearly its own. Furthermore, they argue, "multiple theoretical paradigms utilize qualitative research methods and strategies, from constructivism to cultural studies to feminism" (p. 3; Carspecken, 1996).

Not only does qualitative research incorporate multiple disciplines and themes, but many theoretical traditions also flourish in its sphere, including ethnography, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, cultural studies, and ideological critical theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990). As Denzin and Lincoln note, "each tradition is governed by a different set of genres; each has its own classics, its own preferred form of representation, interpretation and textual evaluation" (p. 6). Qualitative research tools include ethnographic prose, case studies, historical

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sociological interpretation (pp. 322-23).

narratives, first person accounts, still photographs, life histories, biographical and autobiographical materials (Carr, 1987; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Miller, 1997; Patton, 1990).

What is now known as "qualitative" research is grounded in ethnography, and the anthropological practice in which researchers live in natural settings over extended periods of time to study society and culture. Ethnography aims to produce a description of a particular culture[5] or social group. Participant observation, one of the prime data collection methods of qualitative research, is based on anthropology and gives a socio-cultural interpretation of data. Specifically, Burgess (1984) explains that "in research involving the use of participant observation it is the researcher who is the main instrument of social investigation" (p. 79; Dingwall, 1997; Miller, 1997; Patton, 1990; Stake; 1995). This involves intensive fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the culture under study (Patton, 1990; Spindler, 1987). Researchers over the decades have focused their attention on what it is the participant observer does. Wilson, in 1977, for example wrote:

> the participant observer has more latitude in that he is not limited to prespecified places and times. He can interview and observe in many situations, not usually available to other researchers. He also has an advantage in his ability to monitor the rapport he has built with interviewees and to gain access to confidential information.... Furthermore the participant observer in interviewing knows much more about the persons or incidents referred to in his answers or questions. Finally, the participant observer cultivates an empathetic understanding with the participant that is nearly impossible with quantitative methods. The researcher shares the daily life of the participant and systematically works to understand their feelings and reactions. (pp. 256-57)

[5] The notion of culture is central to any discussion of this method. Spindler (1987) sees culture "as a continuing dialogue that revolves around pivotal areas of concern in a given community. The dialogue is produced as social actors apply their acquired cultural knowledge so that it works in social situations – they make sense and enhance, or at least maintain, self-esteem" (p. 153).

Dingwall (1997) offers a more contemporary view to the effect that "the fundamental virtue of observation whether direct or via the proxies of audio or video-recording, is that it enables us to document members accounting to each other in natural settings" (p. 60). Yet, the subjective nature of observation has its limits, as Dingwall succinctly reminds us:

> Observation shows us everyday life being brought into being. It does not, of course, show us what is real. It does not tell us what is going on inside the head of the people who are making the world real for each other... Observations tells us about the set of solutions that have been produced, how people solidify and stabilize their social environment and how, on occasion, they play with it and test it. (pp. 61-62)

Participant observation also includes an element of *interpretation.* Alluded to earlier by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Stake (1995) argues that "interpretation is a major part of all research" and the "function of the qualitative researcher during data gathering is clearly to maintain vigorous interpretation. On the basis of observations and other data researchers draw their own conclusions" (p. 9). Researchers like Erickson (1986) go so far as to place the emphasis in qualitative research on interpretation, especially approaches that are used in research on teaching. He prefers to use the term "interpretive" to refer to the whole family of approaches[6] to "participant observational research," adding that "it points to the key feature of family resemblance among the various approaches – central research interest in human meaning in social life and its elucidation and exposition by the researcher" (p.119; Maguire, 1997). Debates like these stretch the epistemological and ontological boundaries of qualitative research. Other techniques, such as open-ended, unstructured and informal interviewing, literature, and document reviews, are the staples of data-collection for this field. Lately, Miller (1997) highlights newer orientations, which are now at the disposal of the qualitative researcher,

[6] The approaches Erickson referred to are "ethnographic, qualitative, participant observational, case study, symbolic interactionist, phenomenological, constructivist, or interpretive" (p. 119).

such as "conversation, dramaturgical and network analyses and the new data-management options provided by recently developed computer-software packages" (p. 1).

Other related concepts are intersubjectivity and reflexivity. Briefly, intersubjectivity refers to the researcher's intimate familiarity and common knowledge of and with the researched environment, including participants (Carspecken, 1995; Kirby and Mckenna, 1989). Reflexivity relates to the notion that research findings are affected by social processes of the wider society and personal characteristics of the biographer. Implicit in this definition is the idea that the researcher is part of the power relations in the research setting as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) state: "reflexivity implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them" (p.16; Altheide and Johnson, 1994; Boston, 1994; Maguire, 1997; Simon and Dippo, 1986; Woolgar, 1988).

2.3.2 Qualitative Research and the Eastern Caribbean

2.3.2.1 Review of Literature

Qualitative research in education in the Caribbean is at a crossroads. Academically, the Schools of Education at the campuses of the University of the West Indies should be the main engines of such research. However, a thriving tradition in this field is still to be developed as the programs focus more on teacher education requirements and project research, which is frequently foreign funded. Few Caribbean books have been written on the subject and in-depth writing is still at the academic level, mostly in doctoral theses which are not always easily accessible regionally or worldwide (Antrobus, 1998; Louisy, 1993; Ellis, 1986a).

A noticeable trend, however, is the inclusion of Caribbean writers in emerging cross-country studies on qualitative research, and educational research in general. Of note is Louisy's (1997, in Crossley and Vulliamy, eds., 1997) analysis of the dilemmas of insider research in a small country setting. Using material from her earlier doctoral work on tertiary education in St. Lucia, she examines the relevance of concepts such as "insider/outsider" and the importance of context in qualitative research inquiry in relation to small states like St. Lucia. Another example is Ellis' (1999) article on information, research, and decision-making in Barbados (in Rokicka, ed., 1999). While not specifically focused on qualitative research, Ellis' work raises question about the research environment on the whole, and the kinds of inputs needed to strengthen policy and practice. Further back, Miller (1983) examined the state of the research environment in the English-speaking Caribbean and found it wanting. He cited the lack of a stimulative environment to foster innovation in research, the absence of a research community, economic pressures, inadequate supportive institutional structures and the like.

On the other hand historically, qualitative data, along with quantitative data, informed much of the major studies involving education, such as *Foundation for the Future,* (Education Reform Working Group, 1991) and a *Time for Action* (West Indian Commission, 1992). Both commissions employed a consultative process involving formal and informal interviewing, observation, and literature and document research. In the past two decades, participatory methods, case histories, observation, role play, informal dialogue, group sessions, and more are routinely used in community and adult education programs and short-term training activities, especially in the OECS. Documentation of these activities is not always consistent and depends a great deal on the institutions carrying out the activities. Nevertheless, even if the activities are documented, articulating such practices into more rigorous research concepts to inform

an authentic Caribbean qualitative research tradition is yet to be fully undertaken systematically, either at the public or private sector levels.

2.3.2.2 Application to OECS Education

The appropriateness of using a qualitative methodology for understanding the contribution for policy and decision making in the Eastern Caribbean started to crystallize when I read Miller's (1987) explanations for part of the crisis facing education in the Caribbean. He argued that the region is in a "position of marginality both in terms of the external relationship and the plight of the poor in Caribbean countries" (p. 130). He suggested that part of the reason for this state of affairs could be attributed to the fact that in both the postwar and post-independence periods educational reforms have concentrated on quantitative issues, such as increased enrolment, fully trained primary teaching force in the larger Caribbean islands, establishment of university education and expansion of tertiary education. Furthermore he argues:

> taken as a whole the quantitative increases in educational provisions are nothing short of spectacular. . the major weakness, however, is that these increases have merely expanded the institutional provisions that were consistent with a colonial society while leaving the fundamental relationships within the societies basically unchanged. In a number of instances it would appear that the quantitative increases have made matters worse and basic problems more difficult to solve in the future. (p. 130)

Later writings on the usefulness of a qualitative approach, though sporadic, supported this view. Louisy (1997) notes, for instance, that "indeed, much of the information available on education in small states in the international literature had been culled from quantitative surveys, conducted by external agencies, from country profiles prepared by nations at the request of external bodies, and from perspectives gained by external 'parachute' consultants on short-term visits" (p. 107). McIntyre (1997) put the case for a balanced approach, arguing that "there is widespread recognition in the public and private

sectors that more intensive and urgent efforts to upgrade education and training, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, are a central factor in increasing international competitiveness and realizing the development potential of countries in the region" (p. 55).

Further afield, in some preliminary research on education in Africa, Miller's refrain echoed in Obanya's (1989) comment that "a lot of work has been done and enormous resources have been committed to education. But the fact remains that there has been very little *qualitative* [italics added] change. Efforts now have to be directed to the type of educational reform that should bring about qualitative improvement. A reconsideration of the major issues (conceptual, structural, method-contents, and levels and types of commitment to change) would be a reformative way to begin a new set of reforms" (p. 347). Indeed, throughout the developing world, the use of qualitative approaches to investigate and resolve many of the persistent and chronic problem in education is still wanting (Masri, 1997). Preston (1997) observes "the extent to which research is undervalued if it does not give salience to the numerical qualities of phenomena and the extent to which such quantification reduces the visibility of its non-quantitative parts" (p. 48).

I also drew support for my decision from what other writers had to say in general about qualitative research and policy making (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997; Finch, 1988; Kirby and Mckenna, 1989; Rist, 1994). Finch (1988), for example, describes some of the possible benefits of qualitative research, which make it well suited to answering certain kinds of policy questions:

> First, they can provide descriptive detail about particular settings. Second they can provide data upon "natural" settings rather than those which have been artificially

> constructed for research purposes (such as a formal interview). Third, they facilitate study of situations in the round, reflecting the complexity of the total setting.... Fourth, they can move beyond the simple documentation of outcomes and focus upon processes through which those outcomes were produced. Finally they make it possible to study processes over a period of time moving away from the cross-sectional analysis, taken at a single point in time, which is characteristic of most quantitative work. (p. 189)

On the whole, qualitative research has much to offer developing countries like the OECS (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997). It allows for a deeper insight into educational issues like policy making, and makes such information accessible to a wider range of readers. In Caribbean culture with its strong informal make up, personal fieldwork and long interviews allows for greater of exploration of difficult and elusive issues.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

2.4.1 Interviews

The interview phase took place over a number of months, beginning in Canada. Both for the formal and informal interviews, the logistics of interviewing across countries had to be set up. For the formal interviews, for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity and because they (except one) were taped, a consent form was prepared (Appendices 9-10) together with a letter of introduction from my supervisor and a background note about the research. Once the sample list for the formal interviewees was determined, I telephoned those in Canada first, to ask for their participation. Once they agreed, I faxed them copies of the interview package so they would have some background information beforehand. I used the same approach for those in the Caribbean whom I knew personally. For the bulk of the potential OECS interviewees, who were new to me, I waited until I arrived in the specific country for the longer period of fieldwork in 1999. At that point, I telephoned or met prospective interviewees in person, and explained my research interest. As with the Canadian phase, once they accepted, I gave them background information in person, prior to the interview. Before starting each interview, we discussed the contents of the

interview and the confidentiality and anonymity clauses. Two copies of the confidentiality forms were signed, a copy of which was left with the interviewee.

The taped part of the formal interviews lasted approximately one hour. However, in most cases an additional fifteen to thirty minutes of unrecorded conversation ensued. All formal interviews were conducted at the interviewees' workplaces or homes, usually during working hours. The first set of interviews took place in Canada between October 1998 and May 1999. The bulk of OECS interviews occurred in June and July in St. Lucia and Grenada, respectively. One formal interview was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago and another in Barbados. One formal interview was not taped at the request of the interviewee.

The informal interview process ran concurrently with the formal interviewing and the same contact procedures were followed except that, as the interviews were not taped, letters of consent were not needed in the information package. The atmosphere for the informal interviews was more relaxed in that, while some did take place in offices, the majority was conducted at people's homes at convenient times, over lunch and, in two cases, by phone. Written notes replaced the tape recorder during these sessions. Principles of anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to for formal and informal interviews. And, during transcription of the interviews, I devised an anonymous coding system for all citations in the thesis (e.g. TL9/1/14-5).

A few points about the conduct and rhythm of the interviews are worth noting. For the formal interview especially, the interview guide was used to elicit specific opinions on aspects of policy and decision making and the role of Canada in the ECERP project. As the interviews progressed, they became more of an exchange of ideas. Nevertheless, I felt

that the opportunities for the interviewees to "speak their minds" did not put the credibility of the replies given at risk, but rather enhanced them (Wolcott, 1987). One of the risks for a researcher like myself, who has an intersubjective relationship with the research environment, is the fine line between facilitator and participant in the process (Carspecken, 1996). The reflexive nature of my research and the inherent power dynamic of being a former CIDA staff member was a factor that I was also sensitive to. However, because I was clearly not representing any of the authority institutions such as CIDA, the CEA, or the OERU, I believe neutralized potential power issues between the interviewees and myself.

Indeed, in transcribing the taped conversations afterwards, I discovered that the issues brought out by the research questions were ones that the interviewees had given serious consideration to over many years of work with education projects and funding agencies. Where time permitted, we continued to explore several themes well after the tape recorder was turned off. Further reflections about the colonial history of the region and the inherent issues of power, control, dependency, and vulnerability of small countries and the like emerged in these conversations. The same pattern of intersubjective dialogue also took place during informal interviews. The difference here was that I was able to pursue a specific theme at length, even picking up on points that would have arisen in the formal interview.

The interviews generally concluded with a request from interviewees to be informed about the nature of the research, given how important they felt the unfolding changes were to the education system in the OECS.

2.4.2 Participant Observation

Observation is a fluid and ongoing human process. I had been observing the dilemmas around policy and decision making in education for almost two decades, and it was through observation that I first began to formulate the research questions (Patton, 1990; Saran, 1985). However, actual on-site observation, in the Caribbean, was limited, mostly due to time and lack of resources. As I had limited myself to St. Lucia and Grenada this restricted the emphasis I could place on interviews to collect data (Louisy, 1993). On the other hand, as I was in the Caribbean for approximately six months, I was in a better position to see, hear, and interpret for myself regular contributions about education from policy makers, politicians, educators, and the public through the media, public transportation (a real source of public sentiments in the Caribbean) and private conversations. In such a context, I could not help but be engaged as an observer, underscoring the reflexive nature of this kind of field work. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) have noted, "all social research is founded on the human capacity for participant observation. We act in the social world and yet are able to reflect upon ourselves and our actions as objects in that world" (pp. 21-22; Hopkin, 1992; Marcus, 1994).

Within the specific contexts of the fieldwork in St. Lucia and Grenada, there were opportunities to observe the daily dynamics of the ECERP project and the larger education reform activities. In St. Lucia, through the regular visits to the OERU, I got a sense of the rhythm of the project through observing the staff's interaction with visitors to the office who were connected with the project, chatting informally with staff about how they interacted with their counterparts in the region via telephone and e-mail, or after hours tete a tete. In Grenada, where there was no specific office for the ECERP project

as in St. Lucia, there were other opportunities for more spontaneous conversations and site visits to primary schools in the capital of St. George's. I was able to continue the observation process during the interviews. Body language, tone, and facial expression in Caribbean culture are as important as any written language. The researcher familiar with the Caribbean knows well that often body language has to be interpreted along with the actual words spoken in an interview to obtain the optimum meaning and intent of issues discussed (Carspecken, 1996).

2.4.3 Written and Visual Resources

The nature of the ECERP project and my particular focus meant that I had to rely both on primary and secondary sources of data for documentary and literature research. Although it was the observation aspect that first launched my research inquiry in Canada, I had to rely on primary-source project documents from CIDA and the CEA to provide the factual details on the evolution of the ECERP project. While I was able to obtain secondary source references on the Caribbean from the university libraries in Ottawa and at McGill, the fact remains that critical writing on the topics in this research is taking place at the UWI, but is not accessible outside the region. The objective of contributing to Caribbean knowledge required a general familiarity with what was available on the topic locally. It was therefore important for me to spend some of the research time at the UWI libraries in Trinidad.

The archives in St. Lucia held some historical writing that yielded insights, dating back almost a hundred years, into the long-term problems with teacher education, curriculum development, and finances that are still core challenges to the OECS education reform strategy. Documentation was also collected from the Statistical Unit at the Ministry of

Education, and the public library in Grenada. Newspapers from each country were other valuable sources of material.

The other sources of documentation came from my own private library of development materials, and those of close personal contacts, collected over the years from international, Canadian, and Caribbean sources. While at the OERU in St. Lucia, I was invited to sit in at staff gatherings for screenings of videos of the Education Reform Project in general, and other country-specific activities. I also viewed a video of proceedings from the visioning meeting, intended to review progress of the *Foundation for the Future.*

2.4.4 Analysis of Data

Like the research design, data analysis is an evolving process. Indeed, they were integral to each other, since the initial discussion phases and literature reviews were essential in helping to delineate the focus of my research interests and helping to distinguish what would be relevant and what would not. Once the period of fieldwork was completed I started to analyze the data in sequence, with the emphasis first on the interview, literature, and documentary, and then on the participant observation material.

2.4.4.1 Interview Data

Given the preliminary work on shaping the research questions and interview guide, the issues were then used to establish the main data classification categories. For the formal interview data, I developed a coding system for keeping interviewees anonymous, and for citation in the thesis. The interviews themselves were then transcribed by region. The first set of Canadian interviews had been transcribed closer to the start of the major field work in 1999. The objective here was to keep fresh, in my mind, the kind of perspectives

that were emerging from this first round of interviews, and to listen to whether these perspectives were articulated or not in the Caribbean setting. The same process was repeated for St. Lucia, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados. One objective of transcribing the taped interviews in the Caribbean was that if there were substantial differences and contradictions in the interview data, I could return to that particular country for a brief period or telephone the interviewees or other sources to review the interview material. I did not have to do this and was able to deal with minor gaps and inconsistencies in data through follow-up contact with primary resource persons. Once transcription of the 27 formal interviews was completed, the next step was coding the informal interviews following the same procedures.

2.4.4.2 Literature and Project Documents

I used the same coding and classification systems to organize readings from the primary and secondary sources. As I had been analyzing literature on the research issues and project documents on an ongoing basis, for reasons of funding purposes, proposal writing, and progress notes to my supervisor, patterns and themes in the data had already emerged. The value of the coding procedures was to produce a structure in which to determine frequency and commonality of those themes in light of the overall data. Where new information emerged, categories were established to record those issues, which in turn were factored into final research findings.

2.4.4.3 Observation Data

Though limited, observation data from my fieldwork were used to make connections between what I had heard in the interviews (both from the Caribbean and Canada) and

the actual physical realities of working with the regional structures[7] of policy and decision making in the OECS. To help future research in the region, I must emphasize the value of the participant observation process in a culture where informal networking is accepted as part of the policy and decision-making process. The interview process and the literature have boundaries, and the researcher has to rely on cues and "hunches" when on the surface everything seems equal. To do this, the researcher really has to spend an extended period of time in the actual setting, and while trusting in my experience and knowledge of the region, I admit to limitations in this respect.

2.4.5 Completing the Research Design

When I had completed coding and classification procedures for all three sources, I then had to prioritize issues. This was done mostly by matching and cross checking opinions from the Canadian and Caribbean site interviews, both formal and informal. I established categories of main themes and sub-themes. I then reviewed these in light of the literature and documentary data to complete the framework for the research findings. However, the process of validating research findings did not end with the coding and classification stages (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997). I used the "member check" technique for revising the study (Carspecken, 1996; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995). Parts of the early drafts were returned and discussed with three primary informants for comments or inconsistencies, gaps in the data, or verification of documentary data (for example, ECERP documents). Other interviewees were also contacted by e-mail and asked to clarify specific points of information, mainly factual, that arose from their interviews. This occurred at various

[7] Here I considered the location of the structures that were in place to facilitate sub-regional decision making. For example, the implications of having an OERU office with full staff in St. Lucia but not in Grenada or in any of the other OECS islands as project documents show.

stages in writing up the study. The final draft was again shared with a few key primary informants mainly to fine tune last minute details about the CIDA-ECERP structure.

2.5 Summary

This chapter concentrated on the research design, qualitative methodology, and data collection and analysis. The central methodological argument was that, despite the strong roots in developed world discourse and practice, the scope of qualitative research was such that it gives it a breadth and flexibility well suited for addressing education reform issues in the Eastern Caribbean. Another substantiation for a qualitative approach was the fact that most of the attempts to reform the education systems in the Caribbean and OECS were quantitative. The results, as Miller (1987) argued, while spectacular, in general had made little headway in fundamentally restructuring a colonial-based education system. My response in this chapter was that in view of the OECS' dependent history and the domination of the quantitative tradition, the time was now ripe for a qualitative approach, when combined with dependency theory, to address some of the power relations involved as the OECS attempts to build a sustainable educational policy making environment with Canadian input.

Drawing therefore on the techniques of qualitative research, I established a process of research and fieldwork in the OECS, the wider Caribbean, and Canada covering a period of about five years. The end result is a body of empirical data from which I have been able to present a critical picture of social, historical, political, economic, institutional, and international factors that impact on and influence policy and decision making in education reform in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

Chapter 3. Historical and Societal Perspectives of Education in the OECS

Development must therefore, by definition, be people centered. It must be equitable and allow people to realize their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity. In the context of the sub-region, the strategy must emphasize the strengths and opportunities as opposed to weaknesses and threats. (OECS Secretariat, 1999, p. 3)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter expands the analytical dimensions of current policy and decision making in education in the OECS through the historical lens of European enslavement and colonization. History cannot be discounted in any discussion of social reform, especially in countries such as the OECS whose present traditions, values, and institutions have been shaped for so long by Europe (Isaac, 1992; Stephens, 1991). This social, political, and economic summary therefore takes on additional importance in view of the pivotal and catalytic role ascribed to the OECS education reform strategy for national and regional development, and Caribbean leadership, especially in education. In Chapter 1, I presented the main policy and decision-making mechanisms guiding the current education reform strategy. In this chapter, I will take that one step further to see how the wider societal, political, and economic structures established by the British colonial administration, in particular, helped or did not help to shape the present education system.

Geographically, the OECS is one of the smallest regional groupings in the world, defined as having a population of five million or less (Barrow Giles, 1995; Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997; Payne, 1987). Recent estimates place its population at approximately 583,000, ranging from 149,000 in St. Lucia, the largest, to approximately

3,500 in Montserrat[1] (OECS Secretariat, 1998). On average, the population is almost evenly split between males and females (Ellis, 1986b; Women and Development Unit, 1982). The countries stretch from north to south between the American continents. Those countries to the south, Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia and Dominica, are still popularly known as the Windward Islands, while the others to the north are included in the Leeward chain. Their total land space is small, 3,154 km^2, with a narrow resource base focused mainly on tourism and export agriculture. Anguilla is the smallest, covering 91 km^2, with St. Lucia as the largest, extending over 616 km^2 (OECS Secretariat, 1998).

The ocean is the biggest natural factor among the OECS, as Renard (1998) observed: "The sea is an ever present part of the Caribbean consciousness. It defines the region's geography and remains one of the region's most important economic resources" (p. 12). At the same time, the watery divide has economic implications for the OECS, in that working among the islands involves regular and expensive visits. As one interviewee noted, "It's not like the mainland where you can jump into a car or a train. You have a lot of travel, a lot of subsistence, a lot of costs" (EM7/9-19). However, over the years, inter-island travel by air and sea has been facilitated by regional and international airlines and shipping carriers, with direct connections to major routes in North America and Europe (Chase and Nichols, 1998). The physical configuration of the islands also has its challenges and has an influence on differing patterns of development. Antigua, for instance, is flat, making it theoretically easier to install and maintain basic infrastructure like roads, water, electricity, and telephone communication, all vital considerations in providing total access and services to industry, especially tourism, and public facilities such as schools and hospitals. On the other hand, the hilly terrain of St. Vincent and St.

[1] Prior to the recent volcanic eruptions in Montserrat since 1995, the population was approximately 10,000. (Women and Development Unit, 1982).

Lucia presents more formidable challenges for government planners both financially and infrastructurally.

Ecologically, the OECS countries are known for their natural beauty as well as for their propensity for natural disasters. The population of Montserrat, for instance, has been halved by recent volcanic eruptions, with its capital, Plymouth, completely destroyed. The annual hurricane season brings its share of periodic disasters, and, in the last decade alone, many states have seen their entire agricultural crops, especially bananas, tourism seasons and foreign earnings wiped out overnight. Disaster management and preparedness therefore are issues that, of necessity, have become part of the developmental agenda of the OECS.

3.2 Socio-Historical Setting

The structure of current Caribbean society has been well documented by indigenous and foreign scholars from a variety of ideological and literary perspectives. Contributions have come from historians and politicians like Eric Williams, academics and economists like Gordon K. Lewis and William Demas, Marxist scholars, Walter Rodney and Clive Thomas, and poets and writers like Derek Walcott, Vidia Naipaul, and Sam Selvon, to name a few. As such, a comprehensive literature exists through books, articles, reports, and theses, a good deal of which are available in the region's libraries, and as many more in depositories abroad. The campuses of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, by virtue of having university library facilities, have more holdings and access to this literature than do the smaller countries of the OECS which do not have these same facilities on site. Every country has its own network of public libraries and documentation or resource centres in government departments, colleges, and archives.

The OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia, however, also has a documentation center, but on a daily basis, only available to St. Lucians. On the whole, the OECS countries do not have access to the services that exist in the larger islands. Grenada is becoming the exception with the expansion of the private off-shore St. George's University which is now fully accessible to Grenadians. On this point, within the CARICOM community, the OECS functions somewhat at a disadvantage as its citizenry does not have equal access to textual knowledge and research facilities. Full computerized facilities for each OECS territory to access this kind of information are still in the future.

The history of the OECS is the history of the entire English, French, Spanish, and Dutch Caribbean. Today's Caribbean society, with its mixture of races, cultures, and traditions, dates back to the 1500s when the area was originally inhabited by indigenous peoples, the Arawaks and Caribs. There are still small communities of Caribs in St. Vincent and Dominica (Ellis, 1986a). The ensuing period of conquest and virtual extinction of these communities by the Europeans, and the subsequent colonization and population of the territories, first with slave labour, and then with indentured labour from Asia for centuries, laid the foundation for the current fabric of Caribbean society (Ellis, 1986b; Lewis, 1983; Williams, 1964a). Lewis (1983) argued that the evolution of Caribbean society and culture comprised three major elements:

- The growth of colonialism once the overseas colonies had been established by the European colonizing powers;
- The initiation and expansion of the slave and slavery systems;
- A distinctive Creole culture and Creole institutions based on the twin factors of race and class (p. 10).

This prolonged period of enslavement and colonization was essential to support European capitalism and expansion. Its basis was mono-crop agricultural production of sugarcane fields. In the OECS, the islands of St. Kitts and Antigua, with their flat land, ideal for

growing sugarcane, were among the most profitable (Lewis; 1983; Sunshine, 1988; Williams 1964a). For the other islands, Sunshine (1988) notes that:

> In the mountainous Windward Islands the situation was different. These islands had never been ideal for growing sugar, and many of the smaller estates were abandoned when the market for West Indian sugar collapsed. Thousands of ex-slaves left the plantations to buy, rent or squat on abandoned estates or idle land in the hills. They formed the beginnings of an independent peasantry which pioneered the introduction of new export crops to replace sugar, cocoa and nutmeg in Grenada, arrowroot in St. Vincent, limes in St. Lucia and Dominica, cotton in Nevis and Montserrat. (p. 15)

This period of domination also bred its own psychology of dependence, inequality, and racism that still persists even to today, despite the image of melting pot and tolerance for which the Caribbean has become known (Fergus, 1991c; Lewis 1983; Isaac, 1979; Memmi, 1991; Williams, 1964a; Rodney, 1983).

Underlying the common economic and psychological impacts felt by all OECS countries was the fact that European control of various islands also bred rivalry and competition among the islands, a factor that had long-lasting implications for future Caribbean integration. "Divide and rule" was the common approach to governing (Boxill, 1993; Isaac, 1979; Williams, 1964a). Conversely, that control left its stamp on the national identities of each island. St. Lucia and Dominica, for example, which experienced prolonged periods of French settlement, still retain a very French culture, including a local French *patois,* compared to the other islands which still exhibit very British practices (Ellis, 1986a).

