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**THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION
ON CARIBBEAN MICROSTATES:
Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten,
United States Virgin Islands**



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Preface

The rapid increase in immigration (legal and illegal) to some Caribbean countries has had an enormous impact on the island's physical and social infrastructures which support the economies. The small island ecosystems, in particular, are particularly fragile and sensitive to drastic immigration increases. Also the Archipelagoes are vulnerable to covert entry of undocumented workers.

Caribbean governments experience a high cost of delivery services to satisfy the basic needs of these migrants, especially the undocumented ones. Indeed, direct consequences can be identified, not only for the demographic profile of the population, but also for the social sectors, particularly education, housing, and health.

Given the complex nature of the causes and consequences, the situation places a pressure on the political directorate to devise appropriate intervention policies and programmes. On the other hand, the lack of reliable data on the subject poses constraints on efforts by policy makers to conduct the kinds of analyses required for accurate decision making.

This study presents a systematic analysis of the impact of immigration on small islands and coastal states. The aim is to provide policy makers with the appropriate data and analysis needed to assist in their decision making and problem solving. The study includes: (a) An assessment of data availability on immigrants (legal and illegal); (b) Analysis of the social, demographic and economic characteristics of immigrants; and (c) Identification of the impact of excessive immigration on the demographic profile of the population and the social sectors, with emphasis on the education, housing health and employment sectors.

This study responds to the recommendations contained in page thirteen of the *Caribbean Plan of Action - Follow-up to ICPD* (otherwise known as the *Bahamas consensus*). Funding was provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) through the regional project CAR/97/P07, executed by the Demography Unit, ECLAC, Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain.

**THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION
ON CARIBBEAN MICROSTATES
Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten,
United States Virgin Islands**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The surge in international migration in the 1970s and 1980s forms the basis for the prediction that the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century will be aptly named the Age of Migration. The large-scale movements of migrant labour are characterized by new forms and an increasing ethnic diversity, and are associated with the fundamental transformations in economic, social and political structures in the post-Cold War era. These movements not only affect the migrants themselves, but also exert impacts on both the sending and receiving societies.

During the latter half of this century, the migration culture of the Caribbean has been distinguished by the extraregional movement of some 5.6 million migrants to North America and Europe. At the same time, there has been a rising tide of intra-Caribbean migration with a focus on the receiving countries of the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Saint Maarten, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Conditions which have stimulated and extended migratory labour movements to intra-Caribbean destinations in the latter half of the twentieth century include the following:

- The retreat of the colonial powers from the region and the rise of independent states;
- The retention of race and class structures in the post-colonial era and the urge for upward socioeconomic mobility of the masses;
- The decline of agriculture, the creation of large labour surpluses, and the pressures to seek employment externally;
- Regional economic recession and the widening economic inequalities between the *haves* and *have-nots*, both internally and externally;
- The collapse of capitalist Cuba as a destination for North American and European tourists, the emergence of Caribbean islands as tourist attractions, the combination of resources—white sand, tranquil azure bays, vacation hotels and appropriate infrastructure—in some microstates which transformed them into tourist destinations with a concomitant demand for cheap labour;
- The advent of jet travel that became affordable to many potential migrants; and

- The archipelagic nature of several of the tourist destinations which rendered them easy targets for undocumented migration.

While the foregoing speak to the conditions which sustained the migration culture of the Caribbean, they do not explain what actually causes migration.

The causes of migration

Social scientists generally agree that the following five factors constitute the major causes of international migration:

- i. The primary stimulus of migration is the political and economic conditions of the receiving country. The political circumstances establish criteria for entry—such as the source of labour, the required entry documents, the length of stay, migrant status during the non-immigrant period and thereafter, and the type of incorporation. The performance of the economy determines whether there will be active labour recruitment or self-propelled movement, the types of labour skills required, the number of immigrants that can be absorbed, and patterns of settlement. These are often referred to as *pull* factors.
- ii. Conditions in migrant-sending countries *push* the long-term unemployed or underemployed into a state as potential migrants. Low wages, job insecurity, and political victimization extend the need for an improvement in the quality of life. Moreover, global economic restructuring since 1950 has served to shift jobs from agriculture to the more productive industry and service sectors.
- iii. Currency is now given to the concept of relative deprivation in the sending countries. This refers to the feelings of deprivation arising from racial, social and economic inequalities within society. These feelings increase as the number of persons experiencing it in the referent group becomes large.
- iv. Networking and linkages provide the indispensable connection between the (battery) poles of push and pull factors. Without these networks, migration will not take place. Networks include the factors that inform of the opportunities abroad and how to take advantage of them. The most important of these are family and friends already abroad who supply credible information about the jobs, opportunities, how to get there, immediate living arrangements, and wages. The communications revolution—in the telephone, postal links and television—and the transportation revolution—lowered cost of travel to more locations and the international network of flights—add to the ease with which potential migrants become actual migrants.

- v. The *iron law of labour immigration* asserts that there is nothing more permanent than temporary workers—documented or undocumented. The intent of temporary migration, which forms the basis of most international labour movement, proves sterile in the face of contemporary rights-based politics of the receiving countries. Migrants are aware that if one cannot get into the front door legally, then entry through the *side* door or even the *back* door has the same outcome—permanent stay in the migrant-receiving country.

Impacts of immigration on Caribbean receiving countries

The consequences of immigration on microstates tend to be exaggerated when compared to the effects on industrial metropolises. The impacts on the former are more dramatic and more sudden, and they tend to evoke far stronger reactions from nationals as well. This response is in most instances generated by the racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic differences of the foreigners. These traits also determine the *seuil de tolérance*—threshold of toleration—which tends to be reached sooner in the smallest countries¹.

Four Caribbean microstates which are significantly impacted by immigration and which are the core of this report are the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Saint Maarten and the Virgin Islands of the United States (USVI). These microstates are distinguished by economies which are based primarily on tourism, by per capita income levels that are among the highest in the region, by the need for various proportions of foreign labour to sustain the growth of their economies, and by native populations who are all desirous of controlling the extent to which their homelands seem to be threatened by outsiders.

The major areas of impact are demographic, economic, social, political and cultural.

Primary areas of impact

I. Demographic

Population growth

- Much of the recent population growth in these countries is attributable to immigration.
- The most significant growth occurred in Saint Maarten and the least in the Bahamas—in relative terms.

¹It is instructive that the current heated debate concerning immigration in the United States is occurring at a time when the immigrant stock is a mere eight per cent of the total population.

- Saint Maarten recorded population increases of 186 per cent between 1960 and 1972, 68 per cent from 1972 to 1981, and 145 per cent between 1981 and 1992. The censuses of 1992 showed that it had the highest percentage of immigrant (non-national) stock: 54 per cent.
- The population of the USVI grew by 95 per cent between 1970 and 1980, and the total set of immigrants, and in-migrants (from the United States and Puerto Rico) caused natives to be a minority in their homeland.
- The BVI grew by 47 per cent from 1980 to 1991. In the latter year, half of its population were non-belongers.
- The Bahamas experienced the smallest overall population increase during this period—nine per cent were non-nationals, mainly of Haitian origin.

Sex composition

- The feminisation of the migrant stream that characterizes the labour movement in Latin America and the Caribbean is only partially evident in the four selected countries.
- Census data in recent years show that males dominate the immigrant flow into the Bahamas and the BVI, and females into Saint Maarten and the USVI.
- The predominance of one sex is an indication of the types of labour niches that are being filled—more males suggest heavier work such as manufacturing and construction; and more females imply light industrial, hotel, restaurant, and domestic service jobs.
- One dominant sex indicates that immigrants are not moving with their spouses or families, and they will ultimately select mates from among, and have children with, natives.
- Relationships that produce children are often implicitly resented by natives because of the potential problems of citizenship—in the Bahamas, the BVI and Saint Maarten.

Age composition

- The age structure of immigrants can have significant impacts on the levels of living of the receiving society.

- An analysis of age is critical to the potential impact on the school population, on manpower supply, and importantly, on the voting population.
- The BVI and Saint Maarten exhibit some distortion of their age profile.
- The median age of the population in the BVI jumped from 23.1 to 27.0 years between 1980 and 1990, taking it from a “young” population to one that is “intermediate” in age.
- The number of persons in the BVI in three age groups—35 to 39, 40 to 44 and 45 to 49 years—more than doubled between the same period.
- The increase in the number of immigrant employees in the working ages has pushed the dependency ratio downwards, but the BVI will need to reckon with this delayed effect on the impact of all elderly services later on.
- Saint Maarten exhibits similar migrant effects on its age distribution: in every 5-year age category between 20 and 74 years, the foreign-born exceed nationals by more than 50 per cent—as much as 73.0 and 72.8 per cent among those 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 years respectively.
- In each 5-year age group from 20 to 59 years in the BVI in 1991, there was a plurality of migrants—as many as 71.7 per cent between 30 and 34 years old.

Fertility rate

- A fundamental component of population change is its reproductive capacity.
- Young migrants have higher fertility rates than nationals, and this feature imparts significant consequences on the growth pattern of microstates.
- In the Bahamas in 1990, non-nationals accounted for 9.4 per cent of the population, but produced 17.2 per cent of the births in that year.
- There were 78 births per 1,000 Bahamian women aged 15-44, and 122 per 1,000 among foreign-born women of the same age.
- Another index, the total fertility rate, confirms the higher fertility of immigrants in the Bahamas: 2.46 births for nationals compared to 3.16 for non-nationals.
- The higher fertility of immigrants is of particular importance to countries which adhere to the principle of *ius soli*—citizenship through birth—because of the rights, such as voting, which redound to the children of immigrants.

- Higher fertility rates are equally important in microstates which practice *ius sanguinis*—law of the blood—because of the increasing stock of locally-born non-national residents who are excluded from many rights, and who are essentially second-class inhabitants without a stake in society.

Marriage patterns

- Marriage data from the four countries show that nationals tend to marry among themselves.
- This also appears to hold among immigrants, when there is an adequate ethnic pool from which to choose.
- In the BVI in 1991, 12.1 per cent of the total households were of national couples, 10.6 per cent of mixed nationality couples, and 25 per cent of non-national couples.
- In the male-dominated migrant stream to the BVI, 48 per cent of immigrants chose nationals to form nuclear families.
- There is no strong evidence that immigrants marry nationals in large numbers for the purpose of status regularization.

Size and skills of the labour force

- Regulated immigrant labour is geared to fill positions for which local labour cannot be recruited.
- There was little evidence to suggest that immigrants were directly competing with nationals in the labour market.
- The immigrant labour force in both Saint Maarten and the USVI was larger than that of nationals.
- In Saint Maarten in 1992, the foreign-born labour force constituted 69 per cent.
- In the USVI in 1990, the non-native labour force was 69 per cent of the total.
- The labour participation rate, in Saint Maarten in 1992, was 41.2 and 75.6 per cent for nationals and the foreign-born, respectively.
- In the USVI in 1990, labour participation rates were 29.8 and 66.2 per cent for natives and East Caribbean migrants, respectively.

- Indices of relative concentration of all industries (for the Bahamas and the USVI) confirm that nationals are concentrated in public administration and communication; in electricity, gas, and water industries; in transport, storage and communication; and in financing, insurance and real estate. This is primarily because these jobs are under government control and typically require that employees be nationals.
- Immigrants cluster in mining and quarrying; in construction and manufacturing; in restaurants, hotels, community, social and personal services. These jobs tend to be labour intensive, and are largely entry level.