By the late 1800s Britain, through warfare, had gained total control of the entire English-speaking islands, joining them in a common fate and destiny (Moreno, 1990, p. 43; Connell, 1994). This helped create what Lewis (1983) described as a society at once "multiracial, multicultural, multireligious, multilinguistic" (p. 329). British neglect and

indifference, once the colonies ceased to be profitable, around the period of emancipation in the 1830s, caused underdevelopment and impoverishment of the resources of the Caribbean that future generations would have difficulty overcoming. Consequently, Lewis (1983) further argued that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the society was still "plagued by all the evils that make it a part of the Third World: widespread poverty, gross inequities of wealth and income, serious structural unemployment, educational backwardness, a monoculture too heavily dependent on world market forces over which it has little control" (p. 329; Fergus, 1991c; Will, 1991).

It should be noted too that, in the aftermath of slavery, the larger islands of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana, unlike the OECS, received large numbers of indentured labourers from India and China. The majority of the OECS population is thus of African descent, with small numbers of East Indians, and the rest, people of European descent. Intermixing of white slave-owners with African female slaves also helped to diversify the racial structure by producing generations of mixtures. This issue of colour is an important factor in understanding the structure of Caribbean society and its role in social status and class (Beckles, 1996; Reddock, 1986; Williams, 1986).

That the mass of Caribbean people today in the OECS have proved to be resilient and able to cope with the legacy of underdevelopment and other current crises is largely due to their ability to survive centuries of hardships and exploitation (Pastor and Fletcher, 1991; Williams, 1986). This strength and adaptability has manifested itself especially in the cultural expressions of dance, music, and song, and a *joie de vivre* that camouflages some of the social and economic problems Lewis alluded to and often gives the outsider the impression that "everything is O.K."

A mixed historical image has also emerged on the aspect of gender. For instance, the Caribbean female is seen as strong and capable, as opposed to the male who is carefree and less prone to responsibility. Studies show for instance that in the lower income brackets, approximately 40 percent of households are single families, headed by women (Women and Development Unit, 1982; Gordon, 1986). While there may be some truth in these portrayals of the sexes, in practice, when looked at in terms of power relations, the images are actually reversed. Women usually are still underrepresented in the upper echelons of political and economic power, both in the public and private spheres, and the key decision makers on average are still male (Antrobus, 1993; Pat Ellis Associates and Annette Isaac Consulting, 1988). This situation has changed somewhat in the past decade, at the policy level, internationally, regionally, and nationally, as women obtain higher education, girls show higher performance rate than boys in primary and secondary schooling, and working and professional choices expand, both intra and extra regionally. However, that inequity embedded in inherited social, economic, and political structures still needs to be redressed.

Finally, it is important to note that, towards the end of British rule in the Caribbean from the 1900s onwards, the United States and later Canada played an increasing role along side Britain in investment, trade, and other areas. After the Second World War, the United States, in collaboration with Britain,[2] was especially interested in security and established military bases in Antigua, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, and Grenada (Sunshine, 1988; Williams, 1964b). Canada, on the other hand, established its presence through the banking sector, a practice that is still firmly in place today throughout the

[2] See, Sunshine, (1988) for a synopsis of how American pressure on Britain to grant self-government to its colonies, through the 1942 Atlantic charter, played a role in the independence movement in the Caribbean (p.42).

region. One consequence of this is that the Caribbean, even in the post-independence era, remains deeply tied to powerful and controlling world economies, with North America now replacing Great Britain. For these reasons, it is not as closely tied, in an economic sense, to its neighbours in the region. Writers have noted that these influences still dominate Caribbean "patterns of thought and action" and thus "inhibit the growth of regional association and consciousness" (Grant, 1991, p. 84; Boxill, 1993; Pastor and Fletcher, 1991).

With this overview, the next section will examine how the British colonial administration shaped the political and economic structures and what that meant for the development of the educational life and structures of the present OECS.

3.3 Political Setting

> The essence of our argument thus far is that the socio-economic profile of Caribbean countries at Independence has been the creation of historical forces and institutional arrangements over which the peoples of the region have had little control. Consequentially, a way forward would seem to lie [in] an ability to master these forces, overcome their constraints and alter the mastery as well as the processes of possible institutional change. (Riviere, 1990, p. 60)

When the OECS, one by one started to take full control from Britain, starting with the independence of Grenada in 1978, they had a system that had been thoroughly penetrated in every way by British policy, ideologies, and self-interest. The governing structures were patterned after Britain and the real political and economic policy and decision making remained with Britain. Until independence, Caribbean countries were known as "crown colonies." All heads of government and senior legislative positions were appointed or approved by Britain, and the constitution was British. Williams (1964a) writes:

> Under the Crown colony system of government Britain's control was supreme. The colonials were expected to obey the fiats from London, to thank London for those fiats, to finance London's policy out of its own pockets, to produce commodities which London would not buy and finally to contribute to the defense of London. (p. 195)

Most legal matters were settled in Britain. In fact, even today, the highest Court of Appeal lies with Britain, although there is now a strong push by CARICOM governments to change this practice (Alexander, 1999). Constitutional and democratic practices were not encouraged, and the right to vote and organize came only towards the end of the 1930s (Sunshine, 1988; Will, 1991). Such a deeply entrenched colonial apparatus does not lend itself easily to yielding power or providing equal space for participation by colonized subjects. Demas (1992), for example, would later argue that:

> Britain did not bestow constitutional advances culminating in independence on the West Indian countries. The demands for constitutional advancement came from the people themselves, increasingly being made politically aware of their dependent political status and its consequences by the emerging political and Trade Union leaders. (p. 56)

Today each country has its own centralized form of government, still based on the British Westminster style. Basic services and facilities for health, education, transportation, and communication are present throughout the OECS although quality and maintenance vary from one country to the next. Elections are generally held every five years, and the voting age is 18. The first post-colonial political leaders came from a variety of backgrounds including educated professionals, trade unions, and working-class leaders (Fergus, 1991a; Riviere, 1990).

The OECS itself, however, was not without its own contradictions in its drive for independence. Ironically, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands (BVI), and Montserrat elected to stay dependencies of Britain (Payne and Sutton, 1993; Sanders, 1991). The effect of enslavement and colonialism just described give some rationales for this, not the least a strong sense of self-interest as Payne and Sutton (1993) suggested: "The appeal of

independence seemed, in other words, to have been widely replaced by a determination, substantially less heroic, to hang onto the tangible benefits of imperial protection" (p.20; Constant, 1990). Connell (1994) affirmed this viewpoint, adding that:

> in BVI there has been minimal interest in any movement towards independence....Lack of interest in independence has not changed as the territory has become more dependent on tourism and financial services, avoiding the criticisms and doubt attached to financial services in Montserrat and Anguilla, hence the combination of "American money, British security" is perceived to be central to future economic and political development. (p. 94)

On the other hand, the political decision by these three OECS countries to stay dependent on Britain can be contrasted with the revolutionary approach adopted by the short-lived People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada from 1979-83. The PRG sought to loosen the grip of the deeply entrenched power structures of colonialism through the reign of a socialist-styled government that had the support of the population. Even though the collapse of the PRG[3] left a painful legacy for the Caribbean, the events in Grenada remain an indication, on one level, that many segments of the region's population are very much aware of how difficult it is to remove centuries of hegemonic practice by former colonizers (Sunshine; 1988, Pearce, 1982; De Grauwe, 1991).

3.3.1 Integration and the OECS

However, the OECS in the post-independence era had to have some collaborative framework to survive, given size, proximity to each other, narrow resource base, and small populations (Boxill, 1993; Callender, 1999; Grant, 1991; McIntyre, 1984; Will, 1991). Williams (1964b) commented that "separation and fragmentation were the policy of colonialism and rival colonialisms. Association and integration must be the policy of independence" (p. ix). After much trial and error with integration movements, the search to find a common and viable formula finally resulted in the formation of CARICOM in

1973, and the sub-grouping of the OECS in 1981 (Persaud, 1997, p. 42; OECS Secretariat, 1998; Charles, 1991; Will, 1991). Attempts at federation and integration go back to the colonial period. The present CARICOM movement was preceded by less successful integration attempts, such as the Federation of the British West Indies, which failed completely. A later arrangement, the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement, CARIFTA, eventually gave way to CARICOM (Boxill 1993).

Today, through its Mission Statement, the OECS visualizes itself as:

> A major institutional player at the regional level, contributing to our sustainable development of our Member countries, by assisting them to maximize the benefits from their collective space; by facilitating their intelligent integration with the global economy; by contributing to policy and programme formulation and execution on respect of regional and international issues; and by facilitating bilateral and multilateral co-operation. (OECS Secretariat, 1999)

More precisely, the formation of the OECS provided a legal framework allowing the countries to:

- work collaboratively at the international level;
- further the economic development of the region through economic integration;
- and promote "functional co-operation," i.e. co-ordination, liaison and harmonization as necessary among social, scientific, and cultural affairs.

The education reform strategy, for instance, falls within the third program area (OECS Secretariat, 1999b, 1999c).

Although the structure of the OECS itself is new and Caribbean initiated, the formula and programs it covers are not (Appendix 11). The Central Secretariat of the OECS and the Economic Affairs Secretariat replace two interim integration bodies: the West Indies

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[3] The events in Grenada are well known on the international scene. The coup of the PRG, initiated by

Associated States Council of Ministers (WISA) formed in 1966, and the Eastern Caribbean Common Market (ECCM) in 1968. Both of these come out of the colonial experience (OECS Secretariat, 1999b; Persaud, 1997; Abbot, 1991; Barrow-Giles, 1995). While the current thinking is that the integration movement on the whole in the CARICOM region is shaky (Boxill, 1993; Grant, 1991), the OECS, as a structure, has generally developed an inner cohesion and dynamic of its own, as Persaud (1997) recently noted:

> Small size and national incapacity have forced the pace of cooperation in the OECS, providing a stronger rationale for cooperation between the OECS Secretariat and its member states than is the case with CARICOM. Because of this necessity and rationale, the OECS has found it necessary to establish institutions where initiatives have already been taken at the CARICOM level, e.g. in the establishment of an export market development facility – the Eastern Caribbean States Export Development Agency – giving the impression of duplication.
>
> Integration through the OECS therefore has a different character than the wider CARICOM movement. There is greater complementarity and cooperation between Governments and the Secretariat with more authority having been ceded to the OECS and its institutions. It is because of this different character and rationale that evolution and progress have been smoother and have been of a more practical kind. The back-sliding evident in CARICOM in the early 1980s was less visible in the OECS which interestingly was initiated at a time when regionalism in the wider Caribbean was facing great difficulties. (p. 42)

3.3.2 Policy and Decision Making

At a national level, public policy and decision making are made by the ministers, at the political level, supported by their staff in the various ministries (Ordonez and Maclean, 1997).[4] Most policy statements are made in budget speeches or in five-year plans. At the regional level, all the OECS structures just described are vehicles for regional policy and

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members of Bishop's own government, culminated in the American invasion in October 1983.

[4] In Chapter 1, I suggested that, based on my definitions, most of what passes for policy in the OECS is actually decision making. Even so the term "policy" is used everywhere in public documents to describe action to be taken.

decision making. The OECS Secretariat is the main co-ordinating body for all these structures. However, it is more of an administrative body as opposed to a policy-making body and responds to directives from the governments. Ministerial committees also come together on a regular basis to discuss common issues. The Education Council of Ministers, for example, is the main *sub-regional* mechanism for policy and decision making in education. The relationships between the national and sub-regional structures then are symbiotic. What goes into the sub-regional mechanisms is a reflection of what is available at the national level to this point, and vice versa.

No other formal institutional structures or facilities exist for broader research and knowledge to support in-depth public policy or decision making in education. When the OECS needs more detailed level of educational analysis to develop policy positions, such as the education reform strategy, it can draw on wider regional institutions such as the University of the West Indies. However, without more structured regional and national mechanisms for policy making, such as policy or research institutes, semi-formal and informal structures or "intellectual infrastructures" have evolved. One example of this is a loose network of national, regional, and foreign consultants compiled in part by the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and other regional institutions. OECS Governments have assembled such teams of specialists and consultants for particular studies, as was the case with the education reform strategy.

There is also another level of informal information gathering, based on personal contact, that has evolved out of the historical process (Riviere, 1990). Most interviewees reminded me that in the OECS everyone knows everyone else, so people are well aware of problems. Furthermore, if anything has to be done, the informal structures come into play, often linked on the basis of kinship or close friendship ties, to gauge how the

political winds are blowing or to generate ideas for discussion at a more substantive political level.

Nevertheless, taking over these historically constructed public policy and decision-making structures and re-shaping them has only happened in the last 20 years. In addition, the newer committees, like the ministerial committee on education for example, have only emerged in the last decade. As one interviewee told me, the transition has taken place quickly from colonial government to the present without the preparation and readiness of the people. In addition, financially OECS governments are more focused on daily crises and survival strategies.

3.4 The Economic Setting

For the OECS countries in particular, colonial economy was entirely structured on agriculture and remained that way until the fifties, when tourism joined agriculture as the region's other major sources of gross revenues (Appendix 12). In approximately half of the OECS countries, tourism is now the major income generator (Harker, 1990; OECS Secretariat, 1998). On the other hand, outside the agricultural and tourism sectors, government has always been the main employer. However, these days, budgetary constraints have curtailed hiring, and with a slow-moving workforce and limited opportunities in the small and virtually undeveloped private sector, the numbers of people hired into government have dropped. These conditions have resulted in part in higher levels of unemployment – 15-25 percent approximately (OECS Secretariat, 1998). The accompanying phenomenon of poverty is well known in the region, especially among the less educated and less skilled members of the population (ECLAC, 1996; OECS Secretariat, 1999a). For this group, the informal sector, a key part of the region's

economic structure, provides employment for all groups (Bell, 1986; Isaac, 1986). This is especially valuable to women in the poorer income groups who comprise almost half of the workers in the service sectors, and in petty trading and selling.

It is important to note also that the OECS economies, like the rest of CARICOM, are very dependent on imports. Historically, economic activities were solely geared towards exports to Europe with the consequence that manufacturing plays a very small role in the economy (Duncan, 1997; Girvan, Gomes, and Sangster, 1983; Harker, 1990). The private sector is mainly engaged in services and imports and plays relatively little role in any major structuring or restructuring of the economies (Charles, 1991; Jagan, 1994; Nicholls, 1997).

Moving towards an integrated economic system became a reality in 1991 when the OECS agreed to the establishment of a Single Market Economy (OSME). The elements of the OSME include free movement of goods and labour, free trade services, the establishment of an OECS capital market, and OECS policy harmonization and co-ordination (McBain, 1993; OECS, Economic Affairs Secretariat, 1999c; OECS Secretariat, 1999d; Samuel, 1993). The OECS countries share a common currency and have joint arrangements for export, especially for bananas and other agricultural produce. OECS offices are also located in North America and Europe to promote the sub-region's interests in general. All governments contribute to the financial support of the OECS Secretariat. Lately, some countries have fallen into arrears, casting a shadow over the long-term viability of the one key co-ordinating regional instrument developed outside of the colonial experience (Seon, 1999).

Despite the fact that there are legislative, regulative, and administrative instruments at various stages of implementation throughout the OECS to make the OSME a full reality, to date each island still maintains complete control over its economic and financial development. At the core of the OSME and indeed the CARICOM movement, is the need for greater economies of scale and harmonization of the region's services to avoid duplication of resources and realize the kinds of goals outlined in the OECS Mission Statement (Boxill, 1993; Demas, 1992).

Other factors that are rooted in history and directly affect OECS and CARICOM economies are global policy, structural adjustment, and foreign aid. One outcome of the historical links with European countries is that the Caribbean, which relies on sugar and bananas, has had exclusive links and written trading agreements with European countries, Britain being chief among them. These agreements are especially vital to the smaller agricultural economies of the OECS. More than 40 percent of the population in countries like St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Dominica owe their livelihood to bananas. With the formation of the European countries into a single economic market, the financial implications for the OECS are dramatic as Sutton (1995) described:

> the establishment of the Single European Market (SEM) with effect from 1 January 1993 and the creation of the European Union (EU) with the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty in November 1993 have had the effect of reconfiguring relations with rest of the world. This has particular implication for CARICOM and especially for the OECS. (p.39)

He notes further that neither the sugar industry nor the banana industry, particularly in CARICOM, could survive commercially or remain without the safeguard of these trading arrangements. The challenge in this case is coming from "Latin American banana producers and from the large US banana multinationals"(Sutton, 1995, p. 44; Duncan 1997; Persaud, 1993).

The challenge is not only coming from the European markets but from other global arrangements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, involving the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It also comes from powerful global trade organizations such as the World Trade Organisation, WTO, to which the United States successfully appealed to curtail the exclusive arrangements that the Caribbean countries had with the EU (Sanders, 1997; Sutton, 1995). It is not only these policies, but those of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and many multinationals that daily impact on the economies of the OECS as well as other small vulnerable economies around the world in the South Pacific and Africa (Layne, 1993; Sanders, 1997; Wittingham, 1989).

In this context, the issue of structural adjustment in the recent history of the region's economic development is significant. In 1984, all CARICOM countries adopted structural adjustment, as laid out by the IMF, as its economic policy framework. It essentially changed the macro framework for the Caribbean. The main objectives were "efficient economic growth, the development of new sources of foreign exchange earning, and keeping the economies competitive" (Antrobus, 1998). The mix of economic policies included: the promotion of export-oriented production; cutback in social services; the removal of food subsidies and price controls on consumer goods; the imposition of charges for services; devaluation of the dollar; and the liberalization of imports (Antrobus, 1998; Henke, 1996; Thomas, 1996).

Jamaica felt the negative social impacts most keenly (Antrobus, 1998; CIDA, 1992a). The point that many analysts make is that structural adjustment as a macro framework for all Caribbean countries contradicts work, especially in the social sectors (Thomas, 1996). In historical terms, the period of structural adjustment in the English-speaking region ushered in yet another new era and type of foreign control. This time, instead of one

country, it was international financial systems, in which the United States had significant influence. Antrobus (1998), for instance, tracks this shift in the following way:

> While the open, dependent economies of the CARICOM countries had always been incorporated into a global market, their relationship with Britain had provided a measure of protection in terms of their trade, while the values of British liberalism had provided a framework in which social development had been recognized as a legitimate and necessary part of the role of representative government.
>
> The loosening of the ties with Britain and the strengthening of those with the U.S.A., a gradual process beginning, perhaps, with industrialization and independence, has reached its final stage with the ruling of the WTO in the "banana wars" between Windward Island and Central American bananas in favor of the U.S. corporations Dole and Chiquita. Perhaps this will also mark the beginning of a new sense of reality: the reality that the countries of this region cannot continue to look to others to protect their interests and the need, therefore, to chart their own course based on a return to the processes leading to a closer integration of their economies. (p. 7)

In terms of foreign aid, the role of donors has already been presented in Chapter 1 and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. It bears repeating, however, that by definition and historically, dependent territories, like the OECS, rely on external support to help develop virtually every segment of the economy (Connell, 1994, p.100; Louisy, 1993; McBain, 1993). Development analysts have also noted that because of their size and ranking as lower developed countries (LDCs), the OECS benefited from grants and bilateral and multilateral flows on concessional terms (Goodine, 1994a; McBain, 1993). These concessional flows in the forms of grants, according to McBain, allowed the smaller OECS territories to avoid the debt problems of their larger neighbours. However, McBain and others also note that this situation is changing as donors like the World Bank seek to re-classify the OECS in higher income categories (Sanders, 1997; Simmonds, 1994).

Indeed, the latest Human Development Reports have classified all the OECS countries in the "medium human development" category, based collectively on increasingly higher

levels of income and other quality of life indicators (UNDP, 1996; Sutton, 1995). Demas (1992) offered one explanation for the improvement in income levels, especially in the eighties:

> In many respects the smaller islands in the Leewards and Windwards.... have performed by and large better economically in the 1980s than the "more developed countries." This was so partly because there was no room to experiment with innovative or far-reaching changes in the economic system and partly because their shared monetary system (The Eastern Caribbean Development Bank) which has operated on the basis of unanimity and which has had limited power to "print money", prevented excesses in fiscal and monetary management. (p. 57)

On the other hand, Duncan (1997) suggests that such conclusions about OECS development may be premature and a two-edged sword:

> On two counts—relative position to the highest ranking developing countries; and relatively high positioning collectively among developing countries – therefore, Barbados and the other Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) appear in danger of being "graduated" out of the category of special concern to international agencies concerned with social development at levels dealing with persistent poverty and with special pockets of poverty and dispossession. Of course, much of this apparent "progress" is illusory. Nevertheless, comparatively analyzed, these countries could not complain too loudly if there is progressive ignoring of their claims for special attention in a number of activities. (p. 2)

Other issues that affect the long-term economic development of the sub-region include human-resource development, technology, and research and development. These points will be examined again in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5 in the theoretical framework and findings.

3.5 Education

> There is still no serious indigenous intellectual life. The ideological formulations for the most part still reflect the concepts and vocabulary of nineteenth-century Europe and, more sinister, of the now almost defunct Cold War...Legal systems, educational structures, and administrative institutions reflect past practices, which are now being hastily abandoned in the metropolitan countries where they originated. (Williams, 1984, pp. 501-502)

I now want to examine the education systems and issues that have evolved out of the colonial period, focusing on reforms, access and equity, quality and gender. History records that missionaries and churches were the first to deliver education, of any kind, to the enslaved and later colonized populations. Education along with political and economic development for the colonized masses was simply not a priority for European colonizers (Isaac, 1992; Lewis, 1983; Williams, 1964a, 1964b).

Generally speaking, British government's participation in free primary education began about 1850,[5] after the emancipation of slavery,[6] alongside the church-run system (Ellis, 1986a; Isaac 1992; Education Reform Working group, 1991; Report of the Education Department, St. Lucia, 1952; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1945). British government's participation, at that point, laid the foundation for the dual education system, led by church and state, that still exists today throughout the Caribbean. However, establishing public schools in those early days of colonial education was one thing; managing and running them efficiently was another. Over the decades since the late 1800s, British colonial administrators themselves wrote about the dilapidated state of education professionally, infrastructurally, and financially (Annual Report of the Inspector of Schools, St. Lucia 1931; Colonial Reports - annual, No. 1648, St. Lucia, 1932; Colonial Annual Reports, St. Lucia 1946; Colonial Annual Reports, St. Lucia. No. 1364. Report for 1926; Report of the Education Department, St. Lucia, 1952). Subsequent regional consultative reports like *Foundation for the Future* (Education Reform Working Group, 1991) and *Time For Action* (The West Indian Commission,

[5] The exact dates when Britain introduced free public education in each of the OECS countries in this study was not obtained during the course of the research. This date is taken from archives from St. Lucia and indicates when the general trend towards public education began for the OECS (Report of the Education Department, St. Lucia, 1952, p. 2. Also Education Reform Working Group, 1991).

[6] *The Emancipation Act* came in 1833 (*Colonial annual report, St. Lucia*, 1946, p. 61).

1992) which both addressed education, as well as other social and political issues, chronicled similar difficulties and challenges in the education system. They serve as a reminder that while progress has been made in addressing and resolving some of these issues since then, the pattern of these problems is rooted in historical policies and decisions.

By the time the OECS countries gained independence in the late 1970s and 80s, there was a well-established public school system, at least by developing-country standards, and free primary and secondary education for all (Appendix 13). It is, however, important to note that the school system was patterned after the British, still reflecting British culture, values, ideals, and traditions, and as such provided an education that was not contextually relevant to Caribbean developmental needs (Isaac, 1992). Issues of class and race were also important factors, for colonialism bred the kinds of divisions where the children of the upper echelons, generally whites or those of mixed ancestry who had gained wealth and privilege, accessed better paying jobs or secured influential positions in public and private sectors, while the poorer classes, largely of African ancestry, filled positions in the service and agricultural sectors (Ellis, 1986b; Friday 1975; Reddock, 1986). Although free primary education was available, the question of the quality of that education and stages completed were linked to a family's social and economic status. Under these conditions illiteracy was a major problem in the education system. Many children from the poorer classes were unable to complete primary school. Sometimes, this was linked to availability of schools nearby, and the need to help parents with livelihood activities.

3.5.1 Reforms

In the aftermath of colonial rule, Caribbean leaders found themselves contemplating how to make this inherited system more relevant to Caribbean needs, as Isaac (1992) argued:

> Here in the Caribbean the adoption of external systems of education was based purely on pragmatic factors. In the colonial period, the colonies were merely an adjunct of Empire; in the post-Independence period, the relation of cultural tutelage persisted, and what was readily available was readily adopted. It was in the process of adaptation and modification that serious though was given to issues of relevance, appropriateness and to ethical or political concerns. (pp. 8-9)

Put another way, Fergus (1991c) surmised that "there was a logical connection between the focus on national needs and the notion of relevance. If education were to serve national development goals and priorities, it had to be ecologically and contextually relevant" (p. 563; Fergus, 1996). In practical terms, relevance amounted to the development of curricula, textbooks, and examination systems and bodies more consistent with Caribbean needs and development objectives (Fergus, 1991c; Isaac 1992; Layne 1993; Government of St. Lucia, 1999).

CARICOM governments therefore took a big step forward to institutionalizing relevance in education by establishing their own examinations board and curriculum development body in 1972 in the form of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). Prior to this, London and Cambridge syndicates was the only body to set high school exams at "Ordinary" level and "Advanced" level (Fergus, 1996, p. 28; Grant, 1991; Layne, 1993). Sanders (1991) summarized the transition in the following way:

> In the past, the educational curricula of Caribbean secondary schools replicated the British system... The obvious result of this was that Caribbean children imbibed British poetry and literature; they learned British history and geography. And, in their eyes, Britain appeared to be the centre of the world. With independence, and the need to make education relevant to the development aspirations of new nations, the GCE was replaced with the tests of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) and the curricula ceased to be dominated by Britain. To the new generation, in the Caribbean England became simply a distant place lacking the sentimental attachment which has influenced previous generations. (p. 179)

The CXC is now fully established and its certificates are increasingly used to enter foreign institutions (Roberts, 1999). The CXC's activities are not only limited to exams but it is also actively involved in teacher education, curriculum development, and the

production of teaching materials (Ellis, 1986a; Layne, 1993; Louisy, 1993; Steward, 1995).

Even though the CXC is by far the largest and most significant post-colonial education reform event, within CARICOM there are other examples of changes and innovations at the regional and OECS levels. Key among them was the expansion of secondary schooling, through the introduction and construction of junior, comprehensive, and senior secondary schools (Fergus, 1996, p. 24. See also Appendix 14). These newer schools were meant to augment the opportunities for all children traditionally provided by the denominational schools (Ellis, 1986a; Fergus, 1996; Education Reform Working Group, 1991). One outcome was improved literacy rates among the younger generation, although adult illiteracy remains a problem in many of the OECS.[7]

The other major change for the OECS was in the tertiary sector. From the seventies onwards, in each country, teachers and technical and community colleges were established. As well, teachers' and nurses' colleges were merged into multi-disciplinary colleges offering a wider variety of programs (Ellis, 1986; Education Reform working Group, 1991; Fergus, 1996; Millrowe Consultants Ltd. Jamaica & UNESCO/CARNEID, Barbados, 1994).

The capacities of these institutions vary from country to country. For example, colleges in Antigua, BVI, and St. Lucia are already delivering one or all of the B.A., B.Sc., and B. Ed. degrees (Roberts, 1999). There has been discussion at the regional level about

[7] Now the concern is with functional illiteracy with students who have gone through the primary system and are now in the secondary system. Part of the responsibly for this lies, analysts argue, with the Common Entrance exams, which focus on multiple choice and less on the written skills (Ellis, 1986; Education Reform Working Group, 1991). See also Fairclough (1992) for other theoretical perspectives on literacy.

rationalizing resources and achieving some economies of scale among the colleges. Specialization is one way to do this but the politics of who gets what specialization (e.g. tourism) is fraught with all kinds of political dilemmas (Millrowe Consultants Ltd., Jamaica and UNESCO/CARNEID, Barbados, 1994).

At the university level, while the thrust for developing a West Indian University began in pre-independence times,[8] full expansion of the university's faculties and main programs accelerated in the post-independence phase from 1960 onwards. The main campuses are located in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Jamaica. The OECS are referred to as the non-campus territories, but there are university centres on every island. These are also linked to the main campuses through satellite, which facilitates conferencing and distance education teaching (Ellis, 1986a; Steward, 1995). CARICOM governments, including those of the Bahamas and Cayman Islands, support the university financially. The UWI in its present form is another example of post-colonial reforms as Caribbean students now usually have options for study other than in Europe and North America. As such, like the CXC, UWI is an important institution for building the kind of knowledge base necessary for long-term and sustainable policy and decision making.

3.5.2 Access and Equity

The question of access is relevant at all levels of education. Today, the Caribbean has one of the highest enrollments in the world. Ninety percent of the children of primary school age are in school (Education Reform Working Group, 1991).[9] Over the decades, both in colonial times and the present, building new schools within reach of the majority of the population has made access easier. However, the question of access is affected by other factors such as income, status, and place of residence. Those with better incomes, for

[8] See Bird (1984) for a detailed description of the evolution of UWI from 1870 to its present development.

example, can pay for private schooling, extra tuition, or extracurricular activities. The Education Reform Working Group (1991) addressed the range of historic problems facing the primary school system in the following way:

> In many countries the primary school plant provides less than optimum circumstances for learning. Several schools resemble nineteenth century factories: they are a single rectangular room sub-divided by chalkboards. Many schools lack staff rooms, libraries, adequate sanitary conveniences for staff and students, telephones and other modern equipment. In most instances the furniture in primary schools is not ergonomically suited to the children or to more modern pedagogic practices. The buildings are not easily accessed by the physically handicapped children. In all the countries there is some overcrowding in urban centres and some under utilization of the physical plant in rural areas. Internal migration and differences in the residential and working location of parents account for most of these imbalances. (p. 13)

At the secondary school level, opening junior, comprehensive, and senior secondary schools provided more spaces for the entire population. Previously, only the church ran the secondary schools, and then only for those who could pay or won scholarships. However, access to full secondary schooling is not automatic in many of the OECS countries. Entry to these schools is by a common entrance exam at the age of eleven. This exam was patterned after the British model which has long since been discontinued. Those who pass gain seats in secondary schools and are virtually assured of at least five full years of formal schooling. Those who are not as fortunate have few options. Either they pay for private schools, on or off the island, or continue through the primary system until the age of 15 (Education Reform Working Group, 1991; Ellis, 1986a).[10] Countries like St. Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla, and BVI (with smaller populations) have already abolished the common entrance exam. Given the historical evolution of the Caribbean, the social and psychological demerits of this kind of sorting exam are well

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[9] Primary education in the OECS includes children from 5 – 12 years.

[10] This is a situation which is problematic not only in the OECS, but in the rest of CARICOM which still uses this system. Children who do not pass the exams after two attempts are placed in "all age" or post primary schools, till the age of 15 or 16, and therefore do not have the full benefits of a secondary education (Education Reform Working Group, 1991).

known to the OECS governments, and threaten the whole idea of the universality of education and equality for all. While there are financial costs involved in eliminating the test, mainly it is the political will of the leaders of the other countries that will determine if and when the practice is stopped.

Even though tertiary education has expanded greatly in the OECS since the seventies, there is still not enough to fill the needs and interests or curious imaginations of a younger generation that has been raised and completely exposed to a wide range of career opportunities. This situation has been fuelled in part by the constant exposure to North American television and culture. Very often the choices are migration to larger Caribbean countries with university campuses or to North America and Europe (to a lesser extent) where extended families reside. Those educated in the Caribbean do tend to stay within the region. For the OECS especially, there is always the scramble to keep its finest students since often they gravitate to better paying jobs within the regional level and in the private sector.

3.5.3 Quality

Central to education reforms anywhere is the issue of quality. This involves all the points raised in this chapter: relevance, access and equity, infrastructure, adequate finances, curriculum development, and teacher education (Stephens, 1991). Teacher education in particular is one of the most critical issues in quality education. Building a tradition of quality is a long-term affair that colonial governments approached as an after-thought, although they had plenty of advice about the conditions in education as shown by the following report on teacher education:

> The standard attained by would-be teachers was deplored year after year in Inspector's Reports even as late as 1934. There was then no provision for the training of teachers, and it was repeatedly affirmed that until, on the one hand, the question of training of teachers was tackled, and, on the other hand, an attempt was made to improve conditions of service, the education in the Primary Schools would continue to be inadequate. (*Saint Lucia Report of the Education Department for the year 1952*, p. 2)

With teachers' colleges in every country, and long-term assistance from international agencies, teacher education efforts have improved both in terms of the numbers of trained teachers and the quality of teaching. Even so, there are still significant numbers of untrained teachers in the primary system from country to country.

At the secondary level, there are even higher numbers of untrained teachers in secondary schools, although at this level teachers generally have advanced high school qualifications, or degrees in areas other than education. With the prospect of teachers being able to obtain a B.Ed. in their own colleges, in the OECS, this situation should improve in the long term (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1998a). Even with training, teachers still face the reality that salaries are low. There is very little mobility in the profession so it is often used as a stepping stone to other professions. This is still the case especially for untrained teachers just out of high school. Working conditions also affect the morale of teachers and ultimately the quality of their instruction.

Through the ECERP project there is a major attempt to harmonize legislation to address these issues on a regional basis through an Education Bill for the OECS. The Bill is an attempt to create a common legal framework for the OECS (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999c). Some countries have tabled the draft Bill and have begun to act on it, while in others it is in the discussion stages. However, changes need the institutional and financial resources to entrench the proposals in the Bill, which can be a developmental challenge for the OECS.

3.5.4 Gender

The issue of gender in the historical development of the Caribbean has generally been subsumed under other issues such as race, class, ethnicity, or income. It is only in recent times, with the advent of the world agenda for women in 1975, that it has been discussed as an issue in its own right. The history of girls' and boys' education in particular is also linked to the early days of primary education in the region. The Catholic churches always maintained a practice of separate schools for the sexes, both at the primary and secondary levels (Colonial Reports-annual, St. Lucia, 1910). Co-educational schools are a more recent phenomenon (Ellis 1986a). Nurses' and teachers' colleges are among the few examples of institutions where women predominated.

Women dominate the teaching profession in the OECS, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, but it is only in the post-independence period around 1982 that regional institutions, like the Women and Development Unit and Centres for Gender Studies at the University of the West Indies, provided the institutional frameworks for serious academic study on gender issues (Bailey, 1998; Gordon, 1997; Leo-Rhynie, 1998). Since 1975, the start of the Decade for Women, governmental machinery such as women's departments, commissions, desks and units have been established in all CARICOM countries (Antrobus, 1986). The roles of these institutions in informing development strategies and policies and decisions peaked in the seventies and eighties, and waned as global economic recessions and natural disasters impacted on the national agendas (Antrobus, 1993). In effect, the women's units were generally understaffed and under resourced, especially in terms of research capacity. One outcome of this decline is the lack of influence of gender analysis in policy development in areas of education in the OECS, such as the current reform strategy. This situation is not likely to change unless

politicians return to their earlier commitments, financially and institutionally, to a development process based on the equal participation of both sexes.

3.6. Summary

My focus in this chapter has been the historical evolution of policy and institution building in education, in the OECS countries through the colonial experience. The British built schools, hospitals, and government buildings and installed basic public infrastructure. In the past two decades, the OECS countries, now on their own, through the limited forces of regional and sub-regional integration, and with the help of the international communities, improved and expanded the colonial economic and social infrastructure. In comparison to other countries which were similarly colonized, the OECS countries have managed to achieve a good standard of living that has placed them among the world's more developed countries. In terms of education, as Fergus (1996) commented, "it is evident that much effort has gone into educational reform over the last twenty years" (p. 29). The work of the education reform strategy in general is a testimony to the determination of the OECS to further this process from a Caribbean perspective.

However, it must be emphasized that the depth of experience that the wealthier industrialized European society gained over centuries, at the expense of their conquered populations, to create their own economic, political, social, and psychological independence and institutions was simply not available to the OECS and Caribbean territories (Carnoy, 1974; Henry, 1991; Jagan, 1994; Pastor and Fletcher, 1991; Duncan, 1997). Of significance now is the fact that the United States has fully replaced Britain in key relations of the economy and in areas of security. That aspects of this new control would extend, by implication, into the political and social sectors is no longer in dispute

(Sanders, 1991). The United States did not bring either the interest or intent to build the level of institutional depth that is so necessary, in my opinion, to create the kind of deep changes and opportunities that newly independent countries need to enhance their viability at all levels on the world stage. That task, in theory, was left now to the sovereign leadership of these independent countries. History shows that Caribbean countries had several handicaps in achieving this. Chapter 4 will explore how post-war intellectuals from the developing world theorized these handicaps.

Chapter 4. Theoretical Perspectives

So we must de-educate, un-define and un-learn before we can re-educate, re-define and validate our existence. It will not be an easy task because we have hundreds of years to erase and rewrite. (Rodney, 1996, p. 4)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses dependency theory and the rationales for using it as a conceptual framework for this study. The discussion on rationale will touch briefly on other recent theoretical frameworks that have also been used to explain power relations in society. The first part of the chapter will deal with the origins of dependency theory and the core arguments from Latin American scholars. The overview of other theoretical models will follow next. The second part will then focus on dependency theorizing from the English-speaking Caribbean, and its implications for educational reform in the OECS.

As a background for using dependency theory, in the Caribbean context, a discussion of post-colonialism is helpful. The OECS are newly independent, post-colonial countries and this description has significance in literature. The term "post-colonial" is used not just as a geographical label but to describe critical discourse from writers, mainly but not exclusively, from formerly colonized regions. This overview of the post-colonial debate will serve to characterize more fully the impetus and the objectives of dependency writers, especially those from the Caribbean.

4.2 The Post-Colonial Debate

In its most literal sense, the term "post-colonial" refers to countries that were former colonies of European or other colonizing countries. However, post-colonial, in the context of this study, focuses on those countries in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean that gained independence from European colonizers, starting with India around 1947 (Walder 1998). Today, however, the connotation of post-colonial is much wider. One point of view from Walder (1998) is that:

> "post-colonial" has come to be thought appropriate, because of the implication that the colonial experience persists despite the withdrawal of political control, as a result of the continuing strategic and economic power of the former colonizers, the new global dispositions which keep groups of poorer states in thrall; and because, as Sahgal admits, however minimal the impact of empire upon a particular people in the long perspective, it has always left its imprint. (p. 3)

The phenomenon of post-colonialism is not just limited to this uni-dimensional description. From the literature, it can be said that the debate has two main directions: one relating to people and their writings from the formerly European colonies and territories, and the other to do with resistance writing, which Lincoln and Denzin (1994) describe as the "taking back of 'voice' of reclaiming narrative for one's own rather than adapting to the narratives of a dominant majority" (p. 580).

Tiffin (1990), offers a context for the different interpretations of post-colonialism from the point of view of "archives":

> Post-colonialism too, might be characterized as having two archives. The first archive here constructs it as writing (more usually than architecture or painting) grounded in those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism – that is, as writing from countries or regions which were formerly colonies of Europe. The second archive of post-colonialism is intimately related to the first, though not co-extensive with it. Here the post-colonial is conceived of as a set of discursive practices, prominent among which is *resistance* to colonialism, colonialist ideologies, and their contemporary forms and subjectificatory legacies. The nature and function of this resistance form a central problematic of the discourse. (p. vii)

Writers like Walder (1998) relate to the first archive, stating that his use of the term "involves writings in English from peoples whose experience of colonization is relatively recent" (p. ix). But more to the point, he uses post-colonial "to identify recent writings in English which have come into being as part of the process of decolonization" (p. xii). Ashcroft, on the other hand, (1997) takes an opposing position. He makes it clear that "post-colonial" does not mean "after colonialism" (p. 21). For him, "the post-colonial is the discourse of the colonized. It begins when the colonizers arrive and doesn't finish when they go home. In that sense, post-colonial analysis examines the full range of responses to colonialism, from absolute complicity to violent rebellion and all variations in between" (p. 21). He continues that "there is no monolithic 'post-colonialism' and that there are many way of theorizing and analyzing the range of subject positions stimulated by the colonial experience, so there are many post-colonial responses and many post-colonialisms" (p. 21). In the end he concludes "what characterizes most post-colonial points of view is a simple conviction of the continuing material and discursive impact of colonialism on the million of lives it has affected" (p. 21).

A similar notion is shared by Slemon (1990) who, while conceding that there are various notions of post-colonial, maintains however that:

> the concept proves most useful not when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once-colonized nations but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or post-colonial discursive purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its others and which continues as an often occulted tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations. (p. 3)

The debate on what constitutes post-colonialism swings between these points of views, but generally post-colonial writing is concerned with political discourse, the shift in power relations between the colonizer and the colonized, issues such as identity and representation (Ashcroft, 1997; Tiffin, 1990; Lincoln and Denzin 1994).

Some of the well-known writers associated with post-colonial discourse include Ranajit Guha, for his work on the "sub-altern" in India. Sub-altern writings focused on the roles of working class and peasant groups in Indian historiography, and the political, economic, and social cultures that informed their existence, in terms of class, caste, age, and gender. Guha and other writers who used the sub-altern approach wrote about these issues from the point of view of the peasants and not through that of the dominant group, which was all too common in colonial writings (Guha, 1982; Gran, 1996). French novelist Frantz Fanon, Nigerian Chinua Achebe, Caribbean Walter Rodney, and Algerian Albert Memmi are a few examples of well-known writers whose political writings have both challenged and replaced the colonial domination of the creation of knowledge about their own cultures and situations.

The other point to be made about the post-colonial debate is that it is frequently compared to the post-modern or post-modernism. Hutcheon (1990) observed "in literary critical circles, debates rage about whether the post-colonial is the post-modern or whether it is its very antithesis" (p. 167). One explanation is that the two "posts" began in the post-war period in the 1940s. Briefly, post-modernism is generally seen as the successor movement to the modernism phase which lasted approximately from 1880 to 1950. It generally refers to a movement in painting, literature, television, film, and the arts (Abercromby, Hilll and Turner, 1994, p. 326). I thought that Tiffin (1990) put forward an interesting rationale in terms of relating why the two "posts" possibly connect:

> Post-modernism, whether characterized as temporal or topological originates in Europe, or more specifically, operates as a Euro-American western hegemony, whose global appropriation of time-and-place inevitably proscribes certain cultures as backward and marginal while co-opting to itself certain of the cultural "raw" materials. Post modernism is then projected onto these margins as normative, as a neo-universalism to which "marginal" cultures may aspire, and from which certain of their more forward-looking products might be appropriated

> and "authorised." In its association with post-structuralism post-modernism thus acts as Barbara Christian has noted, as a way of depriving the formerly colonized of "voice," of, specifically, any theoretical authority, and locking post-colonial texts which it does appropriate firmly within the European episteme. Post-modernism is thus exported from Europe to the formerly colonized, and the local "character" it acquires there frequently replicates and reflects contemporary cultural hegemonies. (pp. viii-ix)

Tiffin concludes this analysis by arguing that the two "posts" do intersect but that the post-modern "has exercised and is still exercising a cultural and intellectual hegemony in relation to the post-colonial world and over post-colonial productions" (p. x).

Recognition of the challenges that newer writings like those from the post-colonial genre pose to the post-modern tradition come from authors such as Popkewitz (1999) who writes that "post-colonial" refers to one of the "new kids who contested the critical modernist tradition in education" (p. 3). Marcus (1994), on the other hand in, reference to post-modernism, argued that an exhaustion seems to have settled into the post-modernism debate and that he has noticed several scholars are carefully avoiding reference to the term in their own work (p. 563). He suggested that *cultural studies* seems to be "a successor identity for the space occupied by earlier post-modern debates, but with the aim of giving these debates both institutional presence and a political, ethical relevance to academic works concerning global social movements and events" (p. 563).

It is beyond the scope of this study to go in-depth to the semantics of these definitions of the "posts" debate, but from the brief review of the literature, I see the term "post-colonial" encompassing both the geographical and the intellectual boundaries. I also see a blurring in the lines of the debate with the passing of time as cultures find themselves increasingly affected by the same global issues. The rest of the chapter will now turn to an examination of these issues from the perspective of dependency theory.

4.3 Post-Colonial Theory: A Dependency Perspective

In the most literal sense, dependency writing emanating from Latin America could be described as post-colonial, in that the theory developed in the post-independence phase of the region's history. However, I must emphasize that the post-colonial definition I present refers primarily to societies like the English-speaking Caribbean. There are many other considerations in terms of describing post-colonial conditions and discourses in Latin America, but that is outside of the scope of this research.[1]

Dependency theory is generally seen as rooted in the Latin American development and underdevelopment experience. In the immediate post-war period, it provided an alternative view of the underlying causes of underdevelopment in Latin American society, which has a similar history of slavery and colonialism as the Caribbean. It is considered alternative, in the sense that both theoretically and practically, the ideas for development of western societies were driven by the school of modernization theory. Modernization theory as some writers noted was formulated in response to the new world-leadership role that the United States took on after World War II, and as such had important policy implications for the United States and its activities abroad (So, 1990, p. 36; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Larrain, 1989). The basic premises of modernization theory were that industrialization and urbanization were the routes to modernization and that capital investment was the most important ingredient in economic growth and development (Escobar, 1995, pp. 39-40). This recipe was supposed to work for all societies, but as Escobar (1995) wrote, the "advance of poor countries was thus seen from

[1] See Fann and Hodges (1971) for detailed readings on colonialism and imperialism in Latin America society.

the outset as depending on ample supplies of capital to provide for infrastructure, industrialization, and the overall modernization of society" (p. 40).

Latin American dependency scholars ran counter to these ideas of development. However, much of the original writings on dependency theory were in Spanish,[2] which, meant that access to the ideas was limited by language. Much of the writings have eventually been made available through translations, but a language barrier caused delays in dissemination of ideas of development and underdevelopment, compared to North American and European literature, which was written in English. Nevertheless, a useful article for fleshing out the historical parameters of dependency theory was written by Susanne Bodenheimer (1971), *Dependency and Imperialism: The Roots of Latin American Underdevelopment* (pp. 156-181).[3] First Dos Santos' (1971) definition gives us a good basis:

> By dependence we mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. The relation of inter-dependence between these and the world trade assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and can be self-starting, while other countries (dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or negative effect on their immediate development. (p. 226)

The starting point, Bodenheimer argues, for theories like dependency is an understanding of Latin American history. Since the time of the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth

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[2] The principal writers are Theotonio dos Santos, Fernando Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Anibal Quijano, Osvaldo Sunkel, Jose Luis Reyna, Edelberto Torres, Tomas Asconi, Marcos Kaplan, Pablo Gonzalez-Casanova, and Dale Johnson (Bodenheimer, 1971, p. 179).

[3] While Bodenheimer (1971) points out the characteristics of the prevailing dependency model, she notes that early evolutions came from analysis of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), and that of Andre Gunder Frank. Very briefly, CEPAL's analysis centred on the "peripheral" status of Latin America vis a vis the advanced industrial centres as manifested in the region's historical evolution as an exporter of primary commodities (p. 163). Bodenheimer notes that Frank's model focused on the role of the dominant classes in the developed societies as well as of the local metropolises (dominant classes and regions) in the Latin nations. He traces the underdevelopment of Latin America and all the manifestations of that underdevelopment to global expansion of capitalism and its penetration of the non-Western nations. Frank provides a causal explanation for Latin America's unfavourable position in the world market, specifying clearly the role of the dominant classes in the developed societies as well as of the local metropolises (dominant classes and regions) in the Latin nations (p. 168).

century, Latin America has played a certain role in the political economy of one or another dominant capitalist nation. This was Spain and Portugal in the colonial and early post-independence period to the end of the 1800s, England during the nineteenth century, and the U.S. since the beginning of the twentieth century. Consequently, Bodenheimer explains, "Latin underdevelopment is the outcome of a particular series of relationships to that international system" (p. 157). Thus the underdeveloped Latin economies have always been shaped by the global expansion and consolidation of the capitalist system and by their own incorporation into that system (p. 159). That international system was referred to as the "core" or "centre" while the formerly colonized countries were referred to as the "periphery."

Under these circumstances, Bodenheimer contends that dependency means that the "alternatives open to the dependent nation are defined and limited by its integration into and functions within the world market" (p. 158). The world market at the time, she defined as the flow of goods and services among nations; and the international system included not just a network of economic (market) relations, but also the entire complex of political, military, social and cultural international relations organized by and around that market (p. 158).

Bodenheimer states that dependency is structured in Latin American societies in two ways, first through dependent industrialization, characterized by:

- increasing foreign control, especially by multinational corporations in rich countries, over the most dynamic and strategic industrial sectors of poorer countries, through direct ownership and control over production, marketing and distribution of patents and licenses;
- increasing competitive advantages of foreign enterprises over local firms, particularly in industries of scale;
- outflow of capital abroad, as a result of foreign ownership; and
- introduction of capital-intensive foreign technology which aggravates the unemployment situation. (p. 162)

Secondly, dependency works through the notion of the creation or re-enforcement of clientele social classes and by certain institutions. Clientele classes are those which "have a vested interest in the existing international system. These classes carry out certain functions on behalf of foreign interests; in return they enjoy a privileged and increasingly dominant and hegemonic position within their own societies based largely on economic. political, or military support from abroad" (p. 163).

These, in brief, are some of the fundamental ideas of dependency theory that influenced development and underdevelopment thinking in the post-war period. Some of the ideas such as "centre" or "core" and "periphery" have extended beyond the dependency literature. These terms were used by dependency theorists to characterize the uneven nature of this type of relationship, between the developed or dominant nations and the underdeveloped or disadvantaged countries, but they are also used more widely and figuratively to capture inequities in society in general, such as within cities, regions, provinces, and so on. In development literature today, the terms "centre" and "periphery" are still used, but other labels such as "North/South," "First World," and "Third World"[4] have generally replaced the earlier terms, but the underlying implications of inequality still remain.

On the aspect of policy, Bodenheimer noted that "politically as well, Latin American development has been limited by the fact that policy decisions about resource allocation and all aspects of national development are conditioned and limited by the interests of the developed societies" (p. 160). Her conclusion is that "underdevelopment in Latin

[4] Velloso (1985) argued that "recent extensions of the concept brought countries outside Latin America into the scenario, as in the somewhat simplified North-South dichotomy. In these extensions, the original meaning of the notion is not always retained" (p. 206).

America is structurally linked to development in the dominant nations. European and American development and Latin underdevelopment are not two isolated phenomena, but rather two outcomes of the same historical process: the global expansion of capitalism" (p.160).

The attraction of dependency theory lay primarily in its analytical ability to explain the stagnation and constrictions of the economies of countries that had been conditioned and structured by imperial and colonial powers (Apter, 1987; Berberoglu, 1992; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Long and Evans, 1994; Palma, 1981; Ramirez-Faria, 1991). Dependency theory became a socio-political framework with a wide appeal among social scientists (Berberoglu, 1992; Leonard, 1990). Scholars from the developing world related many of the concepts to their own regional histories and structures, as was the case with Caribbean writers (Somjee 1991).

As valuable a contribution as dependency theory made to understanding the phenomenon of underdevelopment, it also met rigorous criticism on theoretical grounds that it lacked all the elements of a full theory. Some of the reasons for this, Somjee (1991) notes are that "outside Latin America, the only scholar known in the field of dependency theory was Andre Gunder Frank. Frank, according to Latin American scholars, produced the least number of ideas but monopolized all the adulation and limelight related to it" (p. 54; Ramirez-Faria, 1991). Part of that reason, according to Seers (1981), could be that much of the original writing on dependency was in Spanish, which limited wide access to the English academy, especially in the US. Also, Seers continues, since dependency did not originate in the North, it was not given the same weight in formulating theory "yet despite the relevance of dependency theories to European problems, they have made little headway in our universities" (p.15; Leonard, 1990; Payne, 1984).

On structural grounds, it was accused of concentrating too heavily on factors external to societies and neglecting internal structures of underdevelopment (Abdi, 1998; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Packenham, 1992). Of particular relevance to the Caribbean situation, Seers (1981) suggested that:

> Dependency theory therefore, has greatly extended the field of policy analysis and introduced significant factors omitted from mainstream economics... However many who belong to the school tend themselves to overlook other important determinants of the room to manoeuvre. I am not only talking about the implications of the internal social structure, which are given insufficient weight in some dependency analyses, but also the failure to take on board demographic characteristics. Theorists from small countries have gone out of their way to argue that the *size* of a country's population is relevant. Most tacitly assume all countries to be fairly large. Yet size is perhaps the most important determinant of the room to manoeuvre. (p. 141)

Dependency writing settled into a plateau in the late eighties and nineties. However, Cardoso (1993), one of the well-known names in the field, recently revisited some of the thinking on dependency, albeit in a more inclusive version. He noted that there had been a substantial change in the dependency relationship between South and North from the decade when the theory was first launched. He suggested that "in the past, it was possible to respond politically to the old dependency relations by appealing to "national autonomy," by demanding more industrial investment in order to correct deterioration in the terms of trade, and by expanding the domestic market in order to break the chain of "enclave dependency" and stimulate the internal distribution of revenue" (p.157). Now in the era of globalization, new difficulties have arisen for the less advantaged countries. Cardoso suggested that, even worse, while globalization of the economy caused the formation of new economic blocs, destroying the old East-West polarity and with it the US-Soviet hegemony, it also had a *negative and disintegrating effect on the Third World.* In other words, the "new 'democratic-technological' revolution not only integrated the world economy," but it also "paved the way for the emergence of larger and more powerful political and economic entities" (p. 155). He suggested that these entities would be a United States with Canada and Mexico, and the European Economic Community. Both predictions have been realized through the trading blocs of NAFTA (North

American Free Trade Agreement) in North America and the EU (European Union) in Europe. The Caribbean, and OECS in particular, has already felt the impact of these economic arguments, as related in Chapter 3, so that the conclusions Cardoso drew in 1993 have added meaning:

> Therefore, we are no longer talking about the South that was on the periphery of the capitalist core and was tied to it in a classical relationship of dependence. Nor are we speaking of the phenomenon, described some twenty-five years ago.... whereby multinational companies transfer parts of the productive system and the local producers are tied to foreign capital in the "dependent-associated" development model. We are dealing, in truth, with a crueler phenomenon either the South (or a portion of it) enters the democratic-technological-scientific race, invests heavily in R&D, and endures the "information economy" metamorphosis, or it becomes unimportant, unexploited and unexploitable. (p.156)

It is on the basis of this that Cardoso recommended both that the South construct a new kind of society, and also redefine dependency "so as not to yield only discouragement and a feeling that the South is either no longer of any importance or impossible to integrate" (p.158).

Despite the language barrier, and objections from critics, it is clear that this theory had a deep and lasting impact on subsequent theoretical developments in international literature. Before addressing how Caribbean scholars expressed their theoretical perspectives with dependent development, I will briefly highlight some other theoretical frameworks in the past fifty years that also addressed power relations at the global level.

4.4 Contemporary World Views

4.4.1 Critical Theories

Even as dependency writings were waning, other theoretical and conceptual frameworks were emerging from all over the world, in part as a response to rapidly changing external and international economic and political global phenomena. Theories of multiculturalism, feminism, racism, and globalization entered more forcefully onto the world agenda and

literature. With the exception of globalization which I will address separately, these theories brought out, explicitly, issues that had only been implied in dependency theory, such as gender inequality, identity, voice, and representation. As Popkewitz (1999) put it, these newer streams all added their theoretical stamp to the "posts" traditions "concerned with issues of injustice and equity in society" (p. 3).

These theories were also associated with the school of critical theory that emerged in the post-war period as modern social science writers sought new ways of interpreting and relating to the variety and diversity of new impulses from all over the world. Critical theory had its origins in Europe in the pre-war period, but the present proponents of the school are based in the United States. Apter (1987) wrote that critical theory was "originally a critique of both classical Marxism and liberalism and an alternative to the sociology of knowledge in its original Frankfurt school tradition" (p. 22; Popkewitz, 1999; Torres, 1999). However, critical theory has evolved today to the point where Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) contend that there are schools of critical theory in many fields. It is worth noting too, in relation to post-colonialism and post-modernism, that critical theory is one school where writers from both traditions intersect. Although critical theory is more associated with the post-modern stream, post-colonial writers are often referred to as critical theorists. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) address that theoretical synthesis, noting that it is "impossible to do justice to all the critical traditions that have drawn inspiration from Marx, Kant, Hegel, the Frankfurt school theorists, Latin American thinkers such as Paulo Freire, and French feminists... most of whom find their way into the reference lists of contemporary critical researchers" (p. 139; Dhillon, 1999; Torres, 1999). Apter (1987) earlier made a similar point that critical theory was increasingly important as a "generalized framework for integrating development, modernization, political development and political modernization within a larger philosophical synthesis" (p. 22).