Population density

- Changes in population density in small islands is more readily noticeable than in metropolises.
- There is a tendency for nationals to link social pathologies associated with population growth to the increasing size of immigrant communities.
- In no case do statistics bear out the perception that immigrants commit more crimes proportionately than nationals.
- Population density changes from 506 to 1,544 persons per square mile in Saint Thomas, USVI, from 1960 to 1990 support the rising alarm of natives that their islands are “being overrun by foreigners”.
- A density of 2,838 persons per square mile in Saint Maarten—the highest in the Caribbean—imparts an even stronger feeling of crowding that borders on the claustrophobic.

II. Economic

- The perception of many nationals in immigrant societies is that immigrants:
 - ▶ are a drain on local resources
 - ▶ depress wages
 - ▶ increase unemployment during economic recessions, and worst
 - ▶ they displace natives from jobs.

- Immigrants become ready targets during periods of increasing unemployment, and are blamed for many of the social ills that generate frustration and insecurity:
 - ▶ escalating crime
 - ▶ shortage of affordable housing
 - ▶ overcrowding
 - ▶ failure to meet their tax burden
 - ▶ increasing poverty
 - ▶ infrastructural decay
 - ▶ environmental deterioration.
- An implicit negative impact is that cheap labour reduces the incentive for businesses to become more competitive, and thus keeps low-productivity firms in existence.
- It is suggested that the social capital expenditure on housing, education, health and social welfare services for immigrants considerably reduces the amount of capital that is available for overall improvement and development of the society.
- Empirical studies show that immigrants:
 - ▶ exert positive growth effects on wages and employment opportunities of natives
 - ▶ tend to accumulate higher levels of financial capital than natives
 - ▶ contribute substantially through savings to the capital stock
 - ▶ have a higher proportion of self-employed than natives.
- In general, self-selected immigrant labourers are:
 - ▶ more economically aggressive
 - ▶ enterprising and keenly entrepreneurial
 - ▶ higher-risk takers in business behaviour

- Natives of the Bahamas and Saint Maarten laud their immigrants—particularly Haitians—as:
 - ▶ harder working
 - ▶ more willing to follow instructions
 - ▶ possessing a stronger work ethic.

III. Social welfare

Unquestionably, the cost of the impact of immigrants is greatest on the social welfare of migrant-receiving societies in housing, public education and health services.

- Immigrants tend to concentrate in poor housing areas, or sometimes create slums or shanty towns that are visually offensive to natives.
- Conditions become so substandard that natives flee the immediate neighbourhood; more immigrants move in, and an enclave develops.
- Ultimately, it is the local government that must address this environmental problem by removing the slums, improving the infrastructure and, at the same time, develop a programme of housing for these denizens.
- Each of the four countries of this report has been impacted enormously by the cost of publicly educating immigrant children.
- In none of the countries which is required by law to educate the children of immigrants was there any proactively appropriate planning for the total number of school-age children.
- The lack of planning overburdens all resources—classroom space, teachers, and instructional material. The decision makers in Saint Maarten and the BVI are now aggressively addressing this problem, despite the huge cost that this entails.
- When students do not speak the language of instruction, bilingualism adds to the cost of public education.
- Health services are impacted significantly by immigrants, and the cost of meeting these services falls on local governments.

- The cost of health care rose dramatically during the 1970s and 1980s in the USVI at the height of its immigrant experience.
- Similar spiralling health costs to meet immigrant needs currently characterize the Bahamas and Saint Maarten.
- Higher fertility rates among newcomers, varieties of health problems among undocumented migrants, and lack of health insurance—particularly in Saint Maarten—have created conditions where governments must institute imaginative solutions, including international assistance, or face the further deterioration of the quality of life in their societies.

IV. Political

In the industrial democracies, the extension of the “trilogy” of rights—civil, political and social—to their immigrants in turn affects the treatment which immigrants in the (former) colonies expect. It is partly this expectation that generates genuine anxiety on the part of natives in the microstates of this report. Politicians generally respond to nationals’ concern by making declarations of xenophobia to “keep the aliens out”. The unofficial use of the term *alien* in some countries to describe immigrants is considered by the latter to be contemptuous, and it serves only to deepen the wounds of division between natives and non-nationals.

However, nowhere in any of these microstates, or in any country with significant immigrant communities, is there any evidence that a political movement was founded on an ethnic group, or that such a group attempted to destabilize the government of the host country. Notwithstanding, there is a deep-seated apprehension that once a significant number of immigrants achieves the right to vote, insidious efforts would be made to “take over the government”.

Despite these misgivings, it should be evident that it is completely inimical to the democratic process to categorically deny such a large group of residents equal participation in this process, and it is also apparent that a political underclass will not serve the best interests of a developing society.

V. Cultural

The ethnic diversity that now characterizes the labour movement brings with it some new challenges with which migrant-receiving societies must deal. Monolingualism or cultural singularity among immigrants is now passé.

The diverse culture of immigrants seems to suggest to nationals that without appropriate restrictions, the core culture of their country will be assaulted, diluted, or transformed to an unacceptable degree.

Politics define the rules that govern citizenship, and the degree of cultural homogeneity that the host society wants to preserve establishes the type of migrant incorporation that it will accept. The current perception of immigrants, both politically and culturally, largely determines what kind of incorporation the host society is willing to give to its newcomers.

There is no indication that any one of these societies desires to foster assimilation—the total acceptance and absorption of immigrants into the host society. Instead, the prevailing type of incorporation is one of multiculturalism in which the hosts prefer that immigrant communities remain distinguishable, and to whom are extended equal rights in most spheres of life.

Perspectives for action

Given that international migration will almost certainly increase until the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, and given the current challenges that beset migrant-receiving microstates in the Caribbean, it behooves decision makers in these countries to assume a proactive strategic posture in attempting to resolve the intractable issues which now confront them.

Current practices of migration control do not seem to offer the full protection of borders that microstates need, for securing the coasts of all islands in an archipelago, or a shared border with another microstate, is well beyond their resource capabilities. Saddled because of porous borders, with uncontrolled undocumented migrants, to whom basic human rights must be extended, microstates again appear to need international assistance to overcome this protracted and costly problem.

There is a persistent dissatisfaction in these receiving countries with the conditions that are associated with the presence of the foreign-born and their progeny in their midst. Despite the exhortations of the nativists, *refoulement* does not appear to be a viable option, hence other thoughtful strategies need to be applied.

Caribbean microstates are generally unable to apply the leverage of industrial democracies by using trade, investment, financial aid or intervention—military or political—to resolve the migration pressures with which they are faced. What policies may these microstates adopt if they are to reduce current migration pressures?

Above everything else, the entry of newcomers must be managed to acceptable levels, and the immigrant stock must be meaningfully incorporated into the societies in which they live.

Other policies may be considered within the context of those areas which continue to be directly impacted by immigration.

I. Demographic

- a) It is axiomatic that there is nothing more permanent than temporary migrants, and this should alert all receiving microstates that their migrants will not simply disappear when they want them to.
- b) The gains in population control achieved through family planning and other planning devices will be lost if uncontrolled immigration is allowed to persist.
- c) Experience shows that employers are not an efficient group to whom immigration control should be entirely entrusted.
- d) A continuing stream of single-sex migrants will eventually form relationships with nationals, and microstates which practise *ius sanguinis* must be prepared to offer an appropriate level of rights to their progeny.
- e) The majority of immigrants who are between 20 and 35 years will initially lower the dependency ratio but will raise the median age; however, relevant planning should be instituted to prepare for a larger than normal elderly population with its potential increase in retirement benefits, etc.
- f) Higher levels of fertility rates among immigrants suggest that this characteristic must be considered as part of the planning for all public services for an increasing cohort of children.
- g) Initially, immigrants do not compete with nationals for jobs because they are recruited to fill positions for which local labour is not available, but over time they will become upwardly mobile and would expect to compete and accede to jobs for which they are qualified.

II. Economic

- a) The relatively higher accumulation of savings by immigrants in their early years is partly a function of their temporary status, but much of these savings is repatriated to spouses, children and family members; status security would release these funds for local investment, and family reunion will also cause the reduction of savings being sent back to their homelands.
- b) The abuse of fair wages by employers to newcomers strongly suggests that there should be more vigilant monitoring of the conditions under which immigrants work.
- c) The practise of retreat to xenophobia in periods of economic recession and of blaming immigrants for associated social ills create deep-seated feelings of

resentment which do not dissipate for a long time, and moreover, it renders the process of incorporation a difficult one.

III. Social welfare

- a) The provision of adequate housing is often a requirement of employers in the migrant recruitment process, but there appears to be no regulatory agencies to ensure that this obligation is met; eventually, local taxpayers through their government must meet the cost of cleaning up slums, improving the infrastructure, and providing public housing for immigrants.
- b) Public education proves to be one of the most costly items for migrant-receiving microstates, largely because of a refusal to accept that all children are entitled to public education; such education should be considered to be a part of the cost of the immigration process, an investment in the future of its human resource, and thereby spare itself the even larger cost of dealing with an uneducated, unemployable, and unassimilable underclass.

Microstates which are unable to control undocumented migration face a particular challenge: even with proper planning they will be unable to predict the numbers of children they will need to educate, and local and national budgets appear unwilling to accommodate these costs.

The education of unmanageable migration appears to be a clear case for assistance from external sources.

- c) Almost equally expensive is the provision of health services to immigrants, many of whom cannot afford health insurance; higher fertility implies more babies, and their higher median age suggests more health needs. International assistance may also be needed to relieve local budgets from their current strain.

IV. Political

Nationals of democratic microstates simply can no longer regard immigrants in strictly economic and demographic terms, for it is antithetical to laud the ideals of democracy and yet deny citizenship to so many members of their societies. The "trilogy" of rights of immigrants must be taken into consideration and evaluated for their impact on receiving societies when plans are being made to recruit foreign workers.

V. Cultural

None of the microstates considered here demonstrates any willingness to promulgate a system of incorporation that would embrace immigrants into the fabric of their societies. By default,

multiculturalism appears to be the prevalent type of incorporation. By denying assimilation or integration to non-nationals, ethnic groups feel excluded from the core of society, and this, in turn, forces them to band together and appear threatening to the very society that nationals are trying to preserve. It is evident that every immigrant society should expand efforts to promote integration of its foreign-born residents.

Finally, a fundamental consideration of each microstate should be the establishment of an agency—with appropriate authority to conduct its mandate, and with representation by immigrants—that specifically deals with the major issues that are associated with immigration. The aim is to ensure that each society meets the two primary challenges of migration: management of the entry of newcomers, and the promotion of efforts that genuinely integrate long-term residents into society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The prominence given by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 to the persistently high levels of labour movements between countries bears testimony to the priority that is accorded this theme by member countries of the United Nations. Labour movements are considered to be important components of the worldwide transformations that are now taking place, and in this context, these issues offer serious challenges to the planners of population and development policies within the countries that are affected.

International economic imbalances, poverty, political instability and social degradation are often associated with conditions that contribute to the persistence of labour flows. It has been suggested that long-term solutions to international migration issues are fundamentally dependent on making the option of remaining in one's country both inviting and viable. However, the necessary prior conditions are the promotion of sustainable economic growth—with equity and social mobility—and development strategies that are congruous with these aims.

Migration flows across the world suggest that the optimum balance is not likely to be achieved within the foreseeable future. The state of underdevelopment that exists in many Third World countries almost ensures that their households will continue to seek out new avenues in their quest for a better life for their families. At the same time, this type of movement has the effect on some migrant-sending countries of contributing to further underdevelop those countries. It appears that this vicious cycle cannot be broken by the efforts of the underdeveloped countries by themselves. One may well wonder whether the direct involvement of governments in the promotion of emigration of their citizens is a genuine expression of their commitment to assist their countrymen, or an implicit admission of their inability to provide the quality life that is sought by these emigrants.