Some authors, like Leonard (1990), have included dependency theory in critical theory discourse, noting that if "critical theory in practice is understood as a theory tied to a struggle against domination" (p. 128), then dependency theory fits that definition (see also Morrow with Brown, 1994; Forester, 1985). Furthermore, Leonard argues that dependency theory gives the rather abstract ideas of critical theory opportunities for practical application as he explains:

> examples such as dependency theory, Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, liberation theology, and (some forms of) feminist theory, that are self consciously tied to particular historical circumstances and practical contexts.. all share a commitment to the idea of empowerment and emancipation one finds in the received view of critical theory, but each in its own way provides resources that can be used for rethinking the relation between theory and practice generally, and critical theory and political practice specifically. (p. xviii)

4.4.2 Globalization

The concept of globalization is another theoretical lens in the development and underdevelopment literature. As the micro-economies of the OECS are also affected by the theory and reality of globalization, a few words about this phenomenon and what makes it different or similar to the theories already mentioned are warranted.

Unlike all the other theories and concepts just mentioned, the word "globalization" is a popular word. Almost daily the media carries reports about globalization. At the present time, these reports are related to protests surrounding world trade meetings, with international financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and the World Trade Organizations which protesters see as inimical to the interests of the economies of vulnerable developing countries. Although the terms are in every-day use, definitions are still elusive. In Chapter 1, Ezeala-Harrison (1999) gave a general description of globalization's affect on everything from economics to culture worldwide. Even so, Bowles and Dong (1999) state that, while the terms is "widely used in contemporary

social science and popular discourse," there is no full agreement on its meaning (p. 890). They argue that economists use it:

> to denote increases in trade and capital flows, more widely to be synonymous with any form of liberalization; by radical political scientists, operating at the ideological level as global neoliberalism; and by other social scientists, as the spread of ideas and cultures across national boundaries. (p. 890)

Bowles and Dong (1999) also put forward the position that "many developing countries have sought to integrate themselves into the international economy" and that "globalization has been adopted as the successor to modernization as a development strategy" (p. 891). But Veltmeyer (1999) sees it the other way, as an extension of the arguments found in dependency theory, for instance:

> global capitalism continues to reproduce the conditions of underdevelopment across the system, even at its center. These conditions are uneven. [In] some parts problems have reached crisis proportions, in others they are manageable and in a few others they have been eclipsed by conditions of a temporary structurally based dynamism. (p. 703)

One of the powerful developments in globalization is in the area of computer-based technologies, which Veltmeyer (1999) saw as having "created a veritable revolution in the organization and technical relations of production by shortening and lowering the costs of transportation and communication circuits of capitalist production process" (p. 691). On the same point, Ezeala-Harrison (1999) argued that "globalization actually implies greater interconnection between the various regions of the globe driven by modern communication and information technology (CIT)" (p.786). Without going too much further afield, some of the observations that Veltmeyer (1999), Ezeala-Harrison (1999), and others have drawn about the new technological inputs, combined with the traditional measures of capitalist development woven into the phenomenon of globalization are that economies in general are "less able to resist market-driven pressures" (Ezeala-Harrison, p. 787). Furthermore, globalization has resulted in a fundamental socio-economic restructuring that has established a new basis for the capital

accumulation process and political legitimacy (Veltmeyer, 1999, p. 712). In essence this process retains the status quo for dominant and rich countries, while allowing new opportunities for wealth creation for *a few* developing countries such as those in Asia. But the literature indicates that, in general, for the rest of the poorer countries, including tiny and peripheral economies like the OECS globalization represents just a newer form of dependency.

In summary, in recent decades, there has been no shortage of theoretical and conceptual frameworks for explaining the inequities between developed and developing countries. In each case these analyses could, theoretically, extend to the social sectors including education. However, I selected dependency theory as the appropriate framework for this study based on the particular historical structure of Caribbean society and the OECS in particular. The rest of the chapter will now focus on those arguments.

4.5 Caribbean Theories of Dependency and Underdevelopment

The period of writing on dependency and underdevelopment in the English-speaking Caribbean, generally speaking coincided with the period of dependency writings in Latin America. It is clear from reading the Caribbean literature on dependency and underdevelopment that the Latin American ideas to some degree had also permeated Caribbean intellectual approaches to similar problems in its own hemisphere. In terms of the concept of the post-colonial, Caribbean dependency writers fit both the geographical and discursive profiles. Writing about dependency and underdevelopment in the Caribbean region critically challenged the foundations and legitimacy of British economic, political, and social construction of the systems that are still in place today. However, it should be noted that the independence period in the region has also been

described as "neo-colonial," implying that little has changed especially in the first decades after independence for many English-speaking countries (Beckford, 1975).[5]

The dependent nature of Caribbean economy and how that was structured historically was discussed in Chapter 3. Historians like Eric Williams and Gordon K. Lewis had already provided some of the historical groundwork for the dependency concept and models later developed by economists such as Best, Levitt, Beckford, Demas, and Girvan who were working for the University of the West Indies and Caribbean governments at the time. That historical analysis showed, much like Latin countries, that the Caribbean region had been dominated largely by Britain for almost 200 years. Agriculture was the main economic industry, based mainly on sugar cane in the larger countries and, more recently, on bananas in the OECS.

However, in the larger countries of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana, in the years prior to independence in the 1950s colonial governments and later independent governments embarked on industrialization programs to help transform these economies (Harewood, 1975; Demas, 1975). Levitt and Best (1975), for instance, in making a case for their "plantation theory," described how attempts to transform the English-speaking Caribbean economy, through industrialization programs, had failed. The economic measures in those programs targeted foreign businessmen who were encouraged to organize industrial production, introduce techniques from the developed countries, employ comparatively cheap labour and sell their products either in their own metropolitan markets or in third markets to which they could gain access. Government

[5] The question of whether English-speaking Caribbean countries were in a "neo" colonial phase, given the heavy presence of American and European participation in the economy, was raised during the interviews. This is not an uncommon view in the region and underscores the difficulty former colonized countries have in establishing genuine economic independence when the underlying structural agenda was set decades before their time.

inducements to foreign business were in the form of tax concessions and the provisions of social overheads such as education, roads, public utilities, etc. (pp. 35-36).

That these programs did not produce the expected benefits Levitt and Best attributed to "the legacies of plantation economy and the new endowments of economies dominated by branch plant subsidiaries of multinational corporations" which "set limits on the capacity of the economies to adjust to the manner anticipated" (p. 36). The result was that:

> Low wage levels did not induce investment in labor-intensive industry on a scale needed to reduce unemployment. Nor did the shift of the traditional export sector to new products capital-intensive techniques enhance its ability to do without metropolitan market shelter. Nor has the increase in domestic products produced a corresponding increase in local savings, nor has the dependency on metropolitan entrepreneurship and finance diminished. In spite of heavy out-migration, unemployment increased both in absolute and relative terms. (p. 36)

Levitt and Best concluded that the frustration of these programs to deliver the expectation to the public can only "be understood in the light of the legacy which all territories inherited from their common plantation legacy" (p. 37). In other words, the Caribbean economy had undergone "little structural change in their four hundred-odd years of its existence" and that, "the economy remains, as it has always been, passively responsive to metropolitan demand and metropolitan internist" (p. 37).

It was on the basis of these occurrences that Levitt and Best constructed their plantation theory, the purpose of which they argued:

> We must emphasize, however, that our primary interest lies in isolating the institutional structures and constraints which the contemporary economy has inherited from plantation legacy. The historical stages which underlie models are to be seen in contemporary perspective of successive layers of inherited structures and mechanisms which condition the possibilities of the transformation of the present economy. Our major argument is that the study of the character of the plantation sector and its relation both with the outside world and with the domestic economy provides the single most essential insight into the mechanisms of Caribbean economy. (pp. 37-38)

The essential idea of their theory therefore was that in countries with plantation economies like the Caribbean, "structural transformation is not possible without breaking the traditional plantation patterns whereby Caribbean economy is incorporated into the metropolitan economy" (p. 58). The main lesson emanating from their arguments was that localization of economic decision making lies at the heart of the transformation of colonized structure of Caribbean society (p. 58).

Levitt and Best were not alone in bringing to bear such analytical concepts as plantation theory on the dependent nature of Caribbean economy. Girvan, in collaboration with Gomes and Sangster (1983), elaborated concepts of technological dependence,[6] the nub of which they identified as:

> A structural propensity for continuous and systematic reliance on imported production, consumption and to some extent organizational technologies, on the part of the socio-economic system, and especially the most dynamic components of the productive system. The production technologies concerned are imported wholesale, i.e. in unpackaged form and are not subject to any significant local adaptation or modification. (p.33)

Like the divergent streams in Latin American dependency writing, Marxist views of capitalism and underdevelopment also emerged from the writings of Thomas, Rodney, and other intellectuals at the UWI at the time (Payne, 1984; St. Cyr, 1993). Like the effect that dependency theorizing had on social science worldwide, at the time, it also established a framework for scholarship on Caribbean political economy from various intellectual interests in the region. At the level of government, certainly, these analyses were used to help explain and inform economic policies throughout the region, in trade, import-exports, industrialization schemes, unemployment, foreign aid, and so on, with

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[6] Girvan, Gomes and Sangster (1983) also spoke about technological underdevelopment, which they defined as the "weakness and underdevelopment of local science and technology institutions and, equally important, their lack of integration with the local socio-economic system especially the productive system (p. 33).

varying degrees of success (Duncan 1997; Jagan, 1994). In the case of countries like socialist Guyana, and Grenada to a brief extent, the need to lessen the historical impediments of dependency, more explicitly guided their political philosophies and style of government.

In terms of reactions, Caribbean dependency and underdevelopment writers in general faced their detractors in much the same way as in Latin America on the basis of theoretical incompleteness, and its lack of predictive power (Jagan, 1994; Payne 1984; St. Cyr, 1993). Overall, Jagan (1994) argued for a new development agenda, similar to the line of reasoning presented by Cardoso (1993) that all the imported models proved to be inadequate for Caribbean developmental needs:

> In our Agenda for Development, we need a global strategy for the eradication of poverty worldwide.... Our strategy must be based on new thinking and present-day realities. For Latin America and the Caribbean, many development models had been handed down to us – the Puerto Rican "industrialization by invitation", "bootstrap" model; Kennedy's Alliance for Progress; Johnson's regional integration with ideological frontiers replacing geographical frontiers; ECLA's import substitution; and Nixon's Equal Partnership. However, they all provided inadequate. (p. 12)

As dependency writing waned in the region, from the 1980s onwards, Caribbean scholars continued to produce political and economic analyses of the region's society and economy, but not in as much theoretical depth as their dependency predecessors. Their conceptual foci were spread among the many and subsequent development theories, concepts, and paradigms that emerged in international development literature, such as feminist theory, sustainable development, public administration, and so on (The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1990; St. Cyr, 1993; Williams, 1990). One concept that has also had theoretical appeal for the analysis of post-colonial economies is that of *smallness*. Concepts of smallness were fostered largely by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The main appeal of the smallness approach was that it could be used to

address economic issues specific to small island economies throughout the British Commonwealth. Like dependency, it had its origins in economic analysis and is based on criteria of physical size, Gross Domestic Product, and population size (Barrow-Giles, 1995). Originating in the International Economic Association in 1957, the idea has been picked up by the Commonwealth to address concerns of its smaller members (Payne, 1987). To this extent, the concept is not specific to Caribbean territories. Like other theoretical offerings, the concept of size has encountered its share of criticisms. It has less theoretical development than dependency theory, and the main critique is its "failure to come to some objective definition of size" (Barrow-Giles, 1995, p. 42; Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997; Louisy, 1993; Payne 1987). Nevertheless, the point needs to be made that all these later contributions closely examined, recognized, and took their cue from the realities of the historical dependence of Caribbean societies on Europe.

4.6. Relevance to the OECS

Although dependency theorizing has not been fashionable in the last two decades, I thought it was still relevant as a framework for my research interests, especially for the micro states of the OECS. Even though OECS countries moved into the independence era in the seventies and eighties, their economies and social structures were still characterized by dependent relationships from colonial times, which have persisted in the present independent era. Moreno (1990), for instance, was categorical in his assessment of that process: "Dependence and colonialism are not patterns of behavior imposed temporarily from outside. In the emergent nations of the Caribbean, such patterns of behavior were rooted in the formation of the societies, in their mode of production, in their culture, their form of social organization, and in their very raison d'être" (p. 44). Put another way, St. Cyr (1993) observed that "the shared dominant characteristic today is their dependence on the highly developed Western capitalist systems, and the main

struggle for liberation from that dominance" (p.138; Fergus 1991; Bray, 1991; Miller, 1988; Bacchus & Brock, 1988; Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997). These issues have been well addressed in the preceding analysis and in the historical discussion.

One noticeable gap in reviewing the literature by Caribbean dependency theorists is the overwhelming focus on the larger islands of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana which at the time had stronger economies and larger populations and therefore more opportunities to engage in industrialization and manufacturing processes. During this period, in the 1960s and 1970s, the OECS countries were still colonies, hence the focus on the islands which were already in a post-colonial phase. And perhaps because dependency writing petered out in the eighties and nineties, there were fewer opportunities to extend the analysis to the micro-state economies of the Eastern Caribbean, at the very moment in their transition from colonial to a sovereign rule when such theoretical offerings may have provided more insights into sub-regional dependency and underdevelopment. That lost opportunity was captured by Payne (1984) in the following observation:

> Unfortunately, Caribbean social science, having contributed to the birth and emergence of dependency analysis, has not been as fully involved in the more recent review of the theory's content and the attempts to go beyond it. The New World Group no longer exists, whilst few of the younger scholars at the University of the West Indies have yet shown the insight and intellectual energy displayed by Best and his colleagues. As a result, the literature on the political economy of the Commonwealth Caribbean does not as yet show much awareness of the main strands of what might almost be called the post-dependency debate about development and underdevelopment. The critique of dependency has been advanced more fully in the region at the level of the political, rather than intellectual, practice, but generally at the expense of the latter. (pp. 8-9)

I should point out, in closing this section, that even if Caribbean dependency literature may have focused on the larger countries, the reality for the smaller OECS countries was that their largely tourism and banana based industries were heavily controlled by foreign companies. That is still the situation today. And this applies not only to the main

industries but to virtually every aspect of the economy including telecommunication, computer and information technologies, and any other major investment.

4.7 Implications for Education

So how then can dependency analysis apply to education? Any economic theory aimed at development or underdevelopment problems almost by definition carries within it ideas related to the political and social development of the countries involved, rich and poor. Dependency theory demonstrated this through its widespread appeal and use as a socio-political analytical tool. However, in terms of how dependency theory can be applied to education, this aspect was less developed than the economic arguments. Nevertheless there are precedents within the dependency school itself in terms of practical application to education.

Velloso (1985) argues that in addition to dependency as a theory of capitalist underdevelopment, and dependency as the attempt to reformulate the analyses of development from the perspective of a critique of the obstacles to "national development," there is a third perspective: dependency as a concept and analytical tool (p. 206; Palma 1981). I favoured the third approach chiefly because, as Palma (1981) pointed out, its most significant feature is that it goes beyond the first two points and allows one to:

> arrive at a partial abstract and indeterminate characterization of ... historical processes which can only be overcome by understanding how the general and specific determinants interact in particular and concrete situations. It is only by understanding the specificity of movement in these societies as a dialectical unity of both, and a synthesis of these "internal" and "external" factors that one can explain the particular social, political and economic processes of dependent societies. (p. 61)

Stated another way, Velloso (1985) explained that this dialectical approach acknowledged the epistemological underpinning of the concept, which is the "need to

look at social phenomena as a whole in which the definition of its constituent parts encompasses the very fact that they belong to this whole" (p. 208). He concluded that the concept seeks explanations for economic, political, and social processes based on the specific and concrete situations in which they occur" (p. 208; Larrain, 1989; Palma, 1981; Seers, 1981; So, 1990).

Relating to education, proponents like Velloso (1985), who supported this third approach. argued that educational analysis may have much to learn from the dependency approach to the study of societal problems. In addition, Velloso observed that it can also be relevant to education research in that "it may contribute to the avoidance of an uncritical acceptance of so-called international co-operation education and its alleged benefits to the recipient countries "(p. 208). In supporting this third approach, I also take into account the caveat suggested below by Palma (1981), which has relevance to the Caribbean and OECS:

> I do not mean to support a naïve expectation that a "correct approach to the analysis of dependency would be capable of explaining everything; or that if it does not do, it is *necessarily* due to the fact that the method was wrongly applied, or has not yet been developed enough. I do not have any illusions that our findings could explain every detail of our past history, or should be capable of predicting the exact course of future events, because I do not have any illusions that our findings can take out from history all its ambiguities, uncertainties, contradictions, and surprises. (p. 62)

Some of the germane ideas presented in dependency arguments such as "centre" and "periphery," the politics therein, and technological and knowledge dependency, I believe are quite appropriate to the key concerns of this study, namely understanding the interplay between the internal and external factors, forces, and influences that hamper, or could facilitate, more robust and reliable mechanisms for policy and decision-making reforms in education. In addition, I also think that dependency as an analytical tool still has value for analyzing the structural characteristics of small size, vulnerable natural resources, reliance on foreign aid, and a still heavily structured colonial economy, especially in the OECS.

Louisy (1993), for instance, focused on these dimensions and their relevance to education in the OECS:

> The realities of the constraints that smallness of size imposes, force a recognition and an acceptance that small countries cannot completely eliminate dependence on external forces.... It is argued however, that small states can strive to lessen the degree of dependence, to narrow the gap that currently exists between themselves and the larger more economically viable countries, but more particularly to cure themselves of their dependency syndrome by becoming more equal actors on the international stage. One of the more immediate options open to them is the further development of their one available resource – the human potential. Questions of educational development in small states therefore take on greater significance. (p. 27)

The other aspect that dependency analysis has targeted is the dependence on foreign aid. In the case of the OECS, it is an all too familiar situation, and will be explored in more depth in Chapter 5. Louisy (1993) observed that this dependence on foreign aid is one of the "most sensitive and controversial aspects of the dependence issues .... In some forms, aid perpetuates dependence on aid; in others, it exerts a potent influence on the policies adopted by recipient countries" (p. 187). Likewise Stephens (1991) noted that "one of the particular problems of international aid is its propensity to engender passivity in its recipients" resulting in what Paulo Freire described as the "poor's 'culture of silence'- a silence lacking any critical response to events enacted in their name" (p. 232).

Focusing on the specific context of the ECERP project between Canada and the OECS brings a practical application to the dependency theorizing and reduces the tendency to speak about dependency in a vacuum (Leonard, 1990; Palma, 1981). As those who see dependency theory as a critical theory have noted the ultimate aim is to work towards change in the environment under study or work (Leonard 1990; Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999). My objective, therefore, in selecting dependency theory lies in that change of direction. Within the context of this research, that change, at one level, would consist of

concrete empirical data that policy makers and planners could use in the formulation of policies and decisions in education more specific to the OECS.

4.8 Summary

Much of the theoretical writings that have been produced in development and underdevelopment literature in the past sixty years in post-colonial countries have in one form or another, concentrated on the unequal nature of the power relationships of the colonizing process. I selected dependency theory as most suitable to the analysis of education reform in the Eastern Caribbean, given the region's structured economic and political vulnerabilities in the wake of British rule. At the same time, to put dependency theory in a more global context, I highlighted a few of the other, and more recent, theoretical frameworks, such as critical theories and globalization, that also focus on power relations within and among countries. These theories could also have could been used to address social issues like education.

However, although these other frameworks offered compelling opportunities for analyzing issues of power in education reforms in developing countries, I felt dependency theory was still timely for countries like the OECS, which have not have significantly altered their colonial inherited social and economic structures since their independence in the 1980s. On the contrary, as shown by both the historical analysis in Chapter 3, and the dependency arguments in this chapter, despite political sovereignty in the last two decades, the historical phenomenon of dependency still persists, just in newer mutations. These mutations continue to be reflected in OECS, and Caribbean relationships, including education, with the powerful countries in North America and Europe. With these perspectives in mind, Chapter 5 will continue the analyses of the dilemmas of policy and decision making in education in the OECS, drawing on the voices of

Caribbean and Canadian educators and development practitioners, as well as on relevant literature and project documents.

Chapter 5. Current Policy and Decision-Making Issues in the OECS

I think you could call it ad hoc. The policy formulation process needs to be harmonized. (SO5/7-7)

There are times when I suppose the Minister would make a certain statement. To my mind once the Minister makes a statement whether its written or not, it becomes policy as long as it is verbalized. (PT1/7-24.)

There was structure, but the fact that there was public awareness made us question how decisions were made, how policy is made and where it is made and who the players are and why they are/are not involved. And we deliberately paid attention to all stakeholders, and we discovered that policy was at the top. We felt that policy was made by politicians. Foundation for the Future was engineered by the politicians. (SO8/7-9.)

5.1 The Structure of Policy and Decision Making

The above quotations reflect many educators' perspectives on policy making, in particular in education in the OECS. Although there is a structure, it is not easy to grasp and generally lacks a strong and supportive institutional environment, both nationally and sub-regionally. These opinions are consistent with findings in literature on how many poorer developing nations approach policy and decision making. Their primary development focus, given financial and other constraints, is maintaining the basic, economic, political, and social structures. The more extensive development of a structured policy and decision-making environment is just not a priority (Debeauvais, 1990; Levin, 1991; Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor, 1990; Wilson, 1987). By comparison, the literature and practice of public policy and decision making, especially in developed countries, show that these processes are supported by a very structured institutional environment that reflects a wide spectrum of public and private interests. The most typical institutional structure is a policy institute. It can be a governmental agency, fully or partly funded, or a department within a ministry with a full mandate for

research, analysis, or development. Universities also conduct a lot of policy research, although the focus tends to be more on the academic community and academic interests (Debeauvais, 1990; Ellis, 1992; Firestone, 1989; Gaskell, 1988). In addition, there is a well-developed network of private sector, profit and non-profit specialty agencies with varying policy, research, and knowledge-building agendas that governments can ask for input into specific policy issues.[1] Many of the for-profit agencies are well-honed advocacy and lobby groups that use research to advance a particular position for their client groups. In general, these infrastructures have legislation, mandates, and funding to support this kind of national policy and decision-making organization. Such institutions are usually supported by trained personnel, the latest technologies, documentation, library resources and services, scholarships, university programs, university chairs, and, in many cases, public relations and communication strategies.

In the OECS, while there may be elements of such infrastructure in each country, full development has not been possible. A similar pattern emerges at the sub-regional level, although policies are developed and decisions made. *Foundation for the Future*, on which the current education reform strategy was built, was a testimony to that sub-regional process. The fact remains, however, that there have not been the full resources, *from within the sub-region,* to develop a more structured and sustainable policy environment for decision making in education.

To capture the essences of the sub-regional, regional, and international factors that affect policy and decision making, I have combined interview voices and literature review. The findings are blended into the main research themes: impact of policy and decision-making mechanisms on education reform; significance of the Canadian contribution through ECERP to the policy and decision-making processes of the sub-regional education reform strategy; and the implications of Canadian funding to OECS ownership

and leadership in the reform. The analysis is conducted within the framework of Caribbean dependency, education, and development

The first section in this chapter deals with the specific formal and informal processes and resource factors in the sub-region. This is followed by the implications of the Canadian presence in the education reform strategy. The third section analyzes sovereignty and leadership issues in the context of the current reform and external funding. Because many of the same issues emerged in each research theme, of necessity, there will be some overlap in the analysis. It is important also to remind the reader that the field research did not involve all nine countries, but selected quotes reflected a pattern among respondents from all five-project sites, who worked throughout the nine countries in the region. The main intent of the presentation, therefore, is to build up a picture of the constraints and possibilities in policy and decision making in education from various angles. From this analysis, I develop a potential framework and methodology for action in Chapter 6.

5.2 Sub-Regional Mechanisms for Policy and Decision Making

5.2.1 The Formal Process

The majority of interviewees considered that policy making or the process that informs sound decision making in the education sector was ad hoc or unstructured. They saw this particularly in the selection of donor-funded projects. While their comments were made during this period of education reform starting in 1992, document research and my own experience indicate that the pattern of uncertainties in choices and decisions for donor projects in education and human-resource development was already evident in the seventies and eighties. Although nationally governments may have their own theoretical,

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[1] The Institute for Research on Public Policy (Canadian) is one example of a private sector organization, which researches national and international policy issues. The Institute collaborated with CARICOM and the government of Jamaica on a conference on sustainable development in Jamaica in 1989.

philosophical, or organizational principles for policy and decision making in education, these principles have not really coalesced into a clear model at the sub-regional level. The authors of *Foundation for the Future* contributed insights into the complexity of the range of approaches used by OECS governments in education reform. In outlining the theoretical approach they used, the Education Reform Working Group observed that education reform can be approached from many perspectives: the rational (needs and systems analysis); the political (compromises between policymakers and interest groups); the comparative (adjustment and changes made in response to internal and external comparisons); and the radical (complete break with the past and launching out on new ground). (Haddad and Demsky, 1994). The authors further stated that, in the course of their fieldwork, they encountered a mix of these perspectives among OECS governments. For example:

> The rational and the radical perspectives were predominant among the intelligentsia in the sub-region. The officials of the Ministries of Education, and the Government generally seemed most aware of the political perspective. The comparative perspective seemed to cut across all groups as persons compared the education system of their countries with others in the Caribbean, North America, Britain and Japan. (p. 69)

The point that Ministry of Education officials, in particular, were generally aware of the political perspective was consistent with comments from many interviewees. Whatever approach to education reform, policy, or decision making was taken, it was conditioned chiefly by political considerations. The art of government can proceed without the physical and discernible institutional structures for public policy. Many developing countries make do with what they have. In the context of development assistance, however, donor officials, who may be more used to a rational approach to public policy, frequently encounter frustrations when dealing with countries like the OECS where such similar institutional support is not available. That dilemma was captured in the following comment by an interviewee:

> We continue to be naïve and we continue to look at this very much from a Canadian perspective in terms of how decisions are made, when the reality of how decisions are made in the Caribbean... They have a system and a very good rationale to it which we

> haven't accepted in terms of the vested interests that people have... decisions are not made on facts and on a rational basis. Decisions are political decisions, and they will continue to be political decisions (CS26/4-22).

As noted in Chapter 1, the lack of capacity to achieve effective policy and decision making in the sub-region has not escaped the notice of decision-makers at the sub-regional Secretariat for the OECS. They know that a well-structured institutional environment with the characteristics described above are a prerequisite for competing in "the emerging international order" (OECS Secretariat 1999, p. 2). Correcting this situation was one of the main intents behind the strategic framework of the education reform strategy (Forde, 1994). Currently, the main formal mechanism to facilitate this process is the OECS Education Reform Council, the traditional political policy and decision-making body made up of Ministers of Education from each country. The Council is supported in its regional deliberations by the OECS Education Technical Committee (OETEC) made up of senior education representatives nominated from each OECS country. The OETEC advises on educational priorities, and also provides advice to individual ministers on specific policy. Both the ministers and their senior bureaucrats are generally supported by their staff in the various ministries in preparing the information to feed into the policy and decision-making discussions.

The OECS Secretariat is the sub-regional administrative body central to this process for co-ordination, management, and follow-up at national, regional, and international levels. In addition, the Education Reform Unit, located in the Functional Co-operation Division of the Secretariat, funded by Canada though the CIDA-ECERP project, is responsible for overall implementation of the education reform strategy, and whatever policies or decisions are formulated by the Reform Council at these bi-annual meetings.

Within the last few years, the work of the Education Reform Council, supported by the Technical Committee and the Reform Unit, has been mainly related to the activities recommended by *Foundation for the Future*. Through these newer channels, progress has

been made at the regional level on areas such as harmonization of legislation, curriculum, and grade names. In this way, the present systems continue to shape and influence the pace and substance of reforms in education. In theory, whatever points arise out of the bi-annual meetings of these organizations are fed back into national education developments and discussions and serve to inform national policy or decision making in each country. These meetings of national and sub-regional organizations theoretically lays the groundwork for consistency in the kinds of policy statement, positions, and decisions taken at the sub-regional level.