The industrialized countries of North America, Europe and Asia are under intense external pressures to relax restrictionist policies that serve to keep out immigrants from countries in transition and from developing countries. They not only face internal demands from temporary immigrants for family reunification and other social adjustments, but they must also respond to the strident exhortations of nativists for the refoulement of non-natives and the erection of further restrictionist policies against further immigration.

These tensions between receiving and sending countries were quite evident at the ICPD meeting, and their agreement to continue to seek ways to ameliorate these conditions speak to their mutual need for an improvement in the current situation.

In many respects, the Caribbean region exhibits the symptoms that characterize migration in other parts of the world. For much of its relatively short history, however, it has been typified by the large number of its residents who have migrated largely to North America and Europe. At the same time, there have been distinct periods when intraregional migrations have dominated the movement of its peoples.

Extraregional migration has been the dominant type of labour movement in the Caribbean during the latter half of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, a minor but significant intraregional movement has developed, and it persists to the present. It is with this latter migratory flow that this report is concerned, for it is one that threatens to overwhelm small-island countries.

Specifically, this document attempts to present in detail the consequences that immigration has had, and continues to have, on selected Caribbean small-island countries. These countries are distinguished by economies which are based primarily on tourism, by per capita income levels which are among the highest in the region, by the need for various proportions of foreign labour to sustain the growth of their economies, and by native populations which are all desirous of controlling the extent to which their homelands seem to be threatened by outsiders. The countries selected for study are: the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands (BVI), St. Maarten (in the Netherlands Antilles) and the Virgin Islands of the United States (USVI)).

Section 2 presents a brief introduction to the conditions throughout the period which help to explain some of the forces which gave rise, firstly, to the global labour movements, and secondly, to the intra-Caribbean migratory flows. This is followed by a presentation of the characteristics of immigration in the selected Caribbean microstates. The section also includes a discussion of the primary factors that promote migration. Section 4 details the range of impacts on the selected countries: demographic, economic, social, political and cultural. The final section offers recommendations that might be implemented at national and international levels.

2. THE LABOUR MOVEMENTS OF THE LATTER HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

2.1 North America and Europe

The depressed economic conditions which prevailed throughout the Caribbean during the early part of the twentieth century extended throughout the period between the First and Second World Wars. The collapse of the stock market in 1929 in the United States and the subsequent deep recession only served to worsen life for Caribbean residents. None of the colonies in the region belonging to the metropolitan countries had yet become independent, and the involvement of the mother countries in two World Wars left them even less able to provide a moderate standard of living for the majority of their wards. In these early years, there were notable movements of Eastern Caribbean migrants to the cane fields of southeastern Cuba and to the Dominican Republic. Jamaicans and others from the (British) Windward Islands also journeyed to the east coast of Central America to work the cane fields and banana plantations of United States multinational corporations.

After the Second World War, the labour needs of North America and Europe became acute. A series of bilateral agreements between the United States and Mexico—the Bracero Programme of 1949—provided Mexican agricultural workers for farms in the southwest. Almost 250,000 Mexicans trekked north to work, but 3 out of 4 of these workers were undocumented. Between 1951 and 1990, the United States admitted a total of 17.6 million legal immigrants (Calavita, 1994, 56), while her neighbour to the north, Canada, accepted 5.7 million over the same period (Garcia y Griego, 1994, 124). It is estimated that 485,300 immigrants from the New Commonwealth were admitted to Great Britain between 1953 and 1962, and 709,700 were accepted for settlement from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan from 1979 to 1991 (Layton-Henry, 1994, 275-277). Between 1950 and 1990, some 5.6 million emigrants had left the Caribbean Basin (Guengant, 127, 1996).

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were among the most consequential in the immigration history of the Atlantic countries. The events in the metropolises had significant impact on both the movements of labour out of the Caribbean and within the Caribbean Basin.

The Bracero programme and its attendant hordes of undocumented Mexicans in the United States generated feelings of anti-immigrant nativism and public demands for restriction. These, together with racism, apprehension of tax increases, cultural and political protectionism, fears of depressed wages and displaced United States workers, and the concerns of organized labour over its bargaining power, ultimately led to the response in 1954 of Operation *Wetback*. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans were rounded up and deported (Calavita, 1994, 61).

Sweeping changes were made in the United States to the immigration system by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952. Each country was allotted an annual quota of immigrants, thus perpetuating the national origins system. It also established a first preference system for the immediate family of citizens and legal residents, and made provision for skilled and unskilled workers. In 1965, the INA was substantially modified to allow no more than 20,000

immigrants from any one country. Priority was again given to applicants with close relatives in the United States, or to persons with specific needed skills. Only minor adjustments were made to this scheme during the 1970s and 1980s.

World War II created an acute labour shortage in Great Britain, and these conditions continued for more than a decade. The resumption of emigration of Britons to Australia, the United States, Canada and to parts of Africa only served to exacerbate labour needs in the country. Despite the vitriolic campaigns of racist politicians like Enoch Powell and Cyril Osborne for immigration control of non-whites, thousands of West Indians from the colonies emigrated to England. During this time, British subjects—who included British citizens and citizens of colonies and independent Commonwealth countries—could not be excluded from the Fatherland. The same insecurities and frustrations that were caused by poverty, unemployment, casual work, overcrowding and crime, and for which Jewish immigrants were blamed in 1940, are similar to those for which non-whites were held culpable in the 1950s. The control legislation that was embodied in the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill subjected Commonwealth immigrants to an entry voucher unless they were born in the United Kingdom or carried a passport issued by the British government. Further restrictionist policies were imposed in 1965 by the abandonment of the preferences given to non-white war-service veterans and the annual quota ceiling of 8,500 New Commonwealth immigrants. By 1968, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act virtually eliminated West Indian migration to Great Britain (Layton-Henry, 1995).

Up until 1952, Canada did not have a formal immigration policy in place, though its practice was distinctly exclusionary of non-whites. Its first comprehensive immigration act in that year formally denied entry to “social undesirables”. The policy was further articulated by its Prime Minister, MacKenzie King, who led the nationalist view that no foreigner had a fundamental right to enter Canada. During the 1950s, however, a number of West Indians migrated to Canada on an intergovernmental scheme for the provision of domestic workers. It was not until 1962 that Canada abandoned its racist exclusionary policy by amending its regulations of 1952. It provided for universal admission based on skills, family unification and humanitarian conditions (Garcia y Griego, 1995).

Guengant (1996, 128) has shown that the net migration balance for 24 selected Caribbean countries between 1950 and 1990 was negative for all but 2 of them. In fact, during that period, the only countries that recorded net positive migration were the independent countries of the Bahamas and French Guyana, and the dependencies of the United States Virgin Islands, Sint Maarten, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

A comparison of migratory movements in the Caribbean region and beyond suggests four distinct trends which are likely to shape the nature of labour migration into the twenty-first century. First, the globalization of migration—the increase in the number of countries which are

simultaneously impacted on by migration—is marked by a more and more diverse socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic stream. Second, the intensification of the volume of the migrant flow is likely to magnify the complex of appropriate government policies that attempt to ameliorate the impact of immigration.

Third, the differentiation of migration adds to the difficulties of the policy measures to control migration because of the tendency of the movements to change from one type to another. Fourth, there is the tendency to feminization of migration, in which the expanding movement of women is less that of family reunification than of deliberate moves on their part in search of labour opportunities (Castles and Miller, 1993).

The discussion above indicates that between 1950 and 1975, the major streams of emigration from the Caribbean Basin to the North American and European metropolises were gradually reduced. As these routes became more restricted, intra-Caribbean migration became more pronounced.

2.2 The rise of intra-Caribbean migration

In absolute terms, the number of Caribbean persons who emigrated to other parts of the region within the last 40 years is miniscule compared to the number of emigrants to the metropolises. A numerical estimate of intra-Caribbean migration over the last 40 years was placed at 500,000, and thus represents about 10 per cent of Caribbean emigration (Guengant, 1996, 129). It is also suggested that this comparatively marginal number reflects a reduction in the integration of Caribbean labour markets compared to the first few decades of the century. While all countries of the region can be described to some degree as migrant-sending microstates², the primary senders to other Caribbean destinations are the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Guyana. Within the same period, Caribbean countries which have recorded the largest net migration gains are the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, St. Maarten, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

What is substantively different between this intra-Caribbean migration and that directed to the metropolises is the striking proportional impact that labour movements have on insular microstates. These impacts will be elaborated in Section 4 below.

²Microstates is defined as “small states with limited land area, limited populations and limited resources, which are politically independent or internally self-governing, with the determination to be recognized as separate and distinct entities and the urge to move as far and as fast as possible into the category of developed countries” (Harrigan, 1972).

What, then, were the conditions which stimulated, reinforced and extended the existing migratory labour movements of the post-World War II era to new intra-Caribbean destinations? Some of these conditions are now listed:

- i. By the mid-1950s, the European colonial powers were ready to shed themselves of their colonies. These colonies exhibited the classic characteristics of Third World countries with vast labour surpluses.
- ii. The collapse of Cuba as a tourist haven for North Americans stimulated the emergence of alternative tourist destinations.
- iii. The advent of jet travel made Caribbean destinations more accessible to Americans, Canadians and Europeans.
- iv. Uncontrolled international borders became easier to cross; unguarded shorelines offered numerous entry points.
- v. In the domestic markets, agricultural decline had set in, and many countries became reservoirs of surplus labour.
- vi. The race and class systems of the period of colonial slavery remained entrenched, and these reinforced the sharp economic and social inequalities between the *haves* and *have-nots*.
- vii. Internal political conditions in some States created pressures that fostered outward movement.
- viii. Significant disparities in population growth and densities between contiguous States or nearby islands stimulated emigration.
- ix. A few microstates possess the combination of resources—white sand, azure bays, vacation hotels, cheap service labour and appropriate infrastructure—that made them particularly attractive as tourist destinations.
- x. The development of improved transportation systems at levels that were affordable to most persons provided options for potential migrants to seek out a better life overseas.
- xi. Family networks, complemented by modern communications, significantly assisted migrants in joining relatives who were already abroad.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMIGRATION IN FOUR SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

3.1 Generalizations of immigration in the selected countries

The four countries selected for study in this report have at least one thing in common: with membership in the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), they have experienced or are currently undergoing significant impact from intra-Caribbean immigration. The countries are: The Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and the United States Virgin Islands.

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a former colony of Great Britain, is now a free and democratic sovereign nation. It is made up of about 700 islands, 40 of which are occupied. The British Virgin Islands, a British dependent territory, consists of about 40 islands, with 99 per cent of its population on 4 main islands. St. Maarten—the smallest of the microstates with an area of 13 square miles—has the unique distinction of sharing one island with French St. Martin. As a family member of the Netherlands Antilles, it is administered primarily from Curacao, both of which are under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Three main islands of the 100 islands, Cays and rocks that make up the United States Virgin Islands are occupied. It constitutes an unincorporated territory of the United States.

There are certain features which characterize these countries. Moreover, a number of collective generalizations can be made which derive from their common experiences with immigration in the recent past.

- i. In hemispheric terms, these four countries are miniscule, and are often classified as microstates.
- ii. The engine of growth of their economies is tourism.
- iii. In its initial phase, the growth of the tourist industry requires supplies of labour that are not met domestically, and solutions are found by encouraging relatively large numbers of immigrants—who provide cheap labour—from countries with labour surpluses.
- iv. The private sector organizes the importation of foreign labour, sometimes bypassing official institutions created to manage immigration flows, but government is occasionally compelled, for political correctness, to intervene in order to regain control.

- v. Many groups—such as business owners and middle-class consumers—benefit immediately from the proceeds generated by immigration, but the costs—especially of the long-term impacts of unskilled and undocumented migrants on society—are deferred.
- vi. The dependence of these economies on tourism exposes them to the vicissitudes of the economic performance of the market areas from which they draw their tourists, and this invariably leads to periods of growth and decline with attendant exacerbation of domestic problems during economic recession.
- vii. They all have significant proportions of their populations which are foreign-born (when compared to the United States with 9 per cent in 1994): 17 per cent in the Bahamas (1990), 50 per cent in the British Virgin Islands, 53 per cent in St. Maarten (1992) and 33 per cent in the United States Virgin Islands (1990).
- viii. With the exception of the Bahamas, which is a sovereign State, none of the other dependencies has full control over its immigration policies.
- ix. The dependent countries are simultaneously experiencing emigration and immigration, the latter stream being the more dominant.
- x. In various ways, all have experienced or are experiencing severe economic and social—including political—problems due to uncontrolled immigration.
- xi. Having experienced heady population and economic growth, economic competition and resentment of foreigners tend to magnify the inequalities within society and sometimes promote xenophobia and policies of nativism.
- xii. Much of the contemporary difficulty of immigration control is explained by the confluence of *labour markets* in these receiving countries and the requirement to observe the *human rights* of immigrants.
- xiii. Because of the difficulties of protecting their borders, undocumented migrants seem to be aware that “Once you get one foot in the door, you can get in”.
- xiv. The tourism-based economies are unable or unwilling to reduce the domestic conditions that attract migrants, and they are mere spectators of the basic market and demographic forces of the sending countries.
- xv. There is no clear understanding at what point in the future will current restrictionist policies collide with private-sector business interests in maintaining the quality life styles that are made possible by the cheap services of immigrants and their production of low-cost goods.

- xvi. In countries where they exist, it appears that second-generation immigrants are much more strident in the assertion of their political rights than are first-generation or one-and-a-half generation immigrants—children who migrated with their parents and grew up in the host country.
- xvii. The costs of subscribing to international conventions that protect the human rights of undocumented workers impose considerable financial burdens on each of these microstates.
- xviii. None of these countries has succeeded in the full integration of its diverse immigrants—the existing forms of integration appear to be variants of assimilation, exclusion and multiculturalism.

3.2 Factors promoting migration

Social scientists have perhaps contributed more than the practitioners of any other discipline to the large body of literature on the causes of international migration (Lee, 1900; Todaro, 1900; Lucas, 1983; Stark, 1993; Martin and Midgley, 1994). Both Mills (1988) and Guengant (1993), among others, have also attempted to explain Caribbean emigration. The variegated reasons for migration may be reduced to *push* and *pull* forces that are both economic and non-economic. This explanation is somewhat oxymoronic: the causes appear simplistic but their elaboration is complex. These simple reasons of push-pull provide necessary but not sufficient conditions to account for migration at its current levels.

The *pull* or *demand* factors which promote migration include: the rapid economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s of Caribbean migrant-receiving countries, and the guest worker, “temporary” or other bond-type programmes which were consequently instituted, and which initiated unprecedented labour flows (as in the United States Virgin Islands); the direct recruitment of labour in migrant-sending countries by governments or employers (as in the British Virgin Islands); and family reunification. On the *push* or *supply* side was the rapid abandonment of agriculture as West Indian colonies became independent, and with increasing unemployment and underemployment throughout the region; the concomitant low wages in stagnant economies; the build-up of surplus labour in the British Caribbean as the United Kingdom shut its doors to its former colonists in 1962; and the simple personal need to live abroad, an act which is so indispensable for social acceptability in the Caribbean.

Three more explanatory causes for Caribbean migration are provided, particularly in the context of this report.

First, Stark (1993, 102) additionally proposes the theory of relative deprivation to explain migration. It is a concept based on social inequalities. The feelings of deprivation which arise from these inequalities—racial, social, economic—increase as the number of persons in the referent society who have it becomes large. He believes, further, that migration may be characterized as:

a function of the inequality in the distribution of income by size in the sending and receiving countries; directly related to inequality in the sending society; and negatively associated with inequality in the receiving country (Stark, 1993, 115). In brief, the relative deprivation theory of international migration suggests, *ceteris paribus*, that the decision to migrate to a foreign labour market is reached as a result of feelings of deprivation in the group of reference.

Second, the concept of networking or linkage provides the spark that connects potential migrants to their destinations, and provides the means necessary to move. These links were generally established from prior contact during the colonial period, and might have been influenced by politics, trade, or cultural events. These links are rooted with family members and friends already settled overseas. They are the sources of economic opportunities abroad, particularly on modes of entry, and they are also the major sources of information on life in the host country. These transnational networks are established even during guest worker or temporary migrant programmes, so that when restrictions are lessened or removed, movement is rapid and directional.

Third, some political scientists have argued that it is necessary to look beyond the macro and microeconomic explanations (of the *push-pull* and relative deprivation hypotheses), beyond social networks to trends in political development in migrant-receiving societies. The debates in the industrialized democratic countries over immigration levels, naturalization and asylum policies are closely related to what is referred to as *rights-based* politics. These rights-based issues are also now forcing Caribbean receiving countries to try to determine what level of annual migration to accept, from which countries to permit immigrants, and what rights and services should be accorded these immigrants. This new brand of rights-based politics is not only instrumental in helping many immigrants to enter, but to stay in these labour-importing countries (Cornelius *et al.*, 1992, 8-9).

It is this latter explanation of international migration—rights-based liberalism—that gives rise to the *iron law of labour immigration*. This law is of particular relevance to the migrant-receiving microstates of the Caribbean, for it asserts that the concept of *temporary* migration is just that—a concept. The reality is that in labour immigration “there is nothing more permanent than temporary workers” (Martin, 1994, 86). The implication is clear for receiving countries, and it behooves Caribbean migration policy makers concerned with immigration control to take heed: no country can expect to completely isolate itself from migrants, for as long as immigrants pass through any one of the three doors—the *front door* of legal immigration, the *side door* of grey-area immigration, or the *back door* of illegal immigration—temporary migration will definitely result in some level of permanent migration.

4. IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION

4.1 Classification of impacts

Policies that are designed to promote or facilitate immigration are hardly ever conceptualized in terms of the full range of consequences that are attendant on labour movements. There appears to be no hypothetical formulation at this stage of the direct relationship between the percentage of non-nationals within a society and the community's tolerance level. Data below suggest two working principles. First, countries with large populations tend to react much more slowly to the rising number of foreigners in their midst than small countries—especially small islands. Second, racial, ethnic, sociocultural and linguistic sameness of foreigners with nationals tend to minimize and reduce adverse reactions when the proportion of immigrants rises.

However, there is no question that sustained immigration has enormous consequences for any country, irrespective of size. Domestic reaction to the impact is merely a function of how soon the threshold of toleration is reached, and this is generally much sooner in smaller countries.

The primary areas of impact may be categorized as demographic, economic, social, political and cultural. These are further subdivided as shown below:

Demographic

- Population growth
- Sex composition
- Age composition
- Fertility and rates
- Marriage patterns
- Size and occupational skills of the labour force
- Population density

Economic

- Income and savings
- Wage rates
- Unemployment and politics

Social welfare

- Access to, and quality of, housing
- Access to education
- Access to health services

Political

*Cultural***4.2 Demographic****4.2.1 Population growth**

Wherever administrative decisions are made to admit immigrants to the domestic labour market, it is always on the basis that the domestic labour force is not large enough to meet all the needs of planned economic growth in particular industries or in particular occupations. Simultaneously, because the policy in place allows the demand to determine the supply, and because immigration is often regarded by the migrant-receiving country as temporary, the concomitant growth in population always appears to exceed expectations, and in all cases it has overwhelmed some aspects of planned services and infrastructure. The growth curves illustrated in Figure 1 demonstrate two salient features.

The first is that the decennial population increases in the smaller islands were remarkable by standard measures of growth. While the Bahamas, with the largest population, shows fairly even growth during its last three decennial censuses, the population of the United States Virgin Islands increased by 95 per cent between 1960 and 1970, and by 55 per cent between 1970 and 1980 (see table D1). The British Virgin Islands experienced 47 per cent population growth from 1980 to 1991 (table B1), and St. Maarten experienced the most extreme population changes over three decades: increases of 186 per cent between 1960 and 1972, 68 per cent between 1972 and 1981, and again more than doubled—145 per cent—between 1981 and 1992 (table C1). It is noteworthy that these increases in population took place at the same time that emigration of nationals from each of the four countries was taking place.

The second noticeable feature of Figure 1 is that the rapid growth was not due to natural causes of net births over deaths, nor to significant increases in fertility rates. Net immigration largely accounts for the dramatic growth within the relatively short periods of time. The figure also shows the percentage of the stock that was of foreign origin. It is noteworthy that the industrial countries react strongly to migration issues when the percentage of immigrants in their midst approaches 10 per cent, but these microstates have had to sustain immigrant growth that was severalfold larger than that of metropolitan countries.

While the growth of the immigrant stock in the Bahamas appears modest compared to that of the other countries shown in Figure 1, the percentage of immigrants still exceeds that considered by advanced industrial countries to be tolerable. It reached a high of 16 per cent in 1970, declined to 6 per cent 10 years later, but increased again to 10 per cent by 1990. Bahamian officials attribute this latter increase to the uncontrolled influx of Haitians by boats, and though major efforts are made to stem this flow, they are only partially successful. It is likely that the per cent of non-nationals will increase until the exodus from Haiti is significantly reduced.

The figure of the United States Virgin Islands presents a typical curve of population growth due principally to immigration that is necessary to meet labour demands: rapid early increases of both the overall population and of immigrants—from 16 to 34 to 38 per cent migrants in 1960, 1970 and 1980 respectively—and signs of decrease when the demand is largely met. The decline follows the introduction of strong federal immigration legislation and enforced protection of its borders. The flow has been dramatically reduced for all but overstaying visitors and sporadic undocumented boat immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Haiti and China³. The decrease from 38 to 35 per cent non-nationals between 1980 and 1990 reflects both a reduction in the flow of new immigrants and also a wave of emigration by regularized United States Virgin Islands foreign-born residents to the United States mainland.

Patterns of population growth in the early stages of the immigration cycle are demonstrated by the curves for the British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten. The figure shows that the latter is the only country in the last 30 years with a majority of its residents of foreign origin—54 per cent in 1992. The implications for this small Antillean island are far-reaching for its long-term development. The British Virgin Islands, the smallest of the territories—in population—also posted significant immigrant growth with non-nationals constituting 12, 35 and 50 per cent of the population in 1970, 1980 and 1991, respectively. Like St. Maarten, the prospects of naturalization of these foreigners and their offspring can have acute consequences for the political evolution of these countries.

Such levels of growth in any country could not be allowed to continue without direct intervention by the State. Any economic expansion to which immigrants contributed substantially, or in which they came to share, could not survive for any meaningful length of time under this type of unplanned increase. It is explained below how this growth affects age and sex structures as well as a number of other demographic characteristics.

A common feeling expressed by nationals in these countries is that as non-national proportions of the population become larger, the islands become more visibly crowded, they appear to become “smaller”, resources seem to be gobbled up by the provision of services to immigrants, and they must therefore preserve their homeland from further incursions of the patrimony.

4.2.2 Sex composition

Of the three principal factors that determine the sex structure of a population—fertility, mortality and migration—the movement of people has the most dramatic, short-term impact on the distribution of people.