The Education Reform Council is not isolated in its policy or decision-making practices at the sub-regional level. The Council interacts at the regional level with other CARICOM Ministers of Education and internationally with aid agencies, UN bodies, and other fora. Finally, as Cabinet Ministers, they also interact with their colleagues on other business related to their individual developmental agendas.

With this type of mechanism in place, the observations about lack of structure, ad hoc approach, and inconsistency relating to decisions that affect projects funded by international agencies in particular raise questions. To begin with, the expanded and in-depth support provided by the combined resources of the OETEC and the Reform Unit have only been available to the sub-region's policy and decision making bodies for the last few years. In addition, senior education officers are increasingly those with higher degrees in multiple backgrounds, such as education, business administration, economics, management, and communication. Training in these disciplines often provides theoretical and practical experience in the intricacies of policy and strategic planning. The results of the work of these newer structures will not, however, show up fully for some time yet. However, alongside and beneath the formal process is a very informal process functioning at the national level, and seeping into the sub-regional process. It was therefore the consensus of most of the interviewees that this informal process was really

the driving force behind how policies, and/or decisions were made in education in the OECS.

5.2.2 The Informal Process

As one interviewee put it, the way decisions are made, nationally, is not clear cut and policy often comes as a result of some problems that need to be solved:

> Things will come up for discussion. The discussion will be held among the senior staff. In a sense some decisions are made in those meetings which will be formalized by the Minister, so really and truly the Minister is not the sole agent for drawing up and implementing a policy but the discussions are held by senior staff. In some cases, the decision is made. The Minister will take it to cabinet and the permanent secretary will do the usual thing, prepares the memo and so on and the Minister will take it, speak to it in Cabinet and it eventually becomes policy.
>
> But to say that we don't have a real policy, we don't have a policy document. ..But I will still say that policies are still made in a kind of ad hoc manner as the need arises.. ... But to say that we have a real systematic system for policies, the answer is no...But in a sense, the Permanent Secretary, they know what they want, in terms of training ... Infrastructural development, exams, reform, but its not written out. (PT16/9-24)

Lacking an obvious institutional structure, such as a policy or research institute or unit, quasi-governmental or specific departments within the education ministry, policy decisions are made through the semi-formal and informal structures. An intellectual infrastructure of sorts, primarily of consultants, has emerged as an intermediate mechanism. Both national governments and the OECS Secretariat now have lists of Caribbean and foreign consultants to provide more of that structured information needed for policy and decision making. Academic staff from the Faculties of Education throughout the region also form part of that intellectual infrastructure. The main limitation of the semi-formal structures is that they are used on an "as-needed" basis to carry out a study, a workshop, or organize conferences. As such, they are not linked to the regular political workings of the Education Reform Council.

The political nature of policy and decision making, coupled with the infrastructural gap, takes the process to that level I have described as "informal." It is, in fact, a *culture* and way of communicating in small territories where interaction between government officials and private citizens, many of whom are friends and relatives, is much more intimate than in more structured societies:

> You have to understand the culture of the Ministry in terms of communication. Communication is relatively informal. (PT24/9-24.)

> There's quite a lot of sharing at the informal level. (RC2/5-24)

Brown (1996), in assessing this type of approach, has observed that:

> Casual observation of policy-making in many Caribbean states suggests that problems are identified and defined from the perspective of the main policy-makers and their inner clique of advisers and not from the perspective of those whose interests the policy is expected to advance (i.e., targeted beneficiaries). The result is wide disparity between real problems, on the one hand, and the policies designed to solve them on the other. (p. 11)

The issue of consultation, that is who is consulted, how and when, becomes a key factor in the type of information that is gathered through this kind of informal process. The Ministries of Education are constituted not only of politicians and senior bureaucrats and their staff, but of other professionals, such as teachers and principals from primary to tertiary levels. The principals were often identified as the group that ought to be more closely involved in the informal and formal policy and decision-making process, and yet "most of them would have liked to be involved in the policy making, but there didn't seem to be the structure for that" (SO8/7-9). The emphasis on structure in this comment is on "formal," because on an informal basis, as I was constantly reminded, government officials do have their way of contacting principals of the colleges or schools when they wanted informal discussion on a particular subject. Since the informal process at the national level feeds into the sub-regional planning, then the gaps in knowledge at the national level will be reflected in sub-regional and wider gatherings. Tedesco (1997), in a

study of ministries of education worldwide, captures the slip between the cup and the lip as regards the presence or absence of an institutional environment for change in education:

> The ministers of education agree that institutional capacity to implement educational change is one of the most important criteria for success. This criterion is, of course, much more important in developing countries. In the last instance, the difference in institutional capacity levels is one of the most eloquent indicators of the gap between developed and developing countries. Paradoxically, the lack of institutional capacity is the factor which, on the one hand, allows developing countries to introduce very radical reforms because there are few institutional limits, but at the same time hinders the reforms from being carried out. (p. 539)

Interviewees were quite aware of the political advantages to the lack of a more formalized structure for policy making. Such policies as some interviewees suggested lock decision makers into a position and reduce the possibility for synergy and creativity. The end result, however, as has been shown repeatedly through experience with internationally funded projects, is that many of them do not have lasting impacts beyond the life of the projects. This often results in a waste of human and economic resources, ultimately frustrating efforts at long-term educational reforms nationally and regionally.

In a structural sense, the handicaps of colonial history were still visible barely twenty years ago, when the OECS leaders took over the forms of British administration. This did not allow for the structure, capacity, or awareness of the importance for a well-defined environment for Caribbean policy and decision making in any sector, let alone education. In the immediate aftermath of independence, the British, along with other international agencies, filled those institutional gaps with their programs in the region. This brings us to perhaps the most critical aspect on policy and decision making: the research and knowledge resource base in the OECS.

5.2.3 Institutional Environment

My emphasis on the institutional aspects of policy and decision making in this section will address the infrastructure and human resources available for developing research and knowledge capacities. I use the term "research" to include the broader context of knowledge creation in the OECS. Current literature on policy and decision making, coming as it does from industrialised countries, already has research on virtually every aspect of theory and practice in the public sector. Both interview and document data indicate that the OECS does not yet have a clearly identifiable sub-regional institutional capacity for building research and knowledge in education. Generally speaking, much of the theory and practice in the copious literature from developed countries is not yet applicable to the present research reality in the OECS. There have, however, been some notable studies on the research environment in the Caribbean: Miller (1983), *Research Environment in the Caribbean*; Ellis (1992), *Research in Education Institutions: Increasing Capability and Capacity,* and Ellis (1999), *Information, Research and Decision Making in Barbados.* Interviewees' comments were consistent with the findings in these reports about problems related to research, such as the lack of institutional infrastructure encompassing funding, trained and adequate human resources, and documentation. Interviewees also knew and understood the potential and power of information and data gathered through research for achieving real change in education in the OECS. They also pointed out that many problems stood in the way of even establishing a basic infrastructure for research and knowledge construction (Rokicka, 1999). In a very real sense, the analysis presented is looking at what would be needed to seriously build a research base in education in the sub-region.

It became clear that "with education and development, research has become critical in the process of legitimating the continuing transition required, if political and economic goals are to be met" (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997, p. 53). Similarly, as Ellis (1992), in

her study for the Caribbean UNESCO agency (CARNEID) on research in the Caribbean, observed: "an enhanced knowledge base, the outcome of relevant and appropriate research is not only critical for policy formulation, programme development and planning, but is an important and valuable resource" (p. 38). Furthermore, she argues, "a sound data base that is comprised of valid and reliable information and is being continually expanded by the addition of new knowledge generated by educational research, is a resource on which all persons involved in education must be able to share if the quality of education is be improved, and if education policies and programmes are to achieve their goals and objectives" (p. 38; Haddad and Demsky, 1994; Miller, 1983). The need for research or, alternatively, the lack of research culture throughout the Caribbean has been noted from time to time by other Caribbean educators. Lockhart (1991) critiqued the lack of a research approach specifically geared to education in the OECS in this way:

> For example, in many countries around the world a significant body of research is being developed around the concept of affective schools but only one country in the OECS has attempted any research in this area. At the same time a number of countries in the sub-region have been involved in significant education reforms but there has been little documentation of the process of those reforms in the form of case studies, nor has there been any significant evaluation of those reforms. Surely this is a strong argument for creating a mechanism that can undertake decision-oriented research which will enable officials in education systems in the sub-region to be aware in meaningful way of what is happening in other education systems in the sub-region and to plan the development of their systems in the context of sub-regional experiences. (p. 3)

Recently, the OECS Secretariat (1999) pronounced on the value of a knowledge culture to educational development:

> Given that people are one of the abundant assets and the development thrust is people oriented the logical extension is that development should be knowledge based. Knowledge is here defined to include, not only education but also the acquisition, processing and use of information to generate economic opportunities. There is a clear link from here to human resource development to create competitive advantage in this area. (p. 15)

As things stand today, the OECS is not without the ability to produce knowledge or even some kinds of research. Yet, the still too recent legacy of a colonial history and very

dependent economies have meant that, for the past two decades, there has been very little movement in the kinds of constraints that militate against a more supportive research and knowledge culture or environment.

5.2.3.1 Research Sites

In the Ministries of Education, senior planning officers should focus on educational research expertise. However, their work is more focused on collecting information rather than on research. Furthermore, that information, usually in the form of quantitative annual statistical digests, is more for management purposes and for use with donors than for research, as the following interview comment indicated:

> And that is the real problem with regard to research capacity within each country. From what I know of ministries, a lot of attention is paid to gathering data, statistics and numbers. And it's something that we have inherited from the UN (in terms of UNESCO, IIEP, Paris). And again it's tied into the donor agencies.
>
> If you are meeting with the donor agencies, World Bank, CIDA, or IDB, you have got to have tons of numbers to convince them that the system is working well, efficiency and all that. So the research departments in Ministries spend a lot of time dealing with numbers. Now what research do they do? I think this a question that an individual project may answer, but I don't think there is much. I think hat they would start from looking at these numbers and say now what do these numbers mean? (SO21/7-21)

It was pointed out by a few interviewees that, in the last few years, islands that have received World Bank/CDB loans or funding (Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and St. Kitts-Nevis) for projects in education, as part of the agreements, have sent some of their staff for training at the master degree levels. These individuals, who are generally from the teaching profession, have been identified for senior management and or research positions in the Ministries of Education. The limits of this research did not permit a full examination of this World Bank program as far as research was concerned. Nevertheless, general comments from key informants suggest that the use of these individuals for outright research varies from government to government and that such an

approach had not been fully developed along any strategic lines that could be used sub-regionally.

Other research sites are Teachers' Colleges and Faculties of Education at the UWI in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. To complete their programs, students conduct research studies of problems within their system. But that research is only for accreditation and does not normally filter into the government echelons of policy or decision making. However, the Ministry of Education in St. Lucia is working with its community college to find ways to use its pool of research, both from students and staff, some of whom have doctorates, in its strategic planning activities.

Several interviewees also noted the strong potential of research conducted at the Faculties of Education at the UWI to help policy and decision making within the sub-region. However, academic research is often very theoretical and aimed at the research community, and university professors generally conduct research to further their own careers (Ellis, 1999; Ordonez and Maclean, 1997; Perris 1998). Moreover, university academics in the region tend to keep an arm's length relationship from governments and only respond when invited. At the same time, however, at the informal level, interaction takes place among OECS senior educators and Ministers of Education and UWI faculty. Many graduates from UWI are also in senior positions in Ministries of Education throughout the sub-region. Appointed members from the Cave Hill Faculty also sit on the OETEC committee. The fact that there are no campuses in the OECS itself is a very real limitation for developing a full-fledged research environment for all sectors, not just education.

The latest site is the OECS Education Reform Unit, which represents a vital missing institutional link for policy implementation at the sub-regional level. The fact that Canada funds the full operation brings us back to the familiar situation of dependency on foreign sources for achieving key developmental objectives. The OECS governments are

scheduled to take over the full running of the Reform Unit in two years. Only then will it become clear how committed national governments are to supporting a regional mechanism to further the sub-regional integration process in education, propelled by the education reform strategy.

5.2.3.2 Human Resources

The resource factor was the one issue that resonated throughout the interviews, regarding the supportive environment for policy and decision making. Resources are needed from all points: the economic, political, social, and managerial. Politics and economics will be analyzed more fully under leadership, but Lockhart (1991) summarized the dilemma in human resources, in the OECS:

> The education systems of the OECS which are relatively small compared to other education systems in the world have to provide all the functions of the education systems in larger countries with much fewer personnel so that education personnel in the sub-region are multi-functional and over-extended. The result has been that in some critical developmental areas education systems in the OECS are not able to function with any great degree of effectiveness, and as the resources available to education are likely to remain static if not shrink, in real terms these systems will be hard-pressed to provide the type of services that their population will require in a world that is becoming increasingly sophisticated and competitive. (p.1)

Some of the fundamental constraints in human resources in education to build a research and knowledge culture in the OECS relate to small size and limited natural resources. In the OECS, as small, island states, aside from the politicians, the bureaucrats who make policy in education, are also the ones who are responsible for implementing it. These policy makers do not have as large a support staff as their counterparts in higher profile departments or wealthier countries. They are limited in number, have multiple roles, and are all-purpose administrators. So when placed at the sub-regional level, there is a sense of isolation among these officers because they do not have a support group to help them interact regionally, even in terms of keeping them up to date on research and modernization of education systems.

On a positive note, interviewees saw the education reform strategy as being an opportunity to address this difficulty regionally through the sub-regional OECS education counterpart structure,[2] whose activities are facilitated through the Education Reform Unit. Although some progress has been made in curriculum through this mechanism. it is still new and has not yet evolved into a well-honed regional research movement. In addition, regarding curriculum research, interviewee (SO21/7-21) remarked: "one person cannot run the research. Even if she is there to direct it, who is going to do the analysis? Who is going to do the field work, and are these things high enough priority, so they can demand the level of funding?"

The difficulty in building a research and knowledge environment with lack of resources is formidable. The challenge was summed up in one interview: "At the Ministry level, at the level of education officers – people are trying to cope with too much and have access to too few people" (CS26/4-25). The question of who should conduct studies brings us to the resource issue of consultants. In the past, because the senior bureaucrats were usually engaged in multiple roles, consultants, both local and foreign, carried out most research studies. Most Ministries of Education now have nationals on staff, who have trained at the masters level and have the ability to carry out research. Until recently, since foreign donors funded many studies, foreign consultants also carried out the particular research projects. The practice of OECS people doing their own research has not yet been developed to any degree. Crossley and Vulliamy (1997) pointed to the implications of that trend:

> Imbalance in research training is perpetuated in imbalance in employment opportunities available to professional researchers. It is the lack of local researchers deemed skilled to internationally acceptable standards that leads funding organizations to heed the reports of research led by international consultants and leaves poor countries so thirsty for expatriate expertise. (p.56)

[2] This support is building too with the OECS Education Technical Committee.

The OECS, like other Caribbean governments, is now building up its reservoirs of regional consultants so that at least there is a history being created in terms of Caribbean people. However, for the OECS, in particular, which has received much donor funding, crucial studies are still being *conceptualized, funded, and organized* from outside the region. Even though there is a movement now on the part of donors to involve OECS governments in the design and implementation of studies, with local consultants, the control of the ideas and thrust of that knowledge does not reside with the region (Goodine, 1994; Preston, 1997). Interviewee SO5/7-7 put it this way: "but we have so many irons in the fire... so many consultants informing us. And there is always the query whether these consultants come in for ten to twelve days and telling us what we must do about what we have been going for 20 years." The Ministry of Education in St. Lucia has been tracking this practice:

> In many Eastern Caribbean countries, including St. Lucia, the knowledge, perspectives and agendas of persons who lack expert knowledge of the region dominate educational development. Although these countries have tried to adopt relevant education systems many still depend on expertise, resources and findings that originated in the advanced industrial countries
>
> The uncritical transfer of international research, resources and strategies from these sources has perpetuated dependency relationships as well as the tendency to regard foreign materials superior to local values and information. Studies conducted in the more developed countries are important but they must be viewed only as referenced documents. (Ministry of Education, St. Lucia, 1998, p. 1)

Dependency theory, through historical analysis, helps us gain a perspective on how countries, that have been colonized for so long, view the research endeavour as an external process. Used for centuries to being managed from afar, governments in the post-colonial period still retained that habit of accepting knowledge constructed from outside. Research in this context, which requires a shift in thinking from accepting knowledge created from metropolitan centres, to creating knowledge from inside one's region, and relevant to one's needs, takes more than a couple of decades of leadership to

overcome. Miller (1983) wrote about this when many countries in the Eastern Caribbean were emerging from colonialism:

> The implicit assumption that conventional wisdom and common sense is a sufficient basis on which to proceed with respect to the formulation of policy and the determination of practice and procedure. Part of the colonial legacy in this region is the readiness to accept opinion as fact, to substitute assumptions for conclusions from empirical evidence. and to make changes without substantial investigation. (p. 92)

Granted that in today's climate, with a new breed of trained officers, the value of empirical research on educational information is well understood. Yet, these trained officers are still in the minority in the Ministry and the culture of ambivalence towards research is still engrained. Interviewees re-emphasized that, lacking a more structured research environment, even if officers figured out what research to do, there are many issues to work on. "You still have the issue of having to manage the knowledge that is generated... there needs to be a way to handle it institutionally" (CS26/4-25). Added to a general lack of interest in or awareness of the value of research in educational planning, is a similar attitude towards documentation in the OECS. Specifically, this has to do with documentation in the field of education and human-resource development, which can be of use in the practice of policy and decision making in the OECS.

At the OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia, an Information and Documentation Centre had its beginnings in the OECS INFONET, which was established in 1987 as a computerized bibliographic database concerned with the dissemination of socio-economic material held in the documentation centre and institutions of the member states.[3] How much of this relates to education, I was not able to gauge from my time in St. Lucia. However, with the Education Reform Unit in place, there should be an opportunity to identify education-specific holdings. In each country there is also a statistical unit or some form of a

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[3] The collection consists of over ten thousand monographs (books, conference proceedings, manuals, and reference materials) as well as over 500 journals, newsletters, reports, as well as statistical data on the sub-region. The subjects covered are mainly Caribbean developmental issues, in addition to those areas that support various aspects of the OECS work program. The mission of the Documentation Centre is to "manage the intellectual assets of the OECS Secretariat to enable the use of information as an effective tool for development within the Secretariat and its Member States" (OECS Secretariat).

documentation centre in the Ministry of Education. However, the Ministry does not have a well-thought out plan to build up a research or knowledge base. The many problems with documentation include:

- The unavailability of key documents. Once prepared, which often involves considerable staff time, few copies are printed and locating them in later years is often problematic.
- Poor dissemination of important and potentially relevant information, even among Ministry staff and the public. Cost of photocopying documents was cited as one impediment.
- Organization and production of Caribbean educational materials from workshops and conferences. Printed materials are not given priority. There is a lack of consistency in documenting and disseminating materials from these proceedings for research or other purposes. "We are not people who document what we do. We do a lot of wonderful things, but we don't put them down so nobody knows about it. Somewhere along the line someone says: but somebody did that research. We are people who talk a lot but not write a lot" (PT22/7-25).
- Lack of documentation of projects, especially donor projects, once they are finished. One result is that every project that comes into the Ministry is something new and so gaps exist in the history and memory from one project to the next.

5.3 Implications of Canadian Contribution to Policy and Decision Making

5.3.1 Canada and the OECS: A Long-Term Relationship

Since the sixties, CIDA's bilateral program has been regularly engaged with the OECS governments more than with any other part of the Caribbean. For almost 25 years, the OECS, as a regional group, has received the major share of Canadian funding, for infrastructural projects such as airports and school buildings, and for the long Canadian Training Awards Project for human-resource development, and now the ECERP for education. The difference with ECERP is that it is now focused on establishing the kind of institutional setting that builds capacity for a more strategic approach to education and human-resource development. It is contributing to funding the kinds of activities that ultimately build the institutional environment for policy and decision making I have suggested, such as support to the OERU, change management workshops with senior

education staff, installation of electronic management systems, and so on, In the words of an interviewee:

> ECERP is not, for example, a project that looks at building infrastructure. It's about capacity building, looking at systems and mechanisms, setting EMIS, a framework for development. (PT8/9-4)

Any funding relationship that has been going on for so long in one sector is bound to have an effect on policy or decision making of the governments involved. It also perpetuates a form of dependency on the Canadian government, which leaves the education sector in the OECS in a very vulnerable position in terms of achieving any long-term change in key points in the system. To flesh out some aspects of that relationship I will look now at some vulnerable issues in the OECS –Canada relationship and CIDA's internal program and policy structures for aid.

5.3.2 Financial Dependency

Small and micro countries like the OECS, which have newly emerged from colonialism into independence, find themselves immediately faced with full responsibility for financing their own development. However, the OECS countries, especially those that opted for independence, emerged from the colonial relationship with some economic protection and guarantees, as we saw earlier in the agricultural sector with trading agreements with Britain and the European Union. However, the social sectors, which had no such guarantees, had to secure funding in other ways. Although education was singled out as a priority by each government, most of funds available for education went to teachers' salaries and basic maintenance. There was a real need for funding to renovate and transform the colonial infrastructure as documented by *Foundation for the Future*. Carrying out comprehensive education reforms is an expensive undertaking, and it becomes even more expensive if every small island state has to do the work itself. The sub-regional integration structure was one way to overcome those individual budgetary constraints, but that still left a financial gap, for the regional infrastructure also required

funding over and above what was available nationally. Canada, along with other non-Caribbean donors, has been filling that budgetary gap for many of those reforms.

However, the short time span from colonial rule to independent rule, as well as the pressure from expectant populations to fulfill all the new demands of independence, did not provide enough room for astute policy development in education or in the context of the overall developmental agenda. The new post-colonial bureaucracy, in general, did not have much experience in building sustainability, neither did they have experience in planning how to come up with keeping their human-resources base, developing labour market projections for skills needed and, on the basis of that, seek funding from government. It was no secret to development observers and analysts that budgetary planning in the OECS routinely included estimates from overseas donors, especially in education. Miller (1993) put that dependency into perspective:

> International agencies [are] the new overlords in education. As governments become unable to finance educational developments demanded by their citizenry, they increasingly turned to international lending agencies for loans and grants. Those loans and grants have come with conditions consistent with the policies of those agencies. Increasingly in the Commonwealth Caribbean these agencies have become the chief arbiters of educational policy and programmes —while their input to the total cost of education in the region is no more than five per cent, they have gained controlling interest, in some instances.... The recency of this development demands that it be given the most careful scrutiny. In the process let us not make scapegoats of the political directorate or their advisers for we the people have contributed by insisting on unrealistic demands. (p. 26)

CIDA officials, through the ECERP, have tried to lessen that dependency with the recognition that the long-term funding formula for CTAP was now history. Even though there is now recognition among OECS, and other Caribbean and Canadian development observers, that ECERP represents a new approach to development assistance, it is still much too new to erase deep-seated concerns about the impacts of aid, as the following voices demonstrate:

> Because what is happening now seems to be making the islands more dependent. I read in a paper once that the very means we use to make a country less dependent sometimes makes them more dependent. Because for example, we are pushing projects at them and they become so filled with work .. that they look for on the spot solutions and it dampens their creativity because they are pressed for time, that any canned solutions, they will grab it up right away. And it makes them project dependent, instead of working though solutions. (SO5/7-7)

> And it has always bothered me in the Eastern Caribbean that when the funds from the donor agencies dry up, a project that we found to be so valuable and good, suddenly cannot be continued anymore, so the life of the project is as useful as the donor. (PT22/7-25)

5.3.3. Contribution to Research and Knowledge

5.3.3.1 Data Collection Practices

CIDA's internal aid practices and policies contribute to the problems associated with Canada's aid to research in the OECS. The donor practice of conducting feasibility, design, and evaluation studies means that in the process a whole body of data gathering takes place. Analysis of that data informs decisions taken by donors. Just how much of that data or information produced in the form of final reports for the aid agencies is returned back to the OECS is a matter of debate and worth pursuing in depth beyond this thesis. However, there are two factors to consider in terms of the research environment for policy and decision making: donor approach to data collection and use of donor consultants.

As we saw in the previous section, the institutional research environment is not well developed in the sub-region. In this context, however, there is another level of uncoordination relating to the donors. There is no formal, structured, consistent or ongoing mechanism for donor co-operation or collaboration in education or human-resource development in the OECS. The post *Foundation for the Future* period did see a flurry of meetings arranged by the OECS Secretariat to get more donor co-ordination in the education reform strategy but that has not materialized to any significant degree. Aid co-

ordination, if it takes place, is more on a personal level among staff of various agencies, than on a systematic level. The OERU is the first institutional attempt to house some donor activities. However, each donor still operates independently for data gathering and administration of projects, be it for design or specialty studies. Given that there is no defined approach to building up a research environment from within the OECS itself, and the donors themselves lack any traceable systems in this respect, there are missed opportunities for research into education reform. While there are limits to how much one can ascribe every shortcoming to colonialism and its dependent structures, if guidelines, policies, or basic procedures to manage or track donor have not been developed, one is at the mercy of external forces, which are in turn driven by their own more powerful institutional interests. Recognition of the habitual practices that this vacuum creates and the need to correct it were expressed in the following statements:

> It's more like a habit when a funding agency is coming to your country, you need statistics, so they get those statistics, but we have not really developed the culture for decision making. I think it's high time we do that and this is the type of culture we are trying to build along with the necessary infrastructure in place in terms of software, hardware. (SO8/7-13)

> There must be a clear definition of what our needs are. And that's why the planning and centralizing of the information base is so important. I'm not sure to what extent we had a history in the OECS/Caribbean of being able to define what our needs are... (PT8/9-4)

Given that data collection facilities or expertise varies from country to country and is generally unstructured, when donors want specific quantitative data, they frequently conduct their own studies to get the pertinent information. CIDA is no exception. The point was made during interviews that even though the OECS may have collected data on a particular subject or area often to suit donors, the donors often then elect to bypass that and collect their own. That is not surprising given that the data collected by OECS countries may be dated or not well preserved. However, given that donors operate in tighter time frames and in more complex environments than the OECS, the OECS as yet has not developed its own systems or capacity for verifying and validating the information produced by donors (Louisy, 1993). Furthermore, the OECS' vulnerability

as dependent countries manifests itself in an inability to develop the political leverage to access research possibilities in donor-rich countries that could benefit the OECS. If the issue is not a priority, and research would fall into that category, OECS politicians are not going to "rock the donor boat" if it would result in delayed funding at best, or no funding at worst, as the following interviewee well knew:

> But another thing to say on research that we also know and continue to know that there are various innovations and methods and systems being used by donors and they burn a lot of money on that and yet there's no forum whereby the Ministries can systematically hear what the donors are doing. There's no forum where the donors are obliged to talk to each other. (CS26/4-25)

From my experience with CIDA over the years, I know that the lack of any mechanism for a more co-ordinated approach to aid has been a major frustration for CIDA-Caribbean staff and consultants, in terms of eliminating duplication of resources, donor fatigue in OECS staff, and ultimately erosion of efforts towards sustainability. The fact that each donor is only accountable to its national or institutional political directorates means that this situation will persist into the foreseeable future, unless the OECS as a regional group take a stand.

5.3.3.2 Role of Consultants

The role of consultants in contributing to research and knowledge through the aid mechanism is one of the most sensitive yet not well-explored factors in the OECS-Canada relationship. As a background to this the following comment by Chen (1997) is helpful:

> much educational research in developing countries is funded by development agencies operating from developed countries. Too many studies are either carried out by consultants from the north, or they are conducted by local researchers who have to shape their research agendas according to the expectations of the donor agencies. (p. 82)

Canadian consultants, generally of high calibre, carry out all kinds of studies in the context of a particular project, generally funded by CIDA. Their task, however, is not to enrich the research environment of the OECS specifically, but to channel the information they collect into a report for CIDA. These reports often contained a wealth of valuable raw data on various aspects of education, collected from the OECS people themselves, or from other library sources within and external to the Caribbean. Canadian consultants, for example, routinely visit Washington as part of their research to speak with World Bank or other relevant institutions to see what new research or data exists on the Caribbean, or to speak in person with officials responsible for the region. Some of this information may show up in reports. But the point is that there is no systematic way to channel any such new information back to the OECS. Louisy's (1997) observations complete the picture: "Indeed, much of the information available on education in small states in the international literature had been culled from quantitative surveys, conducted by external agencies, from country profiles prepared by nations at the request of external bodies, and from perspectives gained by external 'parachute' consultants on short-term visits" (p. 107).