³More than 300 undocumented Chinese arrived in the United States Virgin Islands since 1994. They claim to be political refugees and on their way to the United States mainland—they do not stay in the United States Virgin Islands. They typically agree to pay gangs in Fujian province in China some \$20,000 to \$40,000 with a small down payment to fly or sail them halfway around the world. The Chinese generally enter the United States Virgin Islands by showing up looking totally stranded and lost—speaking no English—on the shores of small bays on St. John, having been deposited there from the nearby British Virgin Islands or St. Maarten (*The Daily News*, Jan. 11, 1996).

It was pointed out above that the feminization of the migrant stream is considered to be one of the four distinct trends that shape the current labour movement. Particularly in the Caribbean and Latin America, it appears that this region is the only one in the developing world where women predominate in the migrant stream. The sex difference in the proportion of migrants seems to be largely determined by the employment opportunities that are available for women in the migrant-receiving country. These opportunities exist in the tourist industry as service workers in hotels, gift shops, restaurants and related occupations. It seems that the old model of women traveling after their male companions have settled for family reunification is no longer the norm.

Two of the most common numerical measures of sex composition of a population are: the sex (or masculinity) ratio, and the ratio of the excess or deficit of males to the total population. These two indices may be usefully employed to measure inter-area or inter-group comparisons, or for comparisons over time (Shyrock, Siegal, *et al.*, 1980, 1991).

The sex ratio, usually defined as the number of males per 100 females⁴, indicates an excess of males when the sex ratio is above 100, and an excess of females when the ratio is below 100. Most national sex ratios generally fall in the narrow range of 95 to 102, except when there are severe impacts like war or heavy immigration. Sex ratios that fall outside the range of 95 to 102 are considered extreme.

The second index of sex composition—the excess or deficit of males as a per cent of the total population⁵—has a point of balance or a standard of zero. A positive value indicates an excess of males, and a negative value indicates an excess of females.

All of the censuses of the Bahamas indicate that there has been an excess of females in the population: the last three censuses show sex ratios of 98.3, 94.5 and 96.1 in 1970, 1980 and 1990 respectively (see table A1 in Appendix A). This is also the case among Bahamian nationals with a ratio of 94.9. However, the pattern among immigrations is the reverse. In 1990, men outnumbered women among immigrants as is demonstrated by the sex ratio of 107.6. Table A1 also presents the per cent deficit of males in the population, but table A2 shows that the excess of males among non-nationals is 3.6 per cent of that group. It will be shown below—in the following section—that the concentration of males in certain age groups far exceeds the overall ratio of the immigrant group. The effect of this reversal of the sex ratio on the country is not evident because of the relatively small size—9.4 per cent—of the non-national population.

The historical pattern of the sex ratio in the British Virgin Islands is illustrative of the effect of migration on the structure of a population. The censuses of 1946 and 1960 show that the British Virgin Islands had feminine sex ratios of 93.6 and 98.5, respectively. The earlier years were marked

⁴The sex ratio is given as: $(P_m/P_f) \times 100$, where P_m is the number of males and P_f is the number of females.

⁵The excess or deficit of males is given by: $[(P_m - P_f) / P_t] \times 100$, where P_m and P_f are as given in the footnote immediately above, and P_t is the total population.

by constant emigration of males due to the relatively poor performance of the economy. However, in more recent years, the predominantly male flow of immigrant labour has resulted in sex ratios among non-nationals of 113.0, 104.6 and 105.2 in 1970, 1980 and 1991, respectively (tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B).

An imbalance in the sex ratio also prevails in the population of St. Maarten. In 1991 it was 97.4. Unlike the British Virgin Islands, females among immigrants outnumber males; the ratio was 94.8. This index is bordering on the extreme, and is indicative of the youthful women who migrate to St. Maarten (table C3).

Table 1 illustrates the changes in the overall sex ratios of a country that may be caused by the shifting composition of its population with respect to nativity—i.e., native and non-native. The United States Virgin Islands was selected to demonstrate this effect; however, the method of analysis can be extended to any other country for which there are appropriate data.

The general rise in the overall sex ratio of the United States Virgin Islands from 1917 to 1990 can be analyzed with respect to the contribution that changes in each group—national and foreign-born—made both to the nativity composition of the population and to its changing sex ratio.

Table 1(a) shows the sex ratios of each census year for the United States Virgin Islands. The principal features are: that the country exhibits a low sex ratio for all its years from 1917 until 1990; that the excess of females declined gradually by 14.1 points between 1917 and 1970, increased over the following decade by 7.8 points, and declined again by 2.1 points between 1980 and 1990; and that ratios below 90.0 are indicative of extreme situations and must be accounted for by immigration alone.

Table 1(b) also reveals that a low sex ratio prevailed among nationals, although no year is considered extreme, with the exception of 1930. This can be explained by emigration from the United States Virgin Islands to the United States mainland, as was most likely the case from 1917. Throughout the latter half of this century, young native males have favored the United States military for a variety of reasons⁶. Among the foreign-born residents, the excess of females declined from 1930 to 1960 when the inflow was almost equal for men and women. What is also noticeable is that all censuses but that of 1960 reveal excessive feminization of the immigrant labour force, as is evidenced by the extreme sex ratios, all of which are below 90.0, except for 1960. These wide deviations from 100.0 also provide evidentiary information on the sex-selective character of migration to this small country.

In the absence of migration, the sex ratio of a population is expected to fall close to 100. The significant deviations in the United States Virgin Islands and other immigrant countries is a clear indication of the compositional changes that result from heavy immigration or emigration. The

⁶Requests to the armed forces for data on the number of native Virgin Islanders who leave home to join the military have been denied on the grounds that the data are "classified".

importance of this characteristic is not limited to the excess of one sex in the population, but extends to the social implications and the impact which this imbalance may have on local government migration policy.

4.2.3 Age composition

Data on the age of a population is the most important variable in the study of fertility, nuptiality and mortality. While all countries in the Caribbean have responded to the United Nations' call in 1960 to treat the inclusion of age in censuses, there has been far less recognition of the need to collect data on the age structure of immigrants. These data are essential in proactive planning for the rational development of their societies.

One of the simplest but most useful methods of assessing the consequences of immigration on the age composition of a population is to examine the magnitude of the numbers relative to each other, and of the amount and per cent of change in each age category. The British Virgin Islands is enduring a relatively rapid inflow of labour, and this country is selected for an investigation of this kind of impact.

Data for the British Virgin Islands are presented in table 2. Given that the foreign-born population increased by 74 per cent between 1970 and 1980, and by 107.7 per cent between 1980 and 1991, and there is an excess of males in the migrant stream, one can expect that this inflow would markedly affect the age and sex structure. In 1980, almost 4 out of 10 residents were between the ages of 15 and 34. In fact, the median age of 23.1 indicates that 50 per cent of the population was concentrated below that age, and 50 per cent above it. This median is just slightly above what is considered a "young" population. Eleven years later, with an influx of young adult immigrants, about two-thirds—i.e., 68.4 per cent—of whom were between 15 and 44 years, the population reflects this "aging" process. In 1991, the median was 27.0 years, indicating an aging society. The British Virgin Islands is thus described as a country of "intermediate age".

The table demonstrates that the change for all ages combined is 46.7 per cent. However, this number does not provide any indication of the intercensal changes by age, nor can these be derived from the overall change. The last column of table 2 shows that while the total population of the British Virgin Islands increased by approximately 47 per cent, this increase is exceeded by two age categories, those between 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 years. Even more importantly, the population in the three age groups between 35 and 49 more than doubled in the intercensal period. (For similar data on the United States Virgin Islands, see table D2.) This dramatic growth of middle-age British Virgin Islanders may be attributed to the combined effect of two factors. The first is that as the economy has strengthened and levels of living have improved, more nationals are staying at home and fewer are emigrating. Second, the surging economy is also attracting young and middle-aged immigrants to work in the construction and hotel industries and in the retail trades.

This is a clear indication of possible drastic repercussions that will visit any set of social programmes geared to the elderly: health services, pension and retirement plans, and general age dependency.

Another indicator of the effect of a relatively large immigrant labour force is the movement of the age dependency ratio (ADR). This measure reflects the proportion of the combined child population and the elderly to the working-age population. It is essentially an index that measures the social and economic impact of different age structures. This ratio is a useful indicator of the burden—or lack of—that some age structures impose on a population. The higher the ratio is, the more people each worker has to support. The impact on households with large families is obvious.

The ADRs for the British Virgin Islands were 115.5, 79.8, 66.6 and 48.8 in 1960, 1970, 1980 and 1991 respectively. The index for 1960 means that there were about 1.2 dependants per working-age person, which can be considered a heavy load since each working-age person did not actually work. By 1970 and after, the ratio dropped and remained below 1.0—the 1980 ratio was about half that of 1960. The ADR for the British Virgin Islands has been on a steady decline since. The relatively low current ratios for the British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten—see table 3—are a direct function of the movement of young adult immigrants into the productive working age.

It has been suggested that the ADR is regarded with an aura of economic significance that is unjustified. Instead, an economic dependency ratio (EDR) is recommended. A ratio of the economically inactive population to the economically active population is considered to be a much more meaningful measure of economic dependency, for it embodies not only a country's age-sex structure, but also its economic activity participation rates. Table 3 shows EDRs for the four countries in this study. It indicates that in 1990 the United States Virgin Islands had the highest EDR, and that in 1992 St. Maarten had the lowest (tables C2 and C3). The higher EDRs indicate higher dependency on the active work force. For small families, a high EDR implies higher taxes to support schools, health facilities and subsidized housing. For those in business, whether government or private, a high EDR suggests that workers will spend more on their families and save less, and government revenues must be diverted to food, housing and other welfare programmes rather than on financing industry or commerce or economic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water and sewer distribution, and communications systems.

It is essential that planners—in the British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten particularly—understand the implications of their current low ADR and EDR. The influx of immigrants is primarily in the productive working-age groups, and they add very little to the dependent age groups. However, as the immigrants have children, as they age, and if they stay in the country, they will over time contribute their share to the dependency groups. It is prudent for population planners of the British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten to be proactive about this delayed impact of the elderly on the future of their societies.

In order to appreciate further the repercussions of heavy immigration on the age distribution of a migrant-receiving country, its percentage age distribution may be compared to that of a base

country. This may be accomplished by deriving indices for each age group, or an overall index for an age distribution, and the procedure is illustrated for the British Virgin Islands and Saint Maarten. The United States is used as a base.

Remarkably, both the British Virgin Islands and Saint Maarten had substantially higher proportions of their populations up to age 44 years older than comparable groups in the United States, with the exception of the 5-to-14 and 15-to-24 age groups for Saint Maarten. The data in table 4 show that the indices of several age groups of Saint Maarten are more extreme than similar cohorts in the British Virgin Islands.

Two additional indices—of relative difference and of dissimilarity⁷—help to emphasize how very different are the two age distributions of the two receiving countries when compared with that of the United States as a receiving country with only 8 per cent of its population being foreign-born. The index of relative difference and the index of dissimilarity, which capture the magnitude of the differences between any two age distributions, also confirm that the distribution of Saint Maarten is more heavily impacted on than that of the British Virgin Islands, even though the latter distribution is itself significantly different from that of the United States which serves as a base.

Immigrants in general tend to be young adults when they first arrive, and to have higher fertility rates than nationals. The immediate effect is to reduce the proportion of the elderly and to create a “younging” effect on the population.