At the same time there is no arrangement yet between the OECS and CIDA or other Canadian institutions to capture that raw data in a form that can be used for research purposes. Preston (1997) has some strong comments on this trend in the international community:

> The development of high level research and related capacities to increase the independence of low-income countries is not yet in the interests of those who control world finance. International technical assistance and consultancy is a means of overcoming local skill deficits and of ensuring external control of research and its consequent action. Simultaneously, the export of expertise is a mechanism for quieting rich country surpluses of skilled labor and reduced the alienation of aid funds. (p. 60)

In recent years, the practice of teaming up Canadians with OECS/Caribbean consultants means that Caribbean people at least have some of that knowledge, but it still leaves the dilemma of how to capture that institutionally. That missing link in the chain of

knowledge extraction brings us to the internal workings of the Canadian aid delivery system via CIDA.

5.3.4 CIDA's Policy and Programs

When CIDA engages in overseas development assistance (ODA) it is generally in the context of Canadian policy, set by the Federal Government. Decisions taken by federal departments usually stem from the policy or policies in place at the time. Given that CIDA, as Canada's representative, also works within the international development arena, policy issues from other international institutions, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, are also reflected in some of its internal policies. Decisions about what countries, programs, and activities to fund take their impetus – politics aside – from these policies. Gender and the environment are examples of policies that have been fully shaped in international and national fora. CIDA, like other federal departments, has a well-developed supportive structure to deliver the research or knowledge to shape and articulate its policies. Both staff and consultants designated for policy work contribute to the policy-making processes. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to produce relevant background documents. Once completed, policy documents are generally disseminated within CIDA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its office overseas, and the development community. Additionally, approved policies are incorporated into terms of references, and contractual documents, which CIDA enters into with its consultants or contractors who implement projects overseas. Since the creation of CIDA in the sixties, a range of policy issues, including gender and the environment, have shaped its project and program work in Canada and overseas. These include rural development, basic needs, basic education, human-resource development, sustainable development, capacity development, civil society, governance, globalization, and the current results-based management (RBM) (CIDA, 1997; Nelles, 1999; North/South Institute, 1995). Of RBM Nelles (1999) writes:

> an important element of CIDA's strategy was its discussion of results-based management (RBM) as an integral part of CIDA's philosophy and management. Now CIDA and other departments, increasingly under economic globalization pressure, must show developmental impact "results" as a measure of cost-effective government spending to justify Canadian tax dollars going to CIDA-funded projects. It has a practical dimension but as CIDA readily admits, is problematic, raising difficult challenges for the process and concept of development. CIDA recognized that evaluating outcomes is not a precise or straightforward process. (p.812)

It is not my intention to review the Canadian aid program at length, but a few pertinent issues from the point of view of CIDA could amplify our analysis.

5.3.4.1 Project Frameworks

CIDA's current program for the Caribbean stresses three requirements: economic competitiveness, environment, and governance. Human-resource development is another sub-category, under which the ECERP falls, but it is generally seen as one mechanism to promote these objectives. CIDA has a well-established consultative process with the OECS for agreeing on focus areas, objectives, or goals and results through a country program review process, which takes place periodically. Country program reviews generally include feasibility trips, and program or project design missions. If a project idea is approved, then a project memoranda and work-plan are implemented. While CIDA-Caribbean bilateral program engages with the formal sub-regional mechanisms in its consultations, such as the OECS Secretariat and the Education Council of Ministers, it also uses its network, primarily of Canadian and some Caribbean consultants, to conduct analyses at the national levels. Other regional institutions, like the UWI and CARICOM, are also used in researching issues for possible funding. Funding decisions are also made are at the top political level. Other regional institutions, like UWI and CARICOM, are also used in researching issues for possible funding. Funding decisions are also made at the top political level. For instance, gatherings between the Prime Ministers of Canada and the Caribbean can result in a commitment to funding areas mentioned by the

Caribbean politicians. In these cases, it is a just a question of working out the logistical arrangements for the project. More often than not, this process is used to define areas of interest related to the priority areas identified through the country program reviews. Even though politicians in donor countries, like Canada, develop policies in their own national interests, it is the staff at the institutional level that implements them.

Although Canadians work through the formal OECS mechanism, they also interact at the informal level. CIDA's policies or program priorities enter into or connect with the sub-regional agenda through both the formal and informal channels. The creation of ECERP, for example, was bolstered by the good relationships that senior CIDA educators had developed in the late eighties (through decentralization) with OECS education officials. That both CIDA and the OECS agreed on the overall need to focus new funds on the strategic aspects of policy and decision making has served the OECS well. At the same time, CIDA's aid delivery policies dictated that it has final say over how the project is managed and where funds are allocated. As described in Chapter 1, at the bilateral level, once a project has been approved, it is contracted out to a Canadian Executing Agency. Through this mechanism, usually the private sector, but at times through Canadian educational institutions or NGOs, some of the more subtle influences of the aid relationships are created. The Canadian policy of contracting out its large bilateral projects means that from design to implementation stages, which can take up to two years or even more, OECS officials, especially senior staff, who stay in their jobs much longer, have to deal with a variety of Canadian individuals who may represent Canadian policies in different ways.[4]

For instance, from the moment ECERP ideas were initiated (1992-1993), OECS staff dealt with CIDA staff in Barbados through the decentralization phase (CIDA policy position), then to CIDA staff in headquarters through recentralization (another CIDA

[4]The feeling among many OECS staff who have experienced this is that it seems that the donor agency policy changes every time a new person takes over. This is not just the case with CIDA but with all donors (Interview notes).

policy position), and the finally to a new group of people at the Executing Agency, Tecsult Eduplus Inc., in Montreal. Tecsult Eduplus, in turn, as the executing agency, carries out the contract within CIDA's specifications and policies. For example, CIDA's contractual agreements require: use of Canadian consultants with appropriate qualifications to initiate field studies and take the lead in providing final reports; disbursement and accountability of funds; and providing management expertise so that Caribbean people can take over the project when it is terminated.[5] By structuring the Canadian contract in this way, even though OECS people are involved in working collaboratively with the Canadians, it is Canadian knowledge and know-how, that is used. This is even if there are qualified local people. The current contractual and working relationship between CIDA and the OECS, through the ECERP project, has worked to change that imbalance by establishing a team of professionals at the OERU. Handing over the project to the OECS Secretariat and the OERU for the last two years of the project (2001-2003) is seen by all as "the way to go." The following interviews underscore the dilemmas of this aspect of the aid relationship, which still overshadow the project process:

> The concern with the private sector implementation is that even if the private sector company.. is very committed to the reform process and the principles and the objectives of it, they still have a bottom line of a business to run; they still have requirements from CIDA to produce on time, to disburse on time; and therefore the sort of hidden sometimes incentives to spending on activities that are easier to do without paying attention to the structure within which they occur. (AS22/4-21)

> The way their contract is structured drives many of their behaviors. They are given a contract by the aid system. Their contract has certain obligations to them. .. They are a company driven by the market to some extent, to a great degree. So they have to satisfy the contractual requirements. (CS26/4-25)

[5]This particular model of ECERP is a progression of the CTAP model for 25 years, which was managed entirely by Canadian staff with no provision for handover to the OECS at the end. Caribbean staff was involved in administrative, advisory, and country coordinating roles.

> That's a private firm, which wants to see measurable outcomes so that it can show it has done its work. And that puts another complexion on the whole thing. To what extent are they pushing what they themselves consider measurable outcomes rather than looking at the situation as it exits for the particular project.
> ...That bothers me a bit. But I understand that that has to be done. But a lot has to be worked out between the donor agency, the Executing Agency and the people for whom the project is being managed or being prepared. (PT22/7-25)

These issues are at the core of the sensitivities, in the donor relationship, not only with Canada but also with all other donors, and need to be addressed in more depth in other fora. Given the dependent structures of the OECS, and the extent that its own financial resources are limited, this in turn limits the bargaining power that regional politicians feel they have. To that extent, Canadian "assistance" exerts more stress on that dependent structure.

The implications for ownership and leadership for the OECS of this education reform strategy, therefore, as laid out by the *Foundation for the Future,* have to be seen in the light of the issues just presented.

5.4 Sovereignty and Dependency

> Dependence does not mean helplessness, and that the aid relationship need not be a "like-it-or-lump-it" affair. (Louisy, 1993, p. 190)

5.4.1 Ownership and Leadership

The Caribbean countries emerged from the colonial period with their sovereignty compromised: the smaller the countries and the more narrow their resource base the greater the degree of compromise. In this final section, I will focus on how dependency affects sovereign issues such as ownership and leadership, and secondly, on the opportunities offered by the Canadian contribution to education reform in the sub-region.

One of the expected outcomes of the CIDA-ECERP initiative is that it will eventually be completely owned and led by the OECS. In Chapter 1, I pointed out that both the OECS and Canada were in agreement on these objectives. However, when questions were raised on the concepts of ownership and leadership during the interviews, there were mixed feelings about just what these terms meant for OECS vis a vis CIDA, not just for policy or decision making, but for the reform process as a whole. The following excerpts brought these concerns out:

> Ownership and leadership are not the same. I would say that the countries tried to take the leadership, and they owned the feeling, even while recognising that they did not have the resources to carry it out. (RC11/2-24.4)

> I see the individual islands having ownership of the reform. They could make changes as recommended, but the only weakness would be finance... But I see them as having the ownership for the reform despite the assistance, despite the consultation. ... They are in charge, despite what the book says. They decide what changes they are making and when and in that sense they own it; that's the way I see it. (PT16/9-24)

> Now we're talking 1989 - 10 years ago... CIDA provided the original funding which led to FFF. So in that sense CIDA feels some degree of ownership as an Agency for the whole reform process in the OECS states. They catalyzed the talk. They didn't do it of course - all the actual work was done by Miller... and other people on the committee and CIDA certainly urged them along. (CS25/4-4)

> They very much looked at ownership. I think perhaps there was a different definition of ownership by Canada and the OECS. To ownership in Canadian terms, we were looking at assuming financial responsibility. I think the OECS people were more realistic. I think they recognized that they were going to need some financial input for an extended period of time. We're not going to be able to take over part of it. (CS26/4-22)

Interviewees also pointed out that ECERP's contribution was significant for a number of reasons. "We never had a framework – an education program, that seeks to bring together the sub-region" (PT8/9-4) was one comment. In addition, ECERP helped build capacity at the central sub-regional level through such features as the Education Reform Unit and the regional counterparts. It also harmonized common areas, such as education legislation, grade names, and some aspects of curriculum. But the question of ownership and leadership in the OECS is compounded by the fact that although education reform in

general, and ECERP in particular, is occurring at the sub-regional level, the real leadership and ownership is at the national level, as the following interviewee noted:

> Having said that, the work I have been doing over the last three years, I see the policy process much more clearly at the sub-regional level because that's where the particular inputs of the ECERP project have by and large been focused. So there is a bit of tension there because you know the level you are operating is important, useful, helpful, but it's not really the centre of the action. What's really important is what happens nationally. (CS25/4-4)

While the question of ownership and leadership will weigh in the balance, as long as there is foreign funding, interviewees pointed to broader political and economic issues that OECS leaders needed to focus on to demonstrate these qualities in the face of international assistance. Political vision, better management of human resources, commitment to a research environment, and more OECS financing were some of the steps that had to be taken to forge real change in the education sector.

5.4.2 The Vision

Foundation for the Future set a vision for education reform and for the education sector in general in the sub-region. But visions need to be refreshed and translated into action. For example, it was pointed out that *Foundation for the Future* presented a range of issues, such as financing of education, terms and conditions of salaries, satisfaction of teachers in the system, cost of teacher training, and so on. However, these issues require specific management, and planning, not to mention diplomatic skills, to bring them together, given the different national and regional contexts and interests.[6]

The politics of the region also play a role as governments may see fit to follow though on some of the ideals of *Foundation for the Future* only if it goes over well with the electorate, according to many interviewees. Thomas (1996), speaking about the Caribbean public sector, noted, "at bottom the issues centring on public policy are all

fundamentally political" (p. 56). However, the public will rarely oppose improved management practices in their Ministries of Education, especially if it can be shown that such improvements result in tangible gains at the school level. The same goes for attempts at reaching consensus on regional activities and with donor arrangements. Some interviewees suggested donors could be better dealt with if OECS leaders came to the table with clearer notions of OECS plans and priorities so that:

> when a donor agency approaches you now, you can pull out your paper and say these are our mission statements, and say these are our priorities and we would like you to assist us in these ways. This is what we are aiming to or at. (SO8/7-4)

This point of view was re-enforced another way:

> The way I perceive this thing is that we have to know what we want and until we are clear about that what we want, then we're going to always begin to think that we are losing something if we don't catch on to something else. (PT22/7-25)

The donor issue in policy and decision making is one challenge. Reconciling the vision between the regional and national is another predicament that is at the heart of integration movements everywhere. The difficulty the small OECS countries in particular face, as several interviewees expressed, is satisfying the needs of different countries, given that they are at different levels, have different financial and human resources, and cannot absorb or work though many of the reform initiatives as quickly as other countries can. When it comes to funding, donors themselves do not have a regional collaborative strategy, which adds to the difficulty of reconciling national and regional needs, and when money is involved, as is the case with much external assistance, national priorities take over.

Interviewees also argued that the regional versus national vision could be made more concrete if Ministers of Education showed greater interest in sharing and disseminating information among the departments and with the public at regional meetings. Once

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[6] Harmonization of education legislation was a first step in that process.

meetings were over, ministers returned to their national agendas with little or no follow-up beyond their immediate circle. This comment has to be taken in the light of earlier analysis about the importance of collecting and disseminating information from regional activities to build up research information and databases. And lastly, in terms of a vision, the work that the St. Lucia government is doing with its new Draft Education plan could be used as an example. The St. Lucia plan, a detailed document which sets out goals, objectives, priority areas, and so on for education, is being used as a basis for decisions within the government of St. Lucia itself and with donors to help with its own internal reforms. To the extent that national governments are able to present their "vision" in a structured way, the vision at the sub-regional level can be strengthened, even conciliating political interests.

5.4.3 Management

De Grauwe (1991) noted that "politicians are only one of the groups involved in the process of transforming education, and political will is only one of the preconditions for actual change" (p. 353). Even beyond the political will, in the OECS, as I was told, is the need for an understanding of what to do with human resources. The efficient management and use of human resources is one issue that has, and continues to bedevil Caribbean governments on the whole. The ECERP project placed a heavy emphasis on change management workshops for senior decision makers in education. Analysts of policy and decision making in developing countries contribute their own observations about some of the resources needed for effective policy planning and analysis. Haddad and Demsky (1994) listed such factors as the capacity of the state to do the planning at the national level, professional background of the bureaucrats who do the policy planning and the institutional structure of the political sector (p. 3). Levin (1991) also made a similar point: "at the Ministry level, too, skills in planning, policy analysis, and the management of change are not as common as might be desired, even though many countries have over the past few years improved their capacity to plan" (p. 379).

Rodhouse (1988) captured the dilemma of management and availability and quality of human resources, particularly in small countries, when he stated that it was a "feature of small educational systems that those actively engaged in the formulation and development of policy are also frequently involved in the practical day-to-day operation of the system" (p. 19). In this climate, Rodhouse argued "it is not always easy for individuals or others to see clearly where policy-making ends and practical application begins" (p. 19). Haddad and Demsky conclude that all these factors are ultimately political, for "where one stands depends on where one sits and decisions are made by the pulling and hauling that is politics" (p. 7).

Suggestions from interviewees for dealing with the management of human resources focused on the culture of decision making in particular. Given their size, OECS's education systems and, indeed, the entire bureaucracy are very centralized so that decision making is concentrated at the top. As a result, virtually all decisions, major and minor, are made at this level. It was noted that, in such a climate, although there are people, at lower levels, with ideas about new education and management practices, often these ideas did not filter to the top, the informal process notwithstanding. Staff who had received medium to long-term training and had returned to the ministries were the ones who frequently encountered this obstacle. This was not a new issue. A persistent problem encountered during CTAP evaluations was that of managing and harnessing new skills and ideas. OECS nationals who had acquired diploma or degree training through the CIDA-CTAP program often found it hard to introduce new ideas (E.T. Jackson and Associates, 1987). That problem still persists, in varying degrees, throughout the sub-region and it reduces efficiency as senior policy or decision makers do not take advantage of new aspects of education reform.

Other missed opportunities for harnessing information in the Ministry of Education structure comes from the teaching establishment. Principals and teachers possess a wealth of information, but except through their unions, or informally, they have no identifiable

channels to communicate their knowledge to senior policy and decision makers. Although I have confined my analysis to the ministerial structure for education, other critical information sources lie in the non-government sectors and parts of the business sector. Mechanisms for channeling their experiences in non-formal and informal social and economic aspects of education vary from country to country. I was limited in the time I had to investigate how much the entire non-government structure, including business, was able to channel information to OECS decision makers, apart from the bi-annual meetings with the Education Council of Ministries. That would be a research issue for the near future.

Opening up channels of communication to and from Ministries of Education, through more decentralized practices, could allow ideas to flow from all levels into policies or decisions on current or ongoing reform initiatives. One result, as expressed by McIntyre (1997) is that:

> Ministries of Education can progressively concentrate on policy formulation, planning, standard-setting, and monitoring and evaluation. This will allow them to develop a strong research and analytical capacity so that they can keep fully abreast of educational developments in the outside world, relating and adapting them to local use. (p. 62)

Better communication would help establish a greater awareness and feeling of ownership of the reform. While there are obviously political ramifications here, distinctions can be made between harnessing the Ministries' own expertise to improve leadership and ownership decisions and actions in the reform process, and practices that may be overtly political. Central to these changes would be qualities and abilities of leaders themselves to do strategic planning, be up to date with current management practices, to motivate staff, and to position the Ministry as a lead instrument of change in the reform process. Over time, as such a culture was developed, ideally "when the present cadre of persons move on then the culture is there, the environment is there that they pick and continue the process and enrich the process" (SO25/7-7).

The role of newer sub-regional structures like the Reform Unit, in the OECS Secretariat, has to be considered as part of resource management. There is now a fully funded regional structure with trained professional and support staff, research, and travel budgets to help sub-regional governments bring together hitherto untapped resources in the education system. The Reform Unit helps to co-ordinate some of the over-utilized and under-utilized government staff through workshops, studies, and the iternet in areas where it is functional. Harmonization advances in curriculum, grade names, and legislation have been, and continue to be achieved with the help of the OERU.

In addition, the OECS Secretariat, having the Unit as part of its structure now, enhances its mandate and position as a sub-regional body to communicate with donors, co-ordinate their activities to some degree, and even to provide policy guidance for implementation of education projects from the perspective of the recipients rather than donors (Goodine, 1994). The Secretariat, in discussion with donors, can thus be more effective and knowledgeable about issues of sustainability, including financial sustainability, in education (Goodine, 1994). Finally, the Reform Unit itself, being a key member of the Education Reform Council, meeting and representing the sub-region at intra-regional and international fora, gives added depth to leadership and ownership of the reform.

The Reform Unit is now completely funded by Canada, which re-emphasizes the vulnerabilities of the OECS as a peripheral region. The OERU works through the Ministries of Education, which means that it only has such power as the Ministries give it. Its potential as an important policy resource mechanism is dictated by its political context. It is the vision that OECS leaders have of and for the OERU that will make the difference. For, as Williams (1990) noted about the survival of institutions created during public sector reforms:

> The evidence suggests that the change process has been somewhat mechanistic as the setting up of new bodies is often interpreted as the change itself. Additionally, wherever organizational development strategies have been employed, they are often perceived as piecemeal and ad hoc and therefore, out of phase with the environmental strains and tensions that are pervasive in the wider setting. The ignoring of this latter factor has

> prevented development planners as the initiators and advisors on social change from making a frontal attack on the agenda of the change process at the societal and organizational levels. (p. 108)

5.4.4 Research Capacity and Knowledge

One area in the entire reform process where OECS leadership and ownership can make its claim is in building up a more robust research environment. Ellis (1999) made the point that "interest in and commitment to research as the basis for policy and decision making is dependent to a large extent on those who formulate policy and make decisions, and on the extent to which the individuals in those positions understand the importance of research to these processes" (p.38). Ordonez and Maclean (1997) reinforced this observation, adding that: "one of the biggest weaknesses in most education systems is that there is no culture amongst politicians of basing decision making on research." (p. 648). Furthermore, they argued that "research is important to help achieve some continuity over time between successive governments, but this often does not happen, one difficulty being that many political parties and ministers want to push their pet theories and ideas, generally based on political ideology rather than hard data (unless the data is in accord with the ideology)" (p. 648).

On a recent study on poverty assessment, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 1996) had this to say about the relevance of data systems to planning in the region:

> Data is also a prerequisite for designing programmes and identifying target groups precisely. While existing data has to be used more effectively, governments also need to invest in the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of additional data, the nature of which should be determined by the actions to be carried out. Ideally an integrated approach should be taken to the collection and compilation of comprehensive and comparable data. While the primary responsibility for the development of the framework for this information is that of the State, the social partners can play invaluable roles in the collection and dissemination of the data. (p.-4)

The ECERP funding through the OERU, in particular, has laid the foundation for the kinds of systems to support consistent and sustainable policy and decision making in the education sector. The OERU is in a position, especially in the next two years, to translate into structures and action much of the valuable experiences gained from the active regional and sub-regional workshop and conference culture in education and human-resource development. The need to move the historical oral practice that typifies Caribbean culture and research, to a more structured form that works for rather against it was captured in the following reflection:

> You know we talk, talk, we full of talk, all put together. Imagine how powerful this would be: some of this is my talk. I see my talk reflected in here. CIDA comes along and says this is the kind of thing we fund, and a lot of this got funded. Already there is ownership because you are funding the kinds of things people have talked about and are committed to. (PT7/7-7)

The OERU, for instance, represents an opportunity, sub-regionally, to co-ordinate a culture of research for educational policy and decision making. Interviewees gave the following suggestions:

- Start a document centre, as a repository for research papers in education, starting with the OECS. Its computerization facilities make it well equipped to establish links with other data sources in CARICOM, the UWI, and international libraries.

- Initiate planning and centralizing of data and information bases to assist in definition and clarification of OECS educational needs at sub-regional and national levels. The value of such bases for interaction with the donor and internal community now is indisputable.

- Define measures for *dissemination* of above research papers and data given the already stated constraints of centralized systems.

- Increase research output through relevant studies for agreed upon agendas and priorities as set out by the OECS governments.

- Stimulate contacts with wider stakeholders in education and related areas in and outside government (McIntyre, 1997).

- Be the ongoing sub-regional conduit for dialogue and action with the UWI (all campuses) regarding building a more extensive sub-regional research culture and knowledge bases (Brown, 1996). The UWI (especially the Cave Hill campus) has done a lot of work in the OECS and for the OECS in education. However, the impact of that work has not been shown sufficiently, through research.

While the Reform Unit does address many of these suggestions currently, there is a sense among interviewees that it is an important catalyst in helping to translate the vision into reality. The question for the OECS leaders is what opportunities, not present before, does the Unit represent for leadership in policy and decision making during the period of education reform.

While the OERU is an important sub-regional instrument, the same process of developing a research culture also applies apples to individual Ministries of Education, which feed information to the sub-regional and regional levels, as the St. Lucia Ministry of Education (1998) explained:

> A Ministry of Education that does not engage in research will in time become a "dead duck." So too will be the departments and agencies it serves. The Ministry must therefore have an active research agenda, and ought to have as one of its prime roles, dissemination of findings for the purpose of decision making. (p. 2)

In its Draft Education Plan, St. Lucia has listed the kinds of research skills it needs, staffing requirements, and so on. Not every OECS country is at the same level of readiness to define its research needs, complete with details about human or financial resources. What is important is that the sub-region, small and dependent though it is, begin to develop from its own experience a research culture in education that can inform policy models and frameworks, suitable guidelines that reflect its own character and possibilities.

5.4.5 Financing Education Reforms

No other issue depicts the vulnerabilities of dependent countries like that of funding. It is recognized that, although OECS and Caribbean governments have made education a priority, they have also been greatly assisted by countries like Canada in maintaining that priority. Of all donors since independence, Canada is the one that has continuously provided a variety of short and long-term training programs for OECS nationals in

education and human-resource development. But that assistance has created what was described as a project mentality of dependence that undermined discussion about true ownership of the reform. Yet with the new demands in other parts of the world, shifts in donors' policy, and national interests in their own countries, the levels of funding that Canada and others produced for the OECS will likely diminish. The question, therefore, of funding the reform after the ECERP, in particular, is finished, managing efficiently new smaller funds, is now paramount to any discussion of ownership and leadership for future reforms. During an informal meeting, one senior bureaucrat argued that, as far as he was concerned, the only validation for a policy is where you put your resources. As another interviewee remarked, "When you see project inputs having an effect on the recurrent spending on Ministries, then you know that you really have ownership. I haven't seen that yet" (CS25/4-4).

Financing education reforms has many considerations, a detailed analysis of which is outside the scope of this thesis. However, several points surfaced that interviewees, who had experience with financing education, felt were not discussed enough, but yet were critical when talking about reform in general and even more so on ownership and leadership. One point was that the real costs of reform were not really understood by many educators and that economic issues of efficiency and costs and inputs/outputs were not being adequately discussed in educational terms. They saw weaknesses in the links between the Ministries of Education and the Ministries of Finance when it comes to discussing such matters, and yet every idea for reform involves a cost (Fergus, 1996). This is certainly not peculiar to the OECS alone. Ministries of Education everywhere have to face their Ministries of Finance to implement reform ideas or projects, and they are not always successful in securing the amount of funding they need. Interviewee (SO5/7-7) articulated that dilemma this way:

> The other inhibiting factor is promoting policies in finance. The moment you implement a policy, it involves an outlay of money, and then the Ministers are hesitant because they don't hold the purse strings. The have to have a good relationship with Ministries of Finance or be very forceful and demanding.

It was not clear within the limits of my field work just how much the ECERP project in particular helped to facilitate links between the Ministries of Education and the Ministries of Finance. However, when the ECERP ends, the onus would be on Ministries of Finance to determine how to allocate current spending or find new funds to support the regional activities supported by CIDA, including the Reform Unit. As it is, some OECS governments already have trouble keeping up with their current contributions to the OECS Secretariat, let alone finding new funds for work that for seven years had been taken care of by Canada. Interviewees unanimously observed that it would become clear how committed the OECS leadership is to reform and to supporting newer structures like the OERU when foreign financing runs out.

The same discussion applies to the research agenda as a whole. Intellectually, understanding the value of building a research culture is one thing; finding the funds are another. OECS governments have generally not allocated funds in their budgets specifically for research. Research, if undertaken at all, is usually within some specially funded projects, again by external donors. Research currently undertaken by the Reform Unit on students and teachers, for instance, is funded through the CIDA-ECERP project. Funds are needed to set up and maintain the physical infrastructure, even if it is only an office or offices within a ministry, as well as the equipment, such as computers, with up to date software, photocopying machines, and basic supplies, and the like (Ellis, 1992).