4.2.4 Fertility rate

The fertility of a country refers to the reproductive capacity of its population, or to the number of live births occurring within it. In the context of this study, it is a fundamental component of population change. In the absence of significant migration, a high or low fertility rate largely determines the population growth of a country. It was pointed out above that young immigrants tend to have higher fertility rates than nationals of migrant-receiving countries, and the combined impact of moderate to high immigration levels with above-average fertility rates can impart enormous consequences on the growth pattern of a microstate. The case of the Bahamas is used to illustrate the essence of the fertility effect.

Table 5 presents observed rates. From the data, it can be derived that immigrants accounted for 9.4 per cent of the population in 1990, but produced 17.2 per cent of the live births in that year (table 6). The crude birth rate, which indicates the number of live births per 1,000 population in a given year, is significantly higher for immigrants than for national Bahamians in the last three censuses. It is this perception of the rapid growth in the number of non-nationals which generates fear among nationals of being overrun in their homeland by *foreigners*.

⁷The index of relative difference and the index of similarity are two summary measures of the differences between two age distributions. The former is based on the sum of the deviations of the age-specific indices (without regard to signs); the latter on sum of the absolute differences between the per cents at each age.

Two other indices which speak to the fertility of the population, and allow comparison of the subgroups, are the general fertility rate and the total fertility rate. The general fertility rate, a somewhat more refined measure than the crude birth rate, defines the number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age. The data in table 5 show that there were 78 births per 1,000 women ages 15-44 among Bahamian nationals, and 122 births per 1,000 women in the same age group of non-national women.

The total fertility rate is one of the most valuable indices of fertility, because it provides the best possible estimate of the number of children that women are currently having. That is, it is a single-figure measure that sums up the rate of all women at a given point in time. The index indicates the average number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime—if she were to pass through all her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year (Shyrock *et al.*, 1980, 484).

The fourth column of table 7—the age-specific birth rate—denotes the likelihood of a woman giving birth during each year of her childbearing years. In each five-year age group (in table 7(b) and table 7(c)), except the 15-to-19-year category, the likelihood of a non-national woman giving birth is always higher than that of a Bahamian national. By age 35, family size among nationals average 2.1 children, while the same family size is reached among non-nationals at age 30.

Total fertility rate for all women age 15 to 44 years was 2.2 births: that of nationals was 2.5 births, and of non-nationals it was 3.2 births. The table shows that the average age at birth of mothers was 27.4 years for nationals and 27.9 for immigrants. (For additional data on fertility, see tables B3, B4, C4, C5, D3 and D4).

Figure 2 presents a comparative view of fertility patterns in the four countries for both nationals and non-nationals. The graph for the United States Virgin Islands demonstrates that all through the reproductive period, immigrants were more active than nationals. Between age 15 and 30, immigrant young females in Saint Maarten also reproduced at a higher rate than nationals.

This appears to be consistent with the prevailing view in the migration literature that foreign-born women tend to have larger families than nationals. Part of the explanation in the United States Virgin Islands is that many women from the neighbouring islands—the British Virgin Islands and Antigua and Barbuda particularly—go to the United States Virgin Islands to have their babies so that they can claim the right of *ius soli* for their children.⁸ In Saint Maarten in 1981, the fertility rate of foreign-born teenagers was twice as high as native young women. By 1992, while the rates of both groups were reduced, that of immigrant young women still remained 50 per cent higher than nationals' (tables C4 and C5).

The Bahamas is the only country in the group in which national teenagers have higher reproductive rates than immigrants, an occurrence which contradicts the norm stated above. This

⁸Supporting data for this view were provided by the Bureau of Health Statistics, United States Virgin Islands.

phenomenon deserves further study in the light of national efforts to reduce fertility rates. The British Virgin Islands also presents a deviation from the norm. In general, younger nationals tend to be more productive than immigrants, but after age 30 when family sizes average 1.7 children, immigrants then appear to be more productive.

The implications of this general pattern of higher reproductive rates among immigrants also contributes to some of the fears that are expressed by natives about the long-term effects of non-nationals increasing in such proportions as to *take over* their societies.

4.2.5 Patterns in union status

Residents of a country tend to marry or form unions with other residents of the same racial, ethnic and socioeconomic background. In industrial receiving countries, marriages between nationals and immigrants are often discouraged or looked upon with some degree of disapproval. In England, current concern is expressed about the trade in marriages of convenience as a means of obtaining permanent residence (Layton-Henry, 1992). Belgian law prohibits an immigrant entering the country through marriage with a legal resident from bringing in a new spouse if the marriage ends in divorce. And Japanese in Tokyo express ambivalence toward having their daughters marry foreigners (Cornelius *et al*, 1994). In the United States, fraudulent marriages between citizens and foreigners have engendered extraordinary efforts by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to minimize this occurrence.

Perhaps the most common measure of nuptiality is the crude marriage rate. The variation that is observed from country to country may be a function of one or more of the following: the proportion of the population that is of marriageable age; the proportion of marriageable age who have previously married; the level of economic development of the country; provisions for dissolving marriages; and customs that relate to remarriages (Shyrock *et al.*, 1980, 555). Even though the crude marriage rate provides useful information as a gross measure of the relative frequency of marriages/unions and permits comparisons among countries, it appears more useful to examine the patterns of intermarriages/unions between nationals and non-nationals.

In the British Virgin Islands in 1991, 12.1 per cent of the unions were among nationals, while 10.6 per cent of all unions were between nationals and non-nationals. Twenty-five per cent of the unions were between non-nationals, and 31.7 per cent of non-nationals lived alone (tables B5 and B6). In 1980 in the United States Virgin Islands, 41 per cent of the native-born grooms married native women, while 39 per cent foreign-born grooms took United States brides (Virgin Islands Department of Health [VIDH], 1980). In 1989, the comparable marriages were 95 per cent among natives, and 53 per cent immigrant grooms marrying brides who were citizens. And in 1990, marriages were respectively 94 per cent and 53 per cent (See table D5) (VIDH, 1989 and 1990).

In some countries, marriages between citizens (or permanent residents in the United States) and immigrants are often used as a device to offer the immigrant a rapid path to naturalization. There is an increasing number of such occurrences in Saint Maarten among male Saint Maarteners

and Dominican Republican women. In the British Virgin Islands where for many years immigrant family unification was not facilitated, it was inevitable that there would be unions between nationals and non-nationals. This presents a real challenge to the continuation of such a policy in the light of the place within society of the children of such unions, together with those born of non-nationals. It does not appear that any society can ignore the increasing size of these children and adults who know no other home but who are denied the full range of rights and privileges as young nationals.

4.2.6 Size and occupational skills of the labour force

The precise impacts of immigrant labour on the economies of receiving countries have not been thoroughly studied. What has been observed in repeated cases, however, is that relatively little attention is paid to the long-term impact of workers as long as there is a demand for labour that would clearly contribute to the growth of that economy. The process is encouraged as long as that immigrant labour does not compete with natives for their preferred types of jobs, nor does it negatively influence wages, working conditions, welfare and unemployment. During recessions, immigrants are among the first to be targeted, and their presence in the labour market gradually becomes a social, economic and political issue.

The Netherlands Antilles—primarily Saint Maarten—and the United States Virgin Islands present examples of that effect. Table 8 shows that of the economically active population—or the labour force—in the Netherlands Antilles, there was a significantly higher (crude) participation rate in 1992 among immigrants than among nationals—61.7 per cent to 43.3 per cent respectively. This was also the case in Saint Maarten where the respective rates were 75.6 and 41.2. What is also demonstrated is that there is a higher unemployment rate among nationals—16 per cent—than among immigrants in the Netherlands Antilles as a whole, but the reverse is true in Saint Maarten where the corresponding rates were 9.7 per cent and 16.5 per cent, respectively.

In the United States Virgin Islands, the labour force participation rate⁹ among foreign-born workers was high. For Eastern Caribbean immigrants it was 72.3 per cent, and of other foreign-born residents it was 68.8 per cent. The rate was 60.5 per cent for natives, 77.2 for United States immigrants, and 52.1 for those of Puerto Ricans ancestry (table 9).

Unlike the case of Saint Maarten, the unemployment rate of Caribbean-born immigrants is lower than that of native United States Virgin Islanders. The higher unemployment rate of Saint Maarten is perhaps a reflection of the proportionately larger number of undocumented workers there than in the United States Virgin Islands. These immigrants are ineligible for local government or federal jobs, and there are not many other employment options available when the economy is sluggish. This was particularly the case immediately after hurricane *Luis* in September 1995, which caused the closure of several businesses, mainly hotels, which employ many immigrants.

⁹The labor force participation rate in the United States is defined as the per cent of the total number of people working to the sum of the number of people working plus those over age 16 not looking for jobs or retired (Shim and Siegel, 1995).

Reference was made above to the perceived competition which immigrants present to nationals. In all of the countries studied, a plurality of migrant labourers is intended for occupations that cannot—or will not—be met by domestic labour. Consequently, one expects that managerial, local and federal government jobs are reserved for nationals.

While this tends to be so during the early years of immigration, immigrants penetrate these occupational positions over time. This insinuation is considered to be a threat to the established order in every country, and the reaction to this generally appears to be one of alarm and anger. The accession of *native-born* second generation immigrants who can legally and professionally claim certain occupations sometimes appear to accentuate the perceived threat of *immigrants taking over*.

Economic data from the Bahamas given in table 10 may be used to illustrate the dispersion of nationals and non-nationals in the occupational structure of that country. Nationals in 1990 predominated as service workers (23.0 per cent), clerks (16.8 per cent), in the crafts (15.4 per cent), and in elementary occupations (15.2 per cent).

Proportionately, there were about twice as many non-nationals (30.4 per cent) in elementary occupations as nationals, and there were more than twice as many non-nationals in the professions (14.4 per cent) as Bahamians (6.7 per cent).

Native Bahamians showed greater proportions than non-nationals in the technical professions (9 to 6 per cent), among clerks (17 to 7 per cent) and among service and market sales workers (23 to 8 per cent). Importantly, there were also proportionately more non-nationals in the class of 'legislators, senior officials and managers' (7.1 per cent) than nationals (5.1 per cent). This was probably not the case for legislators and senior officials, but perhaps so in the managerial category, reflecting the proportionately larger number of foreign businesses and their representatives. (See tables A3 to A5 for additional data on occupation and industry in the Bahamas.)

The distribution is different in some respects in the United States Virgin Islands (see table D6). Significantly more citizens (27.1 per cent) occupied 'managerial and professional specialty' positions in 1990 than foreign-born residents (15 per cent). However, like the Bahamas, more immigrants occupied service positions—23.5 per cent, primarily food preparation, personal, cleaning and building service—than citizens (16.0 per cent). A larger proportion of immigrants—69 per cent—worked in the private sector compared to 56.4 per cent nationals, but more of the latter—33.8 per cent—worked in the federal and local government than non-nationals—20.6 per cent. The similarities in occupation and in the distribution of employees in industries among immigrants in both the Bahamas and United States Virgin Islands are perhaps a reflection of the dominant tourism sector in their economies. (See also tables B7-B9, C6, C7, and D7). The similarities in occupation and in the distribution of employees in industries among immigrants in both the Bahamas and the United States Virgin Islands are perhaps a reflection of the dominant tourism sector in their economies.

In general, documented immigrants are allowed into receiving countries to fill jobs in specific industries where the demand cannot be met by natives who are already employed, or who elect to forego certain kinds of work.

Over time, however, immigrants may opt to leave the jobs for which they were allowed into the country—either because other more remunerative types of employment become available, or more secure and steady work may be obtained. Policy makers often need to know to which industries locals or immigrants are attracted.