Ultimately, the issue of financing education reform in the OECS relates to the issue of sustainability, a point that interviewees raised repeatedly:

> And he who pays the piper calls the tune which is a major problem indeed, because education reform means having people take ownership and having people develop leadership and it is difficult to do that when you don't have total control. It's a dilemma, you don't have total control, because you are not putting money into it, somebody else is putting money, must call the shots. The trick would be it doesn't have to be a negative but both sides have to be more sensitive. (SO8/7-9)

On a regional level and in the context of education reforms and external funding, Miller (1993) made the following proposal:

> External borrowing for education should be restricted only to those areas in which local resources for repayment are clearly identified and committed to those agencies prepared to lend for purposes that are determined by national and regional bodies. In a world in which knowledge and the creative imagination will be the source of wealth creation, the Caribbean cannot allow itself to be externally manipulated through the conditionalities of the lending process. (p. 37)

It is understood that small countries like the OECS will have to rely on external funding to support changes in their systems, not just in education (Bock and Arthur, 1991). That OECS governments have enough information and experience to know what is facing them with the ECERP is evident from the interviews: "What has happened in the past is that once the external funding from a project has ceased, that's the end of the project" (PT8/9-4). The task for the sub-regional structures is to identify these areas of the reform that are being funded by Canada, decide on the priorities that must be retained, and work with their governments to find means within their budgets to retain them

5.5 Summary

The challenges facing OECS governments in building a workable and sustainable policy-making environment are formidable. The integration model has provided a vehicle in which, ideally, those challenges can be worked out. Donors like Canada have seen the value of that model; hence their prolonged interest in supporting the education and human-resource development projects that can strengthen the developmental objectives of the OECS. However, Canada, like other donors, has its own agenda when it uses public Canadian funds for activities in developing countries. In the end, the onus will be on the OECS leadership to use their collective vision and creativity to exploit the opportunities presented by Canada, through projects like ECERP, to break down those challenges. The alternative is a continued pattern of dependency, which is intricately tied into the well-established structure of international donor assistance.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Implications for Policy and Practice

Just as history in the past made it so history in the future can unmake it. (Lewis 1983, p. 13)

6.1 Summary of Findings

My starting point in this research stemmed from my years of work in the OECS countries, in the 1980s and early 1990s. I frequently encountered instances of inconsistencies, duplication, and repetition of project activities among projects funded both by CIDA and other donor agencies. The unco-ordinated nature of these projects gave rise to a familiar pattern, well known to education and development planners in the region: such projects, although beneficial while they existed, were unsustainable once donor funding ceased. Using a qualitative methodology and drawing on dependency theory, I took the opportunity of the current OECS education reform project, started in 1992, funded in part by the Canadian ECERP project, to analyze some of the possible factors that gave rise to such disconnection among donor-funded projects. My main objectives were to better understand the make up and dynamics of the climate for educational policy making in the OECS; the implications of the involvement of the CIDA-ECERP project in those processes, and what this latter input meant for ownership and leadership of the reform and, ultimately, for genuine educational change in view of the region's colonial history.

Drawing on interview, literature, and documentary data, the analysis examined the historical, political, economic, and social focus that probably impacted on the presence or absence of policy-making structures primarily, but also on decision making in the Caribbean. While the research concentrated on the Canadian involvement, it also drew

attention to the roles of all donors working in education in the OECS, and the complex mix of factors in that circle.

The analysis was limited to the sub-region. However, given the OECS's integral place in the Caribbean, some aspects of the analysis had input from experiences in the wider region. These included the region's history of integration and the role of education in shaping it. First, much of the background and rationales for the OECS education reform strategy came from Caribbean and international initiatives for education that started in the sixties and seventies and peaked in the eighties. These concentrated mainly on reforms occurring in the CARICOM region in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as through the work of the Caribbean Examinations Council. While the CARICOM integration body provided the overarching vehicle for reforms in education on a regional basis, for the OECS in particular, the high costs of education to individual countries spurred the move to a more cohesive strategy, which was validated by findings from a major report in 1991, *Foundation for the Future*. An additional reason for the closer co-operation in education was the fact that traditional donor financial support, especially from Canada, was on the wane, which, on one level, meant that the region as a whole, and the sub-region in particular, would have to find more ways of co-ordinating and harmonizing their activities in education. Another fundamental point in the whole Caribbean experience was the pivotal role education played in helping the countries achieve greater self-sufficiency, given their dependent histories. All Caribbean countries had placed education as a priority on their developmental agenda, but their ability to provide the institutional and economic resources to support that priority has not really matched their ideals. This brought us specifically to the OECS situation.

The research showed that decisions about the kind of education projects that would help achieve self-sufficiency were hampered by an uncertain policy-making process.

Specifically, the institutional inputs to support a robust policy-making environment were incomplete in most countries. That uncertainty was also reflected at the sub-regional level. The CIDA-ECERP project was one of the major funded projects of the education reform strategy, which targeted the strengthening of policy and decision-making mechanisms, in the OECS. While the ECERP has helped to put in place some of the elements of the institutional mechanisms required to support the policy process, that support was only for seven years, ending in 2003. After that time, the OECS themselves would have to fund these policy-strengthening structures.

The CIDA-ECERP project aside and the institutional structures and process it put in place, the research found that some fundamental factors also accounted for the vacuum in policy making, many of which, it could be argued, were the result of the dependent structures inherited from colonial days which were passed on to the present OECS governments. However, there was also a lack of political vision in terms of how ministries should use human resources. The research found that what was construed as policy, as well as virtually all decisions, were made at the top by the politicians and senior bureaucrats, and that skills and knowledge that were available from among trained staff and further afield in the teaching establishment were not tapped. Also, the absence of a research and knowledge culture in the ministries limited the extent to which there could be any systematic and empirical bases on which to draw the kind of textured information and analysis with which to devise sound educational policies. All too real in this climate was the tendency to make decisions based on assumptions rather than on fact. In addition, the financing of education in the OECS was a crucial issue in policy development in education. Strapped for funds from within their own governments, Ministers of Education relied on foreign finances to implement many reform activities. The dilemma here was that often donor funds came with conditions and issues or approaches that were not always compatible with OECS priorities at the time.

In terms of the implications of Canadian involvement in ECERP regarding autonomy for policy and decision making, the findings were mixed. On the one hand, the initial research that led to the present education reform strategy was led and carried out by Caribbean people. At the same time, the key strategic element aimed at strengthening policy and decision-making structures and abilities of the OECS was funded by Canada with approximately $12 million Canadian over seven years. Dependency theory helps to put the situation in perspective. When this kind of support is given to small, vulnerable economies, it is more than likely that the articulation of policies, as well as decisions made about what ought to be education priorities, will be influenced by the donor's policy conditions that come with that funding.

Foreign funding has even more importance for the economies of the sub-region, given that the historical preferential and protection agreements for its basic products, like bananas, are no longer guaranteed with the new economic trading blocs in Europe. In addition, ever-powerful lobbies in the Unites States seek to undermine those historical guarantees in favour of their own interests. In short, the forces of globalization have forced new economic paradigms on all countries of the world, rich and poor. The OECS, on the lower end, feels the impacts most and is least powerful to do much about it.

Centuries of colonial rule and the deeply embedded economic, social, and psychological dependent structures that came along with it cannot be erased in two decades of independent rule. These historical conditions set up a basic infrastructure of government that OECS people now run themselves. However, they also severely limited development of the institutional environment that could support strong policy making that could lead to more consistent and sustainable decisions about what projects and

programs work best for reforming the sub-region's education systems, no matter who funded them.

At the same time, the literature shows that, even in developed countries a strong institutional environment is still subject to political influence. When those rich powerful countries attend global negotiations, decisions are based on data, information, and analyses that have been produced from their public policy and research institutes. These are often about countries like the OECS! The OECS does not have the vast resources to support such analytical capacity. Yet, through its collective efforts, the OECS can produce some of those resources. It is clear that coming to the negotiation table, either within the Caribbean region or with foreign donors, backed by a process of consultation, observation, and documentation, enhances the choices the OECS can make relative to the resources available.

This final chapter will focus on outlining elements of an approach to offer some insights on educational policy making in the OECS, which arise from my own interpretation of the data collected from the interviews, literature, and project documents. In presenting this approach, I acknowledge that recommendations of all sorts about the future of education and the process of education reform in the OECS and the wider Caribbean have been made by national, regional, and international experts over the past three decades. The fundamental constraints of the small OECS dependent economies, and other contributing factors, have rendered many sound recommendations inoperable. However, if, over time, a body of writing is developed to indicate the changes in education necessary for the sub-region to achieve its developmental objectives, then when circumstances allow, the OECS will have access to a body of writing that can help implement the changes.

Since much research completed in Canada and other foreign countries is often unavailable to people in the Caribbean, I will try, in the post-doctoral phase, to have copies deposited with the libraries at the UWI campuses in St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, and Cave Hill, Barbados. Additionally, I hope to place an abstract of the study on the Education Reform Unit's website.

6.2 The Qualitative Contribution

The potential for qualitative research methods in policy making in the OECS involves an awareness and understanding of the value of research to social reforms in general (Chen, 1997). As shown from interviews and literature, this is well understood by the educational and development community in the OECS, but has yet to be translated into a research culture in public institutions. Countries like St. Lucia are, however, beginning to make ground in this area. Perhaps in the OECS, the matter goes further to one of political vision. The issue of using more qualitative approaches to addressing problem areas in the education sector has been emphasized now by several writers in the region, as well as in the international community. Furthermore, major studies like *Foundation for the Future* and *Time for Action* owe much of the thoroughness of their reports to qualitative field research methods.

Using qualitative[1] methods and multi-disciplinary traditions would provide added value to a thriving research culture in the OECS. In the first place, research traditions informed by Caribbean and OECS specific experiences could be developed. Educational reforms and innovations in wealthier countries in North America and Europe have been informed

[1] Suggesting a qualitative research approach is not to de-emphasize the use of quantitative research, which has an established place in social science in the Caribbean. The point emphasized here is to give prominence to a qualitative method of analysis, within a greatly strengthened research environment, that has great potential for developing countries.

by data and information gained from decades of invaluable qualitative research in their own areas. Such work would normally be the domain of the Faculties of Education at the UWI campuses in the wider Caribbean, but there is no reason why some aspects of those functions cannot be replicated in governmental institutions in the OECS.

Secondly, concepts of qualitative research such as interpretation, reflexivity, and intersubjectivity are especially useful for countries that have had dependent and exploited histories. Such concepts, when applied to OECS research settings, allow for more critical reflection on social processes, meanings, and norms, leading to more contextually appropriate problem identification and solution (Chen, 1997; Louisy, 1997). These qualitative concepts help facilitate a deeper reflection on the relevance of education reform and to keep the focus on questions such as: For whom are the reforms intended? Why are they necessary or unnecessary? Who should be involved? What choices have to be made? How much do the reforms cost? When is the best time and for how long? What are the intended and unintended consequences? (Layne, 1994; Ordonez and Maclean, 1997; Rist, 1994). During the field research many interviewees indicated that they had observed, among the general public as well as the teaching establishment, a general lack of awareness about the reforms that were being carried out. Others felt that they had not been personally touched by the reforms, or that the reforms had not reached those most affected: the children. One particularly telling comment was that reform was not truly education reform unless it put gender at the centre of that process. Millions of dollars have been spent on the current education reform strategy, both from OECS governments and foreign donors. I believe that qualitative approaches can help in communicating and disseminating the purposes, objectives, and outcomes of the reforms to more people, at progressive stages.

Another advantage of a research culture in a Ministry of Education, for example, is that when staff changes occur, the knowledge and memory do not disappear with the staff. Research should not be treated as a one-shot issue, or a one-project phenomenon, but is seen as central to the work of governments and their Ministries of Education in particular. That culture should then be supported by documentation, databases, supporting technology, and adequate staff. The spin-offs would also be visible at the sub-regional level where officers are known to feel isolated from other national colleagues. For such a culture to work in each country, education officers need to gather for sub-regional meetings and deal with their various specializations with a common shared environment shaped by OECS and Caribbean needs, issues, and priorities.

At a philosophical level, these approaches help to examine the dialectical interplay inherent in donor funding. On the practical side, they can serve at the design stages as a guide when assembling teams of local and foreign consultants to account for the kinds of knowledge and biases each member of the team brings to the researched activity. To the extent that OECS people understand the potential of these aspects of qualitative research and can use them in their deliberations with donor agencies, they can begin to lessen the institutional strains of dependency, especially in relation to knowledge building.

A qualitative approach embraces concepts of participation and consultation, and forms a structure within which people's voices are heard. The OECS is known to have developed considerable experience in participatory methodologies for adult, education, community development and its variety of workshop activities. When used for public consultation and dissemination, such methods can only strengthen the sub-regional capacity to articulate its vision and demonstrate ownership and leadership on matters of education reform. Interviewees expressed a caution, however, that people in the sub-region had been consulted to death with no results to show afterwards.

With the practical applications of qualitative research, there should not be lengthy delays in the production of knowledge. Policy makers can request progress reports or action notes at various benchmarks along the research continuum. The world of report writing now includes innovative ways of presenting large amounts of information (Brown, 1996). With advances in software, reports can be presented in prose and graphic format and still convey full meanings. In short, qualitative research offers methods that are innovative, tools that are flexible, embraces most disciplines, and facilitates theoretical explorations that are particularly appropriate to developing countries like the OECS.

6.3 The Policy Contribution

Earlier I indicated that, given the lack of a structured sub-regional policy-making environment, much of the theoretical and experiential literature coming from North America and Europe, in the field of policy making and the education sector, were outside of the OECS. In a sense, this works to the advantage of the OECS, in that, if and when a more robust and structured climate is constructed both sub-regionally and nationally, both the opportunities and pitfalls are there in literature and practice for references.

A more structured policy environment allows for a more focused analysis and discussion on definitions of educational policy making and its relevance to the OECS context. Furthermore, any activity that allows for OECS or Caribbean discoveries is a powerful gain in the sub-region's efforts to secure more autonomy vis-a-vis external policies and decisions. However, as we saw earlier, policy can be construed in many ways: statements in budget speeches; ministers' statements; political campaign wishes; positions evolved from periodic research activities. Many of these are funded by foreign sources or may simply be ways of doing things inherited from the colonial administration

(Brown, 1996). National governments have their own formal and informal processes for devising a policy, which could inform educational decisions. The asymmetrical characters of these processes and the fact that they were often developed on an as-the-need-arises basis also impacted on the sub-regional policy-making processes (Thomas, 1996).

Public policy making is a multi-disciplinary process and the literature offers a profusion of models and systems from which the OECS can derive its own analytical and conceptual frameworks, criteria, standards, guidelines, monitoring, and evaluation systems (Haddad and Demsky, 1994; Brown, 1996; Henchey 1990). As Herrington (1998) observes: "the immensely egalitarian thrust of contemporary information technologies allows the fashioning of learning along individual preferences to an unprecedented degree" (p.151). Of particular value to the OECS is Herrington's observation that: "the next generation of educational policy and politics researchers may find the most politically useful lines of inquiry less contained in a policy control axis and more fruitfully sought within institutional and organizational analyses where the production of learning is being newly shaped" (p. 151). Some of that new knowledge, for instance, could help the OECS focus on short-term, medium-term, and long-term policy development. Such models or systems would cover all the cycles of the policy process from issue or problem identification to evaluation (Boich, 1990; Wilson, 1990).

Given that foreign funding, especially, tends to influence decisions about what kinds of educational activities or innovations are actually implemented, approaches like these empower OECS policy and decision makers, as they have a better idea of how to prioritize educational issues and to match resources and external funds accordingly. A country like Montserrat, for example, which is still in a disaster mode, may find that working with a short-term policy cycle gives it flexibility within its present

circumstances, but also a protects a structure for a stabilized future. At the same time, working within the context of the sub-region would give Montserrat an opportunity to take advantage of policy work that focuses on medium and long-term issues, decisions, and possible solutions. The Education Reform Strategy provides many opportunities to work with all these approaches. The important point is an *established process that can be referred to over time.*

6.4 The Institutional Contribution

Talking about the institutional contribution to the policy-making environment in the sub-region refocuses attention on the Caribbean as a dependent region within the world view. The strength of a nation's institutions is a mark of its ability to control its own affairs and to compete in the world economy. For the OECS, it is a question of safeguarding what it inherited from the British and the gains it has had made through integration, which many analysts see as increasingly fragile and threatened by global forces. In this context, the late economist, Demas (1992) outlined three options for the future of the CARICOM region: (1) a kind of economic semi-colonialism vis-à-vis the outside world; (2) marginalization, and (3) the most difficult and demanding, "that of interdependence with (rather than abject dependence on) the rest of the world. In this alternative, international competitiveness is an absolute necessity" (p.60). Demas went on to say that "we can only achieve such competitiveness only by self-reliance, by the adoption of a new work ethic, stepped up educational and training efforts at many levels of technology (both middle level and higher professional level)... Clearly, the third alternative is the one which as sensible West Indians we will all want – that is, earning our way in the world and not forever adopting mendicant postures vis-à-vis the outside world" (p.60).

In this move towards more self-reliance and sustainability, it has been argued that the smallness of Caribbean society is an advantage in terms of the "the ease with which services can be managed and administered, the ease with which one can gain access to facilities and personnel, and the flexibility and adaptability with which the system can respond to the needs of the community it serves" (Louisy, 1993, p. 44). Moreover, the informal nature of OECS society in particular allows for a greater and quicker interaction among all those who make policy and those who eventually have to implement it (Louisy 1993).

The opportunities possible in a small, although dependent system, allow for a more structured policy-making resource environment in the OECS. In view of the concerns raised by economists that education changes always involve costs, the observations of Stephens (1991) are instructive:

> In terms of resources I mean that rather than look to increases we must seek to "exploit existing capacity" so that we first examine critically how we use what we have and secondly, scrutinise how we can direct those resources to more efficient, "relevant and better ends." (p. 230)

The emphases in these recommendations are both for national and sub-regional research structures and resources, to the extent that they both reinforce and strengthen each other's capacities. With the exception of the Research Chair at UWI (see item 6.4.3), I am looking at structures and capacity that already exist, especially for policy making. The risk in any kind of integration movement is that the stronger countries will have a tendency to go their own way and develop institutional processes more suited to their own interests. However, the gains made so far in curriculum reform and harmonization of legislation, for example, indicate that the whole can work equally well with the parts.

6.4.1 Research Sites in Ministries of Education

Both interview research and the literature review showed that most of the Ministries of Education conduct their work without any research capacity. Furthermore, there were few, if any, outright identifiable research sections in the Ministries of Education. To have such a clearly identifiable structure would help to use the experience and knowledge of existing staff and harness ideas and energies of newly trained staff. They, in turn, can help set in motion a culture of research for other staff in the ministry, both those above and below them. The dilemma for OECS countries is to confine the work of this group to educational research and analysis and not dilute it with other responsibilities, especially if politicians in such a small setting feel challenged by a structure that will produce new knowledge. The counterpart structure, however, created with the ECERP project, provided an example of how such a network of permanent research positions can lend support to the sub-regional process. The number of professional staff in this suggested research section would depend on the financial resources available both from the local economy, externally, and the scope of the national educational agenda. However, at least one position should be allocated specifically for policy research and analysis in view of the findings presented in this study about the importance of the contribution of empirical data and information to sound educational policy and decision making. There is also a need to develop a cadre of national and sub-regional educational professionals who are very adept and competent in defining needs of the individual territories and the sub-region, and who are respected for it.

6.4.2 Teachers' and Community Colleges

Teachers colleges or integrated community colleges are structures that need to be thoroughly examined for the roles they can play in building a research culture and environment for the OECS. Interviewees argued about the need for people to recognize the importance of research and to see themselves as researchers capable of acquiring their

own knowledge. In countries where colleges have faculty trained at the masters or doctoral levels, there could be pilot activities linking student research programs and new areas of educational inquiry that may be applicable to the OECS. The challenge here would be intellectually and psychologically stimulating. Education could be seen not only as a vehicle for passing on basic skills and employment opportunities, but also as a means of exploring the subtleties of Caribbean culture and unexamined aspects of its history. Those insights could be used to develop valid and reliable empirical data to use in all aspects of educational research and practice in the sub-regions. Such information would also be relevant to elaborating concrete project activities funded by foreign agencies.

The added significance of the college structure is that, even though it is a government institution, the fact it is physically outside the ministry gives it a certain distance from the immediate bureaucracy. While politics cannot be ignored in any new institutional initiative, research does need some arms length from government if it is going to claim any objectivity, validity, and trustworthiness in the data it collects and the information and analysis it produces for planning and decision making.

6.4.3 Academic Chair at the UWI

A *future* consideration would be for an OECS academic chair in education at the UWI. The most likely campuses would be either at Cave Hill, Barbados, or St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. The chair could be appointed either to the Institute of Social and Economic Research where there is a multi-disciplinary focus, or at the School of Education. In time, this chair could be located at one of the sub-region's colleges if the college could build up a sound and vibrant graduate program. The value of a research chair is well known for enhancing the work of a department in building up a particular subject area. For example, that chair would have the academic legitimacy to identify and

initiate research activities relevant to the OECS and also track research on the OECS carried out by other Caribbean people or those abroad. In other words, it could take the OECS research agenda in education several steps higher (McIntyre, 1997). The assumption here is that the other structures just mentioned would also be in place so that the chair would not operate in a vacuum.

The funding impacts for an academic chair are much more serious for OECS governments because it would be the creation of a new entity. Nevertheless if the academic presence at the UWI were seen as part of a strategic approach to building up a policy-making environment, then the financial inputs would be well worth it.

6.4.4 Documentation and Dissemination

The final institutional points relate to documentation and dissemination. Documentation is one sure and proven way to retain the valuable knowledge that the OECS possesses about itself but which is more often than not mined by external researchers (Ellis, 1992; Quamina-Aiyejina, 1993). Other resources needed in this context would be trained librarians, up-to-date computer technology in which all staff should be trained, and software, photocopying machines, and office support. Even the physical state of the building housing the research facilities needs to be considered. If the full range of institutional supports is not in place, then inevitably gains made at one point in the policy process will be lost in the other.

Underlying all these recommendations is a need to avoid duplication of services from country to country. This is one area where the work of an entity like the Education Reform Unit is key. The Reform Unit could work with national bodies to advise on existing services and resources so that if the colleges or ministries need to develop their own research structures they know which services they can count on regionally, and what

they then have to provide themselves. The Education Reform Unit's role as a central mechanism in educational policy making has already been well analyzed in earlier chapters. However, while the suggestions in this chapter would require considerable study and cost exploration, the OERU at least is a *living reality* and a structure that in the immediate future can do much to pull together the elements of a sound, practical, and relevant sub-regional policy environment.

6.5 Donor Contribution

Public policy making is a sovereign affair. However, in this era of globalization even the most powerful countries, like Canada, discover that world events force their way into the national agenda and to an extent influence economic decisions, which in turn have consequences for social agendas (Simmonds, 1994). The OECS, too, are affected to an even greater degree than wealthier countries and they are much less powerful in their ability to minimize those influences on their economic and social activities. And, to a large extent, those economic and social barriers that have been theorized in dependency writing still exist. Nevertheless, there are many ways in which Canada, through CIDA, can continue to assist the OECS in neutralizing some of the negative impacts of globalization.

6.5.1 Collaboration

For Canada and other donors, there are ways outside straight financial assistance in which they can contribute to a less ad hoc approach to project decisions in education and human-resource development in the OECS. CIDA, as the lead Canadian agency, can, for example, develop more collaborative structures with donors active in the sub-region in education. The way donors currently operate is reminiscent of the "divide and rule" approach of European colonialism and warfare in the Caribbean. Canada could take the

lead through its many international channels to foster a more thoughtful donor dialogue and, hopefully in the near future, lead to a more cohesive approach to funding in education.

One example could be aligning donor monitoring and evaluation indicators with current issues and interests of the Ministries of Education. In this way, there could be general indicators on issues such as quality, school achievement, male-female achievement, enrollment, and so on. The objective would be to have a more consistent process for monitoring, but also an opportunity for donors and Ministries of Education to share and spread knowledge and to avoid duplication of resources and staff burnout or apathy in the OECS.

6.5.2 Research

CIDA could ensure that copies of all future reports based on data collected from the OECS would be deposited with the OECS Secretariat or the Education Reform Unit. While CIDA maintains the rights to confidentiality of reports for its in-house use, synopses of these reports, complete with qualitative or quantitative data collected, should be part of the contractual arrangements. CIDA could also take the lead in urging other donors to do the same. Canada could also benefit from some of these research studies that focus on informal ways of learning and talk, and how that, too, constitutes legitimate knowledge as much as any knowledge gained through formal systems of communication.

6.5.3 Funding

Funding assistance will always be part of Canada's relationship with the OECS. In this regard, and because of its long-term relationship with the OECS governments, CIDA should have no hesitation about funding requests for constructing a more robust policy environment, with particular emphasis on research. Ever mindful that Canadian funding

comes with controls and conditions, future arrangements may see Canada handing over control of projects at an earlier stage in the project relationship. Canada would thus be demonstrating that it understands the historical colonial processes, that have shaped the OECS. At the same time, it would also show that it recognizes its role in loosening the strings of dependency inherently embedded in the aid structure. Both Canada and the OECS would then be reaping the benefits of the vision they shared in *Foundation for the Future.*

6.6 Future Issues

The research also revealed a list of issues related to policy and decisions making that need further analysis:

- Methodological and theoretical approaches that can inform thinking and practice in education in the OECS. Such work should be documented and should lay the groundwork for OECS and Caribbean leadership in educational theory and practice. This would also allow for asking new questions about the relevance of the education system to the development needs of a post-colonial society.
- The role of gender. Research and information on the discussion on gender is not coming out of the education system. Despite the importance of gender in the education sector, it has not had a significant bearing on the elaboration of the OECS education reform strategy or the ECERP.
- Other public sector reforms. Educational reforms cannot take place in a vacuum.
- Policy and decision-making resources and structures in each OECS country.
- The implications, at all levels, of other donor involvement in the sub-region.

6.7 Conclusion

This research has focused on the OECS sub-region in the English-speaking Caribbean. The findings are based on the particular experiences of the sub-region. By implication, the analysis also extended to the workings of national governments. There is no intent to generalize the findings to other Caribbean countries, which are undergoing their own

education reforms at different levels and with different considerations. However, Caribbean society being what it is, experiences in one part often have implications for all. To that extent, the research covered here offers useful insights for education reforms elsewhere in the region, especially those activities requiring foreign funding. Also, the fact that the OECS Ministers of Education also work at the regional level with their counterparts in CARICOM implies that the observations and findings of the current education reform strategy can be shared with them. Governments throughout the Caribbean region are grappling with many of the problems faced by the OECS in education and social reforms in general.

The issues raised in this thesis are also significant as they point to gaps in policy making, in the OECS in particular. Policy making is particularly weak in the region. Current literature on policy making indicates that it requires a well constructed institutional and research base both in the public and private sectors, trained policy researchers and analysts, financial resources, documentation, publication facilities and so on. All of these are in short supply in the OECS. It is important to acknowledge the role of the formal mechanisms for policy making in education such as the long-standing Education Council of Ministers, and the more recent OECS Technical Education Committee and the OECS Education Reform Unit. Yet the fact remains that these are sub-regional structures and the real power lies at the national level. And as the research indicated, finding the resources to develop robust policy making structures is just not a priority for individual governments. Budgetary constraints are often a key factor when it comes to decisions about educational spending beyond the traditional areas such as salaries and infrastructure. St. Lucia, however, is one country which has recognized the need to start building up a more solid base for policy and decision making. Through its *Strategic Research Agenda* education officials have emphasized the input of research, for instance, in educational planning. The Ministry of Education noted: " a sound policy must be

formulated and articulated throughout the Ministry in order to provide support and promote the relevance of research in educational planning." (Ministry of Education, St. Lucia, 1998, p. 3.) For this to happen, the Ministry recognized that funds had to be found to implement that objective. Any innovation at the national level will necessarily strengthen policy and decision-making procedures and activities at the sub-regional level.

The fact too that Canada through the CIDA-ECERP has been the main financial supporter of many of the key initiatives for strengthening policy and decision making in the OECS underscores the limitations of the sub-region to fully undertake that process themselves. Such weaknesses, however, also re-enforces the climate of dependency that is much a part of the sub-region's history.

At the same time, there are opportunities for positive action from the ongoing education reform strategy and the Canadian contribution. Building on lessons learned from the education reform strategy could lead to new insights and provide the foundation for theories of educational policy and decision making for the sub-region and, by implication, for the English-speaking Caribbean. The research in this study, as well as current work on the reform strategy, points to the possibilities and constraints in educational policy and decision making. The new solid mechanisms, such as the OECS Technical Education Committee and the Education Reform Unit, comprise people with the skills and experience who can contribute to new literature and practice on educational policy concepts and approaches. The challenge of a more permanent institutional structure beyond the Education Reform Unit, however, is a weakness that still impedes thoughtful policy development.

Even though donors are aware of each other's work, at an informal level, there is little evidence of a formal collaborative mechanism to facilitate sharing information and

eliminate some of the administrative duplication of the OECS' resources. However, these donors regularly meet on Caribbean and other matters. The OECS governments can collectively urge donors to find ways to share information and develop basic systems to avoid the persistent patterns of duplication and repetition that have characterized foreign aid in education and human-resource development in the region. This kind of dialogue may lead to building long-term relationships with OECS people more on the basis of trust and mutual understanding of each other's responsibilities to their political electorate, and less on the project approach that tends to lock everyone into a limited and short-term development path.