One method of determining this attraction is by the use of indices of concentration. The index basically indicates where the concentration of a characteristic, or lack of it, occurs; i.e., it reveals where there is more or less of the characteristic compared to what would be expected, based on its proportion in the population at large.

Table 11 shows indices of concentration¹⁰ of all industries for the four countries of this report. Certain patterns which emerge tend to support the indicators provided above by a comparison of percentages.

First, nationals tend to be over-represented in electricity, gas and water industries; in transport, storage and communication; in financing, insurance and real estate; and in public administration and education. This concentration of nationals is partially because these industries are under local or federal government or quasi-government control, and because many positions require skills that do not predominate among immigrant labourers. Moreover, the *temporary* status of most immigrants ensure that they cannot hold certain positions for which only citizens or permanent residents qualify.

Second, immigrants are concentrated in mining and quarrying (with the exception of the United States Virgin Islands); in construction; in manufacturing; in restaurants, hotels, community, social and personal services. These positions tend to be labour intensive, are largely entry level, often start at the minimum wage with less-than-standard working conditions, and it is easier for employers to avoid the provision of insurance or of paying social security for their workers.

This concentration pattern changes with time as immigrants achieve or develop skills, and are able to sell their labour for higher wages and better working conditions. More importantly, with a change in immigration status to 'belonger' or 'naturalized', they then become eligible to apply for certain positions that were heretofore restricted to nationals.

¹⁰One method for deriving an index of concentration is given by Richmond (1983, 303): $[A / E * 100]$, in which "A" is the proportion of a certain group in a given category and 'E' is the expected proportion", this latter being defined as "that found in the population as a whole". The value of this index is that it conveys more information than mere percentages, given that it allows proportionate comparisons to be made, and it accounts for the large variations that sometimes exist between native and immigrant populations.

4.2.7 Population density

At a certain historical point in each of the countries being discussed, there arose a perception that the size of the population was growing beyond the carrying capacity of that country. It is the apprehension of this threat to the capacity of their society to sustain continued population growth at current levels of living and patterns of life that generates so much passion in the discussion of uncontrolled immigration. A common charge, especially in small islands with limited land mass, is that population density imparts negative social impacts, including psychopathology, crime and violent or aggressive behavior (Day and Day, 1987).

Despite the position that geographers have taken on this subject, that this theory of crowding cannot adequately explain the social conditions associated with density, government officials and many natives adhere to a recognition of the existence of limiting conditions in the continuing trend of population growth due primarily to the increasing number of immigrants. Their case appears plausible when they refer to rising crime rates, increasing scarcity and costliness of decent housing, and the deteriorating quality of the environment. However, these social and physical pathologies may not be due to the immigrants themselves—in fact, statistical tests confirm that the crime rate among non-nationals is not significantly higher than among natives¹¹. A more plausible explanation may lie in the overall growth in population and increasing pressure from external influences.

The question has been posed as to why these pathological conditions do not serve as a stimulus to action to halt this population increase, primarily if it is associated with legal immigration (Day and Day, 1987, 343). Part of the response seems to lie in the inherent challenge to officials to avoid doing anything that will inhibit the economic growth that is fueled by cheap, migrant labour, and to discover that precise balance at which their society would grow just right.

Increasing population densities are very real to the natives who can remember former times in which they lived with 'adequate' personal space. St. Thomas in the United States Virgin Islands, an island of only 32 square miles, increased its population density from 506 persons per square mile in 1960 to 1,544 in 1990. Saint Maarten, an even smaller geographic unit of 13.1 square miles, jumped from a density of 525 persons per square mile in 1970 to 2,838 persons per square mile (or 1,096 per square kilometer) in 1994. Although both the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands are archipelagoes with several uninhabited islands, their primary islands of New Providence and Tortola respectively have themselves undergone dramatic physical changes because of rapid population increases.

Despite the expressed fears of nationals concerning this index of population increase, Day and Day (1987, 351) suggest that the man/land ratio is more of an expression of area than it is of human reaction to density, or of the relationship of population to resources. It is suggested further that the ratio is not very meaningful as an indicator of comparison between countries with entirely

¹¹ Available data for the British Virgin Islands, shown in table B15, support this statement.

different socioeconomic and environmental conditions. In the final analysis, population density should be examined in static and dynamic terms, largely because it cannot be separated from either the social or cultural dimensions of the society, its demographic attributes, or the set of social changes taking place.

4.3 Economic

While there is a considerable literature in migration on the economic effects of emigrants on their sending societies, there is no comparable volume of the impact on receiving societies. Much of the research on the effects of immigrants on the domestic economy seems designed to establish that immigrants are a drain on local resources, that they depress wages, that they increase unemployment, and they displace natives from jobs.

A number of studies have shown that immigrants exert positive growth effects on the wages and employment opportunities of natives, that immigrants tend to accumulate higher levels of financial capital than natives, that the savings of immigrants contribute substantially to the capital stock, and that proportionately more immigrants are self-employed than natives. It is also suggested that employers consider immigrants to be harder working, more willing to follow instructions and possessive of a stronger work ethic. Empirical evidence from the United States shows: 1) that immigrants create more jobs than natives in their areas of location; 2) that the wages of the typical native grew more in areas of high immigration than in other areas; and 3) that immigration improves the wages of Anglo women (Enchautegui, 1994, 30).

In the countries under study, the economic consequences—expansion and decline—are more striking than are usually observed in the traditional industrial societies. Large supplies of labour were critical to the expansion of the tourist economies of the Bahamas and the United States Virgin Islands, and a similar situation characterizes the current economic expansion of the British Virgin Islands and Saint Maarten. In all of these microstates, immigrants provide replacements for domestic workers in jobs that natives are no longer willing to perform, and release them for higher-paying jobs. However, it has been argued by some economists that the availability of cheap labour in migrant societies reduces the incentive for businesses to become more competitive, and thus keeps low-productivity firms in existence. Additionally, it is suggested that the social capital expenditure on housing, education, health and social welfare services for immigrants considerably reduces the amount of capital that is available for overall improvement and development.

In this section, the economic effects of immigration are discussed under three headings: income and savings, labour wage rates, and the influence on politics.

4.3.1 Income and savings

In many ways, immigrants are not random selections of the communities from which they come. Most of these migrate for economic reasons, and can be considered to be self-selected for success. They tend to be younger (see section 4.2.3 above), are likely to be more economically

aggressive, enterprising, keenly entrepreneurial, higher risk-taking in behavior, and possess a higher stock of human capital.

One economist has observed that “first generation migrants who have been in their new country for a while often have a higher mean income ... than the indigenous (native-born) population” Stark (1991, 371). He recognizes that the characteristic of higher mean income among immigrants is confounding, particularly because immigrants in most countries are economically discriminated against by natives. The former generally face institutional, informational, language, social and other impediments, yet they are often able to outperform many native-born residents. Personal interviews in three of the four countries discussed here indicate that immigrants are regularly paid less, in general, than equally-skilled natives. The proposed explanation for higher average income of immigrants is that if immigrants plan to return to a low-wage country of origin, they exert a higher level of work effort than that put out by native-born workers. “Other things being equal, migrants who have a higher probability of return migration will have steeper earning profiles than migrants who have a lower probability of return migration” (Stark, 1991, 392).

Data from the British Virgin Islands do indicate a lower poverty rate among immigrants than natives. In 1991, 24.1 per cent of the households that were classified as ‘national’ were considered poor, compared to 11.7 per cent of those classified as ‘foreign’. Similarly, 21.4 per cent of the ‘national’ householders were poor while 15.3 per cent of the ‘foreign’ householders were poor also (table B14). In Saint Maarten, the modal monthly income of nationals and non-nationals alike was NAf1,001 to 2,000. However, while 44.1 per cent of the immigrants fell below the modal category, only 15.6 per cent of the nationals did so (table C8). In the United States Virgin Islands, natives show higher median incomes—\$12,102—than immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean—\$11,423 (table D8).

In an attempt to account for the higher savings rate of immigrants relative to that of native-born citizens, two empirical facts from United States census data are considered. First, the likelihood that a person who is foreign-born will be self-employed is significantly higher than that of a similarly skilled native. Second, self-employed workers have higher incomes than salaried workers—which holds for both natives and non-natives. Self-employment entails a higher risk than being an employee, but provides a higher average return—and variance—than wage employment.

Stark (1991, 385) puts forward a mathematical proposition: the higher the probability of return migration the higher is the level of savings. Two corollaries derived from the proof of this proposition state: 1) as a consequence of the possibility of return migration, migrants save more than the native born; 2) if return migration does not take place, migrants’ wealth outweighs the wealth of the native born.

Stark (1991, 385) infers that “given the possibility of return migration, migrants save more than the native born. Thus, if return migration does not materialize, migrants outperform the native born and migrants from countries to which the probability of return is larger will have higher mean incomes. The analysis also indicates that migrants’ contribution to capital formation ... is higher

than that of comparable native born". He concludes that if the contribution of capital accumulation is considered a valuable attribute of immigrants, it is incumbent on the host country "to devise measures that prevent the return probability falling to zero" (Stark, 1991, 386). The logic seems to be that if immigrants plan, or are under the threat, to return home, they will likely accumulate wealth for their eventual repatriation. This is evidently one of the most challenging aspects of migration policy for receiving countries.

Economist Stark does not provide empirical data for any country to support his theory and mathematical formulations. However, from the United States Virgin Islands, testimony submitted before a congressional subcommittee by the Alien Interest Movement stated that "aliens and their spouses and dependants have built up substantial 'equities' while residing and working in the United States Virgin Islands... 'The 1971 round-up of illegal aliens' (which resulted in the deportation of 9,000 aliens in a few months) had a staggering impact on the economy and particularly retail business establishments..." (Committee on the Judiciary [COJ], 1975, 50). It is reported that local bankers and other businessmen intervened to request a halt to the deportation because it was causing a run on the banks by depositors for their savings, and also had strong adverse effects on the economic viability of other businesses.

Economic microdata to support the income levels of migrants and their savings patterns are difficult to obtain, but this is evidently an area for further research because of the strong policy implications.

4.3.2 Wage rates

In every country covered in this study, there is a pervasive perception that immigrants adversely affect the employment opportunities of nationals, even though no supporting evidence was forthcoming to buttress this belief. However, "studies consistently reveal that immigration has no significant effect on the wages or employability of natives" (Enchautegui, 1994, 30). The positive economic effects of migrants on wages (in the United States) is largely through complementarity. In other words, if immigrants complement natives, a rise in wages is likely from an increase in immigration. Empirical work demonstrate that African-American men, Latino natives and Anglos experienced improved wage rates in areas of high immigration. But these improvements in wages do not hold under all conditions.

The impact of immigration on the wages of natives is largely influenced by the elasticities of labour demand and the elasticities of labour supply. In conditions where wages can be readily manipulated by employers and where immigrant labourers may readily be substituted for natives, high immigration will depress wages. Documented information from the United States Virgin Islands helps to explicate this situation.

"Without alien manpower, the Islands could not have experienced such a high rate of economic growth. It was employers, though, who profited the most..." (Miller and Boyer, 1980, 10). Such profit seemed to have come at the expense of both immigrants and natives. At the pinnacle of

the period of growth, general wages were low. The wage rate that was set by employers for bonded workers became the prevailing rates for the primary occupations for which immigrants were allowed to enter the country. Thus because of the high elasticity of the labour supply, employers eschewed the need to offer inducements of higher wages and better working conditions to indigenous workers. Immigrant female domestics¹² appeared to have been severely discriminated against by an hourly wage rate as low as \$0.54 per hour or \$23.76 per 44-hour week, compared to \$77 for similar work and time in New York (Social, Educational Research and Development, Inc. [SERD], 1969, 46). However, when the Department of Labour proposed that the minimum wage of immigrants be raised to \$1.60 per hour, the business community mounted so strong an opposition that the proposal was deferred and then died quietly.

Despite the evidence that employers largely controlled the importation of cheap foreign labour, that “most native Virgin Islanders have regarded manual labour—agricultural or commercial—as degrading [and] above all, they want a Government job” (Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law [SICIL], 1975, 15), a local organization presented to a congressional subcommittee that “aliens depress wage rates and working conditions for native Virgin Islanders” (SICIL, 1975, 48). The complicity of the government with employers to keep wage rates artificially low worked to the detriment of natives, who in turn agitated in various forms against immigrants within their community.

4.3.3 Unemployment and politics

Popular concerns of nationals become most vocalized during periods of high and increasing unemployment. Immigrants usually become easy targets for domestic workers. The former tend to be blamed for ills that generate frustration and insecurity: crime, a shortage of housing, overcrowding, unemployment, failure to meet their tax burden, poverty and environmental deterioration. These reactions, which appear exaggerated in small insular societies, are also evident in the industrial receiving societies.

The economic processes underway in the United States since the 1970s have increased the demand for migrants to fill minimum-wage, unskilled and part-time positions. But as Americans have faced dwindling opportunities during these times, their anxiety has been extended in hostile ways to the newcomers. The political response expresses itself through national restrictionist policies like the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the Immigration Act of 1990, and at the State level, through the ominous manifestation of *ethnic cleansing* embodied in California’s Proposition 187 (Ojeda, 1996).

In France, foreign workers were heavily concentrated in the heavy industries of steel, automobiles, mining and shipbuilding. A shift to highly technical, information-based industries rendered these industries almost obsolete, and industrial restructuring pushed unemployment among foreigners from 4.6 per cent in 1975 to about 14 per cent in 1982 and almost 20 per cent by 1990.

¹²The term *domestic* or *domestic worker* is commonly used in the United States Virgin Islands to describe household service workers.

Political activity among unemployed and disaffected immigrants stimulated the rise of the national anti-immigrant political party of the Front National. This in turn led to further political and cultural militance among immigrants (Hollified, 1994). In Germany, economists warned that their country's famed industrial engine was being calcified because the prevalence of cheap foreign labour prevented a proactive approach to the development of new technologies. German xenophobia and the oil embargo of 1973 prompted the government, in response to immigrant-driven strikes, to ban further recruitment of guest workers and to restrict further immigration (Martin, 1994).

In the island of Saint Maarten, the laid-back approach to the entry of migrants changed as the presence of foreigners became more highly visible and as Antillean nationals publicly reacted to decreasing job opportunities and "being pushed out and shut out of the labour market" (Larmonie, 1995, 7). The worsening economic situation led to a government policy of "search and remove", but employers' concern for the viability of the tourist industry secured a moderation of this measure.

By 1970 in the United States Virgin Islands, the economic boom with virtually full employment had come to a major juncture. An economic downturn was engendered by a crisis in the tourist industry brought about by the closing of a number of hotels. A slowdown in construction due to tightened credit availability generated a level of unemployment—above that on the mainland United States—that was unprecedented since the inception of the foreign labour programme in the mid-1950s. These economic conditions precipitated more official action (designed to deal with the protracted immigrant problem) within a two-year period than in the previous 15 years.

The United States Congress passed Public Law 91-225 in 1970 which essentially promoted family reunification by allowing spouses and minor children to join "temporary" workers in the United States. The unforeseen effects in the United States Virgin Islands increased the proportion of foreigners markedly. The relatively poor performance of the economy at that time led natives, in the absence of any evidence of job competition, to demand decisive action to expel undocumented workers. A federal Department of Labor survey "found that over 40 per cent of the United States citizens and permanent residents registered for employment ... were classified in occupations for which there were no competing alien job seekers", and subsequently, that "the composition of the Islands' unemployed did not support the assumption that 'aliens were being certified in jobs Virgin Islanders wanted'" (SICIL, 1975, 42). However, police and immigration officials began a roundup at midnight of 28 February 1971 and "everyone found without proper documentation was taken to jail and then told to get off the island as quickly as possible... Deep and widespread bitterness was left in the roundup's wake among those aliens who remained" (SICIL, 1975, 44). Despite much progress, this bitterness reared its head once more in the local politics of 1996.

The fundamental issue in this section is that wherever it appears that immigration helps to promote economic growth, subsequent downturns in the economy almost always are associated with foreign-born residents. And almost invariably, politicians and nationals alike call on government to resolve the issue, irrespective of the degree of benefit that devolves to the country because of the contribution of the foreign-born.

4.4 Social welfare

A third major impact of immigrants on receiving countries—after that on demography and on the economy—is on the social infrastructure of the society. This impact may usually be seen in the effects on housing, education, health services and on some aspects of the physical infrastructure. Where governments are directly involved—beyond the policy level—in the immigration of labour, institutional policies usually exist in varying degrees of adequacy to minister to the housing, education and health needs of immigrants. Experience in the Caribbean and elsewhere has shown that when the immigrant process is not marked by a clear social policy, or when it is left in the hands of employers, or where uncontrolled immigration gives rise to a relatively large number of undocumented migrants, the dislocation in social welfare services often gives rise to strong feelings of animosity by nationals against foreign-born residents.

Relations between the groups are further weakened when escalating costs to maintain the social infrastructure are met by increases in the tax burden of nationals. The classic case in California of Proposition 187 to exclude undocumented and certain other migrants from basic services like education and some forms of welfare is matched by the French *seuil de tolérance*—threshold of tolerance—in both housing and educating immigrants¹³. The record in the Caribbean suggests that where proactive policies have been adopted in response to the needs of immigrants, the results have generally been positive for those societies. It appears that in countries which respond reactively to immigrant-related social problems which have become entrenched, the issues are not readily resolved and they tend to be far costlier—both in terms of social relations and immigrant incorporation.

The three sections that immediately follow examine the effects of immigrants on housing, education and health services.

4.4.1 Access and quality of housing

Each of the countries under study demonstrates some degree of residential segregation of immigrants. Identifiable causes for this segregation include the following characteristics which also exist elsewhere. 1) Most immigrants arrive without much capital and begin in low-income jobs. 2) Some landlords refuse to rent to them by price discrimination or other subterfuges, or charge high rents for poor or squalid accommodations. 3) Immigrants tend to seek cheap housing in working-class neighbourhoods. 4) Proximity to bus lines or other economical means of daily transport are often in substandard residential areas. 5) Immigrants themselves may create their own areas of housing concentration for economic—ethnic businesses, agencies, etc.—and social reasons such as their desire to stay close together for mutual support, to maintain family and neighbourhood networks, and most importantly, to retain the language and culture of their native land. This principle of ethnic herding for protection sometimes leads to ghettoization.

¹³The *seuil de tolérance* of France limits the presence of immigrants to a maximum of 10 to 15 per cent in housing estates, and to 25 per cent of students in a class.

The process of residential segregation possesses elements of contradiction. The clustering of immigrants is sometimes perceived by the majority population as a deliberate effort to create *ethnic enclaves*. These enclaves may even be regarded as threatening to the political order. On the other hand, immigrants may be forced into this situation by a dearth of affordable housing or by discrimination. And residential concentration appears to be a necessary precondition for community formation of immigrants.

The *maquila* economy¹⁴ of Nogales serves to illustrate the kind of housing quality that attends sudden population growth of a small immigrant community.

Twenty new residential districts appeared in Nogales ... between 1986 and 1989, the majority of which are substandard dwellings built by the migrants themselves on land they "invaded"... Three factors were found to empirically differentiate workers with regard to their housing. The most strongly differentiating factor combined the availability of electricity and durability of walls (i.e., cardboard vs. wood or sheet metal), the second factor differentiated workers' housing by whether it had running water and sewage, and the third on the amount of "free" space.¹⁵ (Kopinak, 1996, 221-222).

The *maquila* housing for immigrants described above is not atypical. Two Saint Maarteners describe similar conditions in their island.

The living conditions of many immigrants are below human conditions. They live in one-room or two-room shacks, made of plywood and pieces of carton; wooden floors covered with old pieces of carpet. Many have no water, electricity or toilet facilities. The one- or two-room house functions as a bedroom, kitchen, living room, bathroom, etc., and their children are growing up under these unusual conditions. Some of these shacks cost over \$100 a month (Wyatt, 1995, 3)¹⁶.

The Saint Maarten Government has not developed a housing development plan, neither for immigrants nor for citizens. The great bulk of the immigrants live in shacks: plywood and zinc-plate structures, without or with minimal electricity and no running water and no in-house toilet.

It is true that a few years ago the Government started to take action against these shacks and shanty-towns. The effect of their presence—ecological problems, sewage problems, etc.—had become all too bad to continue to ignore. In the course of this

¹⁴A *maquiladora* is a new factory or factories established by foreign investment money along the northern border of Mexico with the United States. (See Kopinak, 1996.)

¹⁵Kopinak states that there was not only no free space in the housing occupied by immigrants, but that overcrowding is the norm (1996, 222).

¹⁶Aruba, an autonomous political entity of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, experienced steady immigration since 1986 in support of the growing tourist industry with a concomitant housing crisis. It was estimated that by 1995 the government needed to construct 8,185 housing units—or 42.6 per cent above the 1991 stock—in order to meet the current demand (UNDP, 1994).

action many shacks were torn down as being too far below standard, and a great number was upgraded. However, it does seem that the plan has lost a great deal of its steam (Larmonie, 1995, 6).

In the United States Virgin Islands, the two largest companies—an oil and alumina refinery—made provision in housing for some of its workers. However, the vast majority of other immigrants serving the tourist and related industries were “on bond” or undocumented, and could not be housed in the 4,800 public housing units which were constructed. “Housing is a serious crisis” (SERD, 1969, 8) and “action will be required on the part of the government to consider special kinds of housing to fit the special needs of aliens”. SERD (1968) also recommended that the Government of the United States Virgin Islands should take a major responsibility in providing decent housing for all its residents (tables D9 to D12).

Four generalizations may be made in respect of housing. First, most employers do not seem to meet their responsibility of housing immigrants when they are required to do so. Second, unplanned immigration appears to create an inevitable crisis in the housing industry, and immigrants often resolve their housing problem by constructing units which do not meet housing standards. Third, the large number of migrants without housing tenure might suggest that financial institutions would make mortgage loans available to those who could afford them. This does not appeal to money lenders because of the real risk of their investment in non-citizens who may flee or be coerced to depart. Fourth, citizen complaints about decaying neighbourhoods, visual blight, unsanitary living conditions and declining property values pass responsibility ultimately on to the government to identify the huge capital outlays that are required to increase the supply of the affordable housing stock. And the cost is even higher when additional infrastructure of roads, water and sewer systems and electricity supply are included.

The housing conditions of nationals and non-nationals in the British Virgin Islands are illustrated in tables B10 to B13 (in Appendix B) on households by size, number of rooms and bedrooms as well as other structural characteristics. They confirm that non-nationals in general have smaller houses, fewer rooms and bedrooms, fewer houses with piped water and a greater proportion shares toilets. Housing quality indicators for Saint Maarten demonstrated in tables C9 to C11 confirm the conditions described above: the modal household size for nationals and non-nationals is two persons and one person, respectively; the modal number of rooms is five and three respectively; 30 per cent of the non-national households do not have toilets; and proportionately, 11 times more non-nationals use pails as a water source compared to nationals. In the United States Virgin Islands, the proportion of natives in public housing is smaller than that of foreign-born residents