Ultimately, OECS educators and development analysts know that building up a strong institutional environment for educational policy and decision making is key to achieving goals of self-reliance and sustainability. The decisions to commit the resources to achieve these goals will depend much on the political vision of OECS leaders. This will be an indication of how far they have come in the psychological struggle to divest themselves of the vestiges of colonialism, and to set the basis for a new kind of relationship that puts the power in the hands of the sub-region.

Personal reflections and observations

When I started this study in the mid 1990s, it was an attempt to understand what I viewed as inconsistencies between projects funded by the donor community and the general goals for sustainable development articulated by the OECS through its education reform strategy. I was particularly interested in the OECS' policy and decision-making processes for the education sector. The OECS education reform strategy and the Canadian CIDA-ECERP provided the project context to examine my concerns. The tools of academic research allowed critical insights into the historical, social, political, and economic imperatives underlying policy and decision making in education in the sub-region.

I was, however, still left with the impression that, despite newer inputs like the Technical Education Committee, the Education Reform Unit, and the education counterpart structure, all of which supported more coherent decision making, there was still a long way to go fill the gaps that led to the inconsistencies I had originally identified. Specifically, in the sub-region, the wider research and knowledge-building structures that can help to close gaps in policy making had not yet emerged. In addition, the lack of a more formal donor collaborative structure and an increasingly competitive global economy all mean that the tendency towards the disconnection between what is construed as policy making and actual decisions taken in education and human-resource development projects funded by donors is likely to persist.

One of the central findings of this thesis was that there is much more work needed on the kind of sound policy making that could support consistent and sustainable decisions in education. However, as an independent researcher likely to continue working in the Eastern Caribbean and the rest of the region, I believe there is a responsibility to identify those structural gaps in policy making and to bring those insights to bear in the work that I produce for the region. I also have a contribution to make whenever I work directly for the OECS by helping to build up and recover

Caribbean knowledge that I may gain through interviews with OECS people themselves, observation, or other forms of research.

I know this is easier said than done, but I think there will be opportunities for collaborative work with researchers from other funding agencies and multilateral institutions working in the region to examine the issues raised in this study outside the scope of the "project." I believe the time is ripe for donor agencies working the OECS governments to collectively revisit the rationales and methods of financial contribution to this post-colonial region and ask new questions about aid, education, sustainability, and even sovereignty. This kind of work cannot be done outside the scope of the government structure in the OECS. Unlike wealthy donor countries with their wide range of public and private institutions, which provide ample room for critical research and discussion at arms' length from the government, in the OECS, the government is the main political and institutional structure. Nevertheless, through the OECS education reform strategy and with the with help of donors like Canada, there is a growing number of public sector professionals with the skills and training from ministries, schools, and colleges who are aware of the difficulties in making sustainable decisions in education. This is especially the case for those funded by foreign agencies.

As *Foundation for the Future* showed, it is not beyond the vision and capacity of OECS and policy and decision makers to bring together government-based Caribbean educators and wider regional and non-regional researchers/consultants to find ways to stimulate constructive and ongoing dialogue focusing on collaborative approaches to policy making. The NGO sector, though small in the region, also has a role to play in policy making and decision making in education. Their role to date has been marginal yet their work with many of those disaffected by the education system make them valuable contributors to any long-term dialogue in education reform in the OECS.

The economic reality of small dependent countries that make up the OECS suggests that institution building is painfully slow. Yet the frustrations and missed opportunities that come from not addressing the kinds of issues suggested here are only likely to increase among an educated population. The ultimate outcome could be an adverse effect on the sub-region's vision for progress and prosperity.

As an independent researcher, this phase of my enquiry has come to an end. Nevertheless, it also marks the beginning of another phase of research and writing on the many subjects presented in this thesis.

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Appendix 1
Acronyms

BVI -British Virgin Islands
CARICOM -Caribbean Community
CDB - Caribbean Development Bank
CPF -Country Program Framework
CEA - Canadian Executing Agency
CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency
CTF – Caribbean Teachers Federation
CTAP - Canada Training Awards Project
CXC - Caribbean Examinations Council
ECERP - Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project
EMIS - Educational Management Information System
EU - European Union
FFF - Foundation For the Future
GTZ - Agency for Technical Cooperation of the Government of Germany
IT - Information Technology
MOE- Ministry of Education
OCOD- Organization for Co-operation in Overseas Development
CTF - Canadian Teachers Federation
ODA - Overseas Development Assistance
OECS - Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OERC - OECS Education Reform Council
OERS - OECS Education Reform Strategy
OERU - OECS Education Reform Unit
OETEC - OECS Education Technical Committee
RBM - Results Based Management
TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training Systems
UNESCO - United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization
UWI- University of the West Indies

Appendix 2

EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES

General

1. Harmonise the education systems of the sub-region.
2. Create a common legal framework for education within the sub-region.
3. Promote education about the environment at both the primary and secondary levels.
4. Strengthen foreign language and inter-cultural learning across all levels of education in the sub-region.
5. Establish a central mechanism for curriculum development.
6. Review the recommendations of the OECS/CIDA Primary Textbook Feasibility Study with a view to implementing them and carry out a similar feasibility study of textbooks used in secondary schools.
7. Commission a study to determine the worthwhileness of establishing a centralised unit to ensure the appropriate use of the media and new technologies for educational purposes.
8. Initiate an exercise designed to develop an explicit philosophy of education for the sub-region.

Strategies for Reforming Early Childhood Education

9. Continue to promote and facilitate private initiative and philanthropic contributions as the major sources of the creation of pre-schools.
10. Introduce appropriate legislation and administrative guidelines to ensure effective regulation of the establishment and operation of pre-schools.
11. Permit the establishment of pre-school departments within primary and all-age schools where these schools are under-utilised.
12. Promote the mounting of awareness programmes for parents and other care givers in the home.
13. Provide Government assistance for the following:

    a) Teacher Training
    b) Curriculum Development, Design and Production of Materials
    c) Teachers' salaries

EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES

Strategies for Reforming Primary Education

14. Modernise the primary school plant.
15. Improve the quality of primary education

    a) Expand and improve the quality of teacher education
    b) Establish teacher resource centres in association with teacher education institutions
    c) Institute training for primary school principals
    d) Evaluate and assess "streaming" where this practice currently exists in primary schools in the sub-region
    e) Encourage schools and teachers to experiment with a wide variety of instructional strategies
    f) Adopt functional standards that primary schooling should achieve
    g) Establish a system of records

16. Democratise the management of primary schools.
17. Establish support services in respect of children with special needs.
18. Integrate the creative and fine arts into the teaching/learning process.
19. Review the mechanism for the transfer of students from the primary to the secondary level.

Strategies for Reforming Secondary Education

20. Re-structure the school system along the following lines:

    a) The rest of the sub-region should follow the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis in providing schooling to all children up to the age of 16 years.
    b) All territories should aim to transfer to secondary schooling all children who are not developmentally disabled; that is, approximately 90 per cent of each age cohort.
    c) All countries should provide special schooling for the developmentally disabled up to age 16 years.
    d) Transfer from primary to secondary schooling should be based on satisfying functional standards and literacy and numeracy at the primary level.
    e) The age of transfer should be allowed to vary between 10 and 13 years.

EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES

f) Establish certification for students reaching the functional standard of primary education, a primary school leaving certificate, in order to add structure to continuing and adult education.
g) Establish mechanisms to maximise continuity of instruction between primary and secondary schooling.
h) Establish two exit standards of success for secondary school leavers: one standard would be the current CXC and the other demanding cognitive competence one year below the current CXC standard.

21. Re-conceptualise the programme in secondary education as follows:

    a) General education that would emphasise and promote:
        i) problem solving
        ii) creativity and imagination
        iii) independent judgement
        iv) generic technical skills
        v) Inter-personal skills
    b) A common curriculum in the first 3 years.
    c) Introduction of broad specialisation in the last two years.
    d) The concentration of individual schools on particular areas of specialisation, since no one school could offer all the programmes.

22. Encourage innovation in the schools in respect of the following:

    a) Semesterisation of at least some programmes of instruction.
    b) Setting and other forms of grouping for instruction.
    c) Modular programmes.
    d) Flexible programming across year-groups.
    e) Internal assessment and promotion strategies.

23. Improve the quality of secondary schools by:

        i) Establishing a programme of training school principals.
        ii) Establishing a comprehensive programme for educating and training secondary school teachers in the sub-region.
        iii) Lengthening the school day to five and one-half hours of instruction where this does not currently obtain.
        iv) Strengthening foreign language teaching through co-operation with neighbouring non-English speaking Caribbean and Latin American States.

24. Strengthen support services.
        i) Guidance and counselling
        ii) Social welfare
        iii) Libraries and learning resources

EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES

25. Articulate secondary schooling with:
    a) The upper primary grades
    b) Tertiary programmes
    c) Continuing education
    d) Regional, sub-regional and national TVET programmes.
26. Promote:

    a) Enrichment programmes in vacation periods, particularly the summer.
    b) Sub-regional and regional exchanges of students and teachers.

Strategies for Reforming Tertiary, Adult and Continuing Education

27. Continue the amalgamation and integration of small single-discipline colleges into larger multi-disciplinary institutions.
28. Expand tertiary education by increasing existing institutional capacity and establishing new facilities and programmes where necessary.
29. Re-think and reorganise Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) to produce a standardised system which functions in a partnership with the private sector and which is intimately integrated into the world of work.
30. Facilitate and provide ongoing professional training for adult education, teachers of TVET and teachers in the formal tertiary education sectors.
31. Mandate tertiary institutions to establish more intensive and extensive working relationships with the sectors, occupations and individuals they serve.
32. Revise existing legislation to give tertiary education a sound legal basis.
33. Re-structure the governance of tertiary institutions to allow greater autonomy, wider national representation and greater accountability.
34. Rationalise the existing programmes in terms of their relevance, costs, demand and maximal utilisation of available quality teachers.
35. Encourage private and public sector initiatives in providing continuing education for adults.
36. Articulate programmes at tertiary institutions with those at the UWI and other universities within the Caribbean region,
37. Upgrade the modes of delivery of tertiary education in keeping with current worldwide trends.
38. Ensure equity in the access of students from poor homes, girls and rural residents to tertiary education.

39. Provide hostel accommodation for out-of-island students.
40. Create and Eastern Caribbean College Council under the aegis of the OECS Secretariat.

Strategies for Reforming the Terms and Conditions of Service of Teachers

41. Improve the salaries of professionally qualified teachers.
42. Improve benefits to teachers.
43. Improve the working conditions of teachers in the schools and re-orient programmes of teacher education so that they are more student centred.
44. Expand teacher training to achieve 90 per cent trained teachers at primary and secondary levels by the year 2002.
45. Enhance the status of the teaching profession.
46. Establish a career path for teachers.

Strategies for Reforming the Management and Administration of the Education System

47. Promote wider participation in the management of education.
48. Provide adequate and appropriate training in management and administration for Ministry and school managers.
49. Pool education development specialist resources in the OECS.
50. Establish independent bodies to award scholarships.
51. Create an autonomous OECS Human Resource Development Institute.
52. Review the existing organisational structure of the Ministries.

Strategies for Reforming the Financing of Education

53. Redefine and restructure financial obligations.
54. Guarantee the education subvention and decentralise the control of spending.
55. Devise equitable bases for allocating funds to schools

EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES

56. Strengthen the financial management capabilities of Ministries of Education and of schools and colleges.
57. Introduce cost recover schemes for tertiary education and for specific Technical Vocational Education and Training.
58. Provide incentives for private investment in education.
59. Control external borrowing for education.

Strategies for the Reform Process

60. Accept the Reform Strategy as a whole.
61. Mobilise the sub-region for implementation.
62. Establish a mechanism to co-ordinate, manage and monitor implementation.
63. Establish a Reform Unit staffed with professionals.
64. Establish national priorities.
65. Commence implementation through the immediate development of some projects.

Source: Unedited copy from OERU records, St. Lucia, 1999.
Original Source: Education Reform Working Group. (1991). *Foundation for the future: OECS education reform strategy.* St. Lucia: OECS Secretariat.

Appendix 3
List of OECS Education Reform Projects

Upgrading primary school plant
Expansion/upgrading secondary school plant
Staff development (teachers, principals and ministry officials)
Curriculum development (math, science) CIDA
Development of teacher resource centres
Management co-ordination of technical and vocational education training
Development of tertiary level programs, structures, and facilities
Systematic student assessment -
Management of the reform (establishment of the Education Reform Unit)
Distance education initiatives
Harmonization of legislation
Development of education management information systems (EMIS)
Source: Forde, 1994; OERU records, 1999.

Appendix 4
OECS Education Reform Policy-Making Mechanisms

The OECS Education Reform Council

The OECS Education Reform Council (OERC) is the policy-making body of the OERS. Its functions are carried out through the annual meeting of OECS Ministers of Education. It is responsible for:

- providing overall policy direction to the OERS;
- establishing annual strategic objectives;
- approving the annual work plan of the OERU;
- overall monitoring/review/evaluation of the OERS implementation process

The OECS Education Reform Unit

Mission statement of the OERU: "The OERU is a service organization co-ordinating initiatives in education that add value to the development process in OECS Member States" (OECS Education Reform Unit, 1999b, p. 2).

The OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU) is the principal institution responsible for the implementation of OERS policy as formulated by the council and ratified by the OECS authority. More specifically, the OERU is expected to perform the following main functions:

- facilitate the implementation of policy approved by the OECS Reform Council;
- provide professional advice through access to a central pool of educational expertise and resources to the Ministries of Education for the development and execution of related reform initiatives;
- systematically disseminate information and knowledge about education and human resource development matter to OECS member states;
- co-ordinate efforts of agencies and regional partners in education matters as agreed by the Reform Council.

The OETEC

The OETEC consists of one representative from the Ministry of Education of each OECS member (Permanent Secretaries, Chief Education Officers, or Planners). OETEC acts as a technical committee for the Ministers of Education, reviewing policy issues prepared by the OERU.

Source: OECS Education Unit and Tecsult-Eduplus Inc., 2000.

Appendix 5
Donor Funded Projects

PROJECTS	OBJECTIVES	FUNDING
Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project (ECERP)	To strengthen the quality of human-resource base for development in the Eastern Caribbean	CIDA (Canada) 21 million $E. C. 1996-2003
Tertiary Level HRD Program	To upgrade the level of trained human-resources in the OECS labour market in priority sectors by improving the number and quality of trained persons	EDF (European Dev. Fund) 18.1 million $E. C. 1997-2003
Primary school teacher training project	To improve the quality of primary school teaching and management in the OECS	DFID (Britain) $1,216,000.00 E.C. 1997-2001(approx.)
Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	To support the implementation of TVET initiatives within the education reform process	GTZ (Germany) 2.2 million $E. C.
Basic education reform projects	To increase access to primary and secondary education	World bank and CDB -negotiated as loans on a national basis – varying sums

Source: OERU records, St. Lucia.

Appendix 6.
List of ECERP Project Areas

Full support of the OERU;
Electronic networking of the OECS Ministers of Education and the OERU;
Public awareness;
Improving Management within Ministries of Education;
Curriculum development and reform;
Financing of education and of education reform;
Teacher education

Source: Tecsult-Eduplus, (1996, pp. 5-1 – 5-13)

Appendix 7
Chronology of Caribbean Field Work

March 1998
Preliminary field trip to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago

November 1998
Preliminary field trip to OECS Education Reform Unit, St. Lucia

May 1999
Arrival in Trinidad and Tobago. Set up research base

June-July 1999
Field work in St. Lucia and Grenada

July-August 1999
Fieldwork in Trinidad and Tobago

September 1999
Field work in Barbados

September-October 1999
Wrap up fieldwork in Trinidad and Tobago

Appendix 8
Interview guide – revised version.

General

Let us talk about:
How you first become involved with the OECS education reform project
The ECERP project between the CIDA and the OECS

Your understanding of:
Education/education reform in the context of the project
Underlying assumptions about international assistance

What is your understanding of policy making and decision making in regards to education reform in the OECS?

What is your understanding of management in regards to education reform in the OECS?

What has been your own experience in the OECS on policy, decision making and management in education reform?

What do you know about the policy and decision-making bodies or institutions on education in the OECS?

In your opinion, how have they influenced the development of policies in the overall reform project; and in ECERP?

What do you know about education research facilities in the OECS?

What do you think of the roles of these education institutions in formulating the reform strategy, in shaping ongoing initiatives?

What do you think about the capacities of these institutions on a national basis versus sub-regional basis for planning education reform?

From your experience, how would you describe the relationships of the OECS policy, decision-making and research institutions with other similar regional and national Caribbean institutions?

From what you know, how have other donors contributed to the policy and decision making in the education reform project?

How have other Caribbean institutions contributed to policy and decision making in the education reform project?

What other factors do you think affect policy and decision making in education reform in the OECS? And what has been your personal experience in these areas?

Canadian (CIDA) policy/decision making/development assistance factors

What is your experience with Canadian institutions in planning, designing, or evaluating education or related projects in the OECS?

What do you know about Canada's (CIDA's) role in the reform project?

What do you know about CIDA's role in ECERP?

What has been your experience with ECERP?

Based on your experience of the above, how would you describe CIDA's record in developing policy and decision-making environments in the OECS?

What do you think are the motives for Canadian intervention in the education reform process?

How would you describe the Canadian contribution?

How does CIDA collaborate with other foreign donors on ECERP? What do you think of the collaboration?

What other factors do you think enter into the Canadian contribution?

OECS leadership/ownership factors

What is your understanding of leadership and /ownership concepts in the reform project?

The Reform Strategy talks about "pooling of regional resources" to achieve education reform. What does this concept mean to you?

What do you think about the input of the donor community in general to the OECS reform?

How do you think this influences or affects the objective of leadership and ownership in the reform project?

How do you think Canada's role in the reform project
contributes to the objective of ownership and leadership?

What do you think about the Canadian contribution relative to input of other Caribbean institutions? And other foreign donors?

How do you explain your feelings about the Canadian input and what is actually occurring in the ECERP project?

How do you think what you have just described affects the implementation of the overall reform project?

And how do you think what you have just described affect the objective of ownership and leadership in the reform project?

What other experiences have you had with foreign or regional donor input into other education reform-type projects?

What do you think about the fit between ideals of the original mandate and current direction of the reform project with the actual involvement of Canada?

What are your thoughts now on the underlying assumptions of aid in relation to leadership and ownership matters

Now that we have discussed these topics what else would you like to say?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 9
Letter of consent

Education Reform in the Eastern Caribbean: Implications of a Policy and Decision-Making Program by an External Donor

I hereby consent to participate in Ms. Isaac's research study on education reform in the Eastern Caribbean.

The nature, objectives, risks, and benefits of the research conducted by Ms. Isaac have been fully explained to me.

I understand that I will not be inconvenienced in any way through my participation.

I understand that confidentiality will be maintained and that the data will not identify individuals involved.

I also reserve the right to refuse to answer questions, or withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature

Date

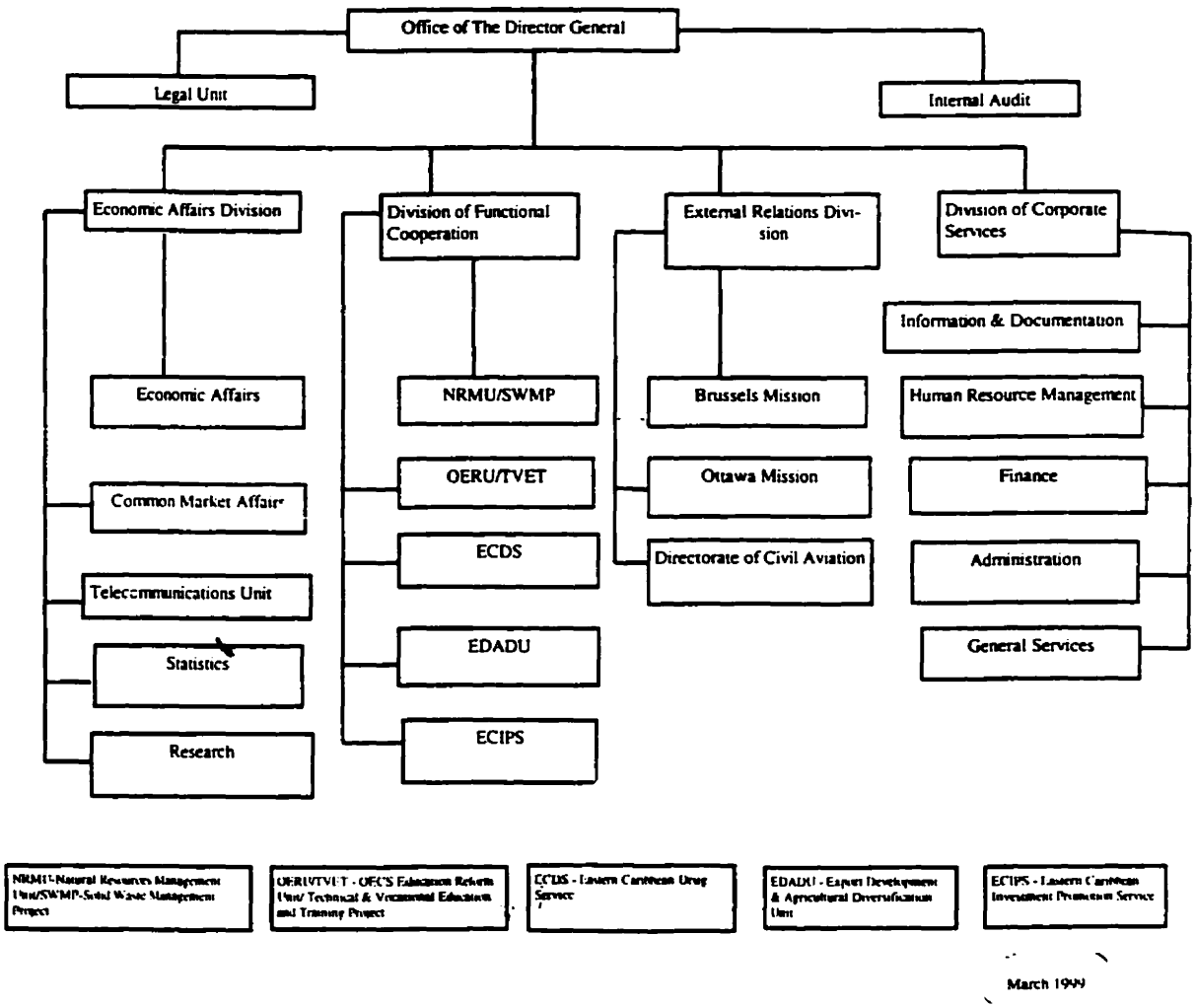
Place

Name of researcher

(Note: I left one copy with the interviewee (formal sessions only)

Appendix 11
Organisational Chart of the OECS Secretariat

Organisational Chart of the OECS Secretariat



Source: OECS Secretariat, 1999(b).

Appendix 12
Selected OECS Economic indicators

Table 1

OECS Countries – Real Gross Domestic Product

EC $Million	1995	1996	1997
Anguilla	143.43	148.24	162.14
Antigua & Barbuda	981.69	1,034.46	1,093,44
British Virgin Islands	1232.82	1,361.07	1,466.91(r)
Dominica	410.30	422.90	430.60
Grenada	526.60	542.70	567.90
Montserrat	122.06	95.90	75.51
St. Kitts & Nevis	436.80	462.50	491.50
St. Lucia	1,042.00	1,033.30	1,056.00
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	517.30	524.20	535.70

r- revised
Source: OECS Statistical booklet, 1998.

Table 2

OECS Countries – Selected Sectors Contribution to Real GDP, 1997

As a % of GDP	Agri-culture	Manu-facture	Hotel& Restaurant	Govt. Services	Other Services
Anguilla	3.81	0.83	33.64	14.45	1.7
Antigua & Barbuda	3.57	2.49	15.24	16.08	6.6
British Virgin Islands	1.8	1.1	12.5	6.5	4.2
Dominica	20.3	6.15	2.51	17.29	1.3
Grenada	9.47	7.03	7.87	16.49	2.7
Montserrat	1.31	4.13	0.87	33.55	5.7
St. Kitts & Nevis	6.97	11.66	7.06	15.01	4.3
St. Lucia	6.93	6.36	13.46	13.45	4.9
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	10.8	8.36	3.57	16.89	1.7

Source: OECS Statistical booklet, 1998.

Table 3

OECS Countries – Components of Agriculture Contribution

As a % of GDP	Crops	Livestock	Forestry	Fishing
Anguilla	0.22	1.13	-	2.45
Antigua & Barbuda	1.09	0.85	0.07	1.56
British Virgin Islands	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Dominica	15.92	1.66	0.77	1.90
Grenada	6.81	0.70	0.38	1.57
Montserrat	0.44	0.13	0.07	0.68
St. Kitts & Nevis	4.60	0.63	0.08	1.65
St. Lucia	5.11	0.79	0.18	0.83
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	6.90	0.94	0.64	2.30

Source: OECS Statistical booklet, 1998.

Appendix 13
Selected OECS Education Indicators

Table 4

Primary Enrollment Rates of OECS Countries : 1900-1987

Countries	1900	1910	1930	1935-40	1980-87
Grenada	63	61	59	66	99
Leeward Is.	32	42	37	-	98
St. Lucia	52	64	53	59	90
St. Vincent	54	46	35	68	97

Source: Education Reform Working Group (1991).

Table 5

OECS Countries – Student Enrolment in Primary and Secondary Schools

	Primary		Secondary	
	1996/97	1997/98	1996/97	1997/98
Anguilla	1,489	n.a	1,062	n.a
Antigua & Barbuda	12,229	12,666	4,260	5,382
British Virgin Is.	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Dominica	13,907	13,636	4,928	5,455
Grenada	23.449	n.a	7,367	n.a
Montserrat	764	n.a	758	n.a
St. Kitts & Nevis	6,063	5,928	4,658	4,548
St. Lucia	30,933	30, 536	11,149	11,405
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	21,628	21, 347	7,639	7,775

Source: OECS Statistical booklet, 1998.

Table 6

OECS Countries – Number of Primary and Secondary Schools

	Primary		Secondary	
	1996/97	1997/98	1996/97	1997/98
Anguilla	6	n.a	1	n.a
Antigua & Barbuda	58	n.a	13	n.a
British Virgin Is.	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Dominica	63	63	14	15
Grenada	58	n.a	19	n.a
Montserrat	4	n.a	2	n.a
St. Kitts & Nevis	23	23	9	9
St. Lucia	84	84	16	16
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	60	60	21	21

Source: OECS Statistical booklet, 1998.

Table 7

OECS Countries – Proportion of Primary School Teachers Trained: 1957-87

	1957	1976	1984-87	1990
Antigua & Barbuda	40	59	80	74
British Virgin Islands	n.a	n.a	40	59
Dominica	9	10	44	43
Grenada	8	36	47	39
Montserrat	21	41	58	64
St. Kitts & Nevis	20	42	72	64
St. Lucia	6	28	53	61
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	6	19	36	28

Source: Education Reform Working Group (1991).

Table 8

OECS Countries – Secondary School Teachers: Academic and Professional Training: 1990

	Total Teachers	%Trained	%Graduate
Antigua & Barbuda	218	71.3	39.4
British Virgin Islands	85	80.0	65.0
Dominica	182	17.6	29.7
Grenada	304	78.3	31.9
Montserrat	74	58.0	51.2
St. Kitts & Nevis	269	n.a	24.9
St. Lucia	351	n.a	28.2
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	398	46.0	26.4

Source: Education Reform Working Group (1991).

Appendix 14
Types of Caribbean Educational Institutions

	Age	Types of Institutions
I PRIMARY A) Early Childhood Education	4 - 5/6	Creches, day nurseries, nursery schools, private/basic schools, infant schools/centres, infant departments in Government primary schools, expensive private kindergartens.
B) Primary Education	6-12 or 15	Government and government assisted public primary schools including all age schools, expensive private preparatory schools.
II SECONDARY	12-15, 17, 19	Government and government assisted public grammar schools, modern secondary, junior secondary, senior comprehensive and composite schools, high schools, community and/or technical, upper classes of primary all age schools, private secondary schools, vocational and technical institutes.
III TERTIARY	17+, 19+	Sixth form colleges, technical colleges, community colleges, teachers training colleges, nursing schools, theological colleges, agricultural schools and colleges, University of Guyana(UG) and University of the West Indies (UWI).

Source: Ellis, 1986a. P.43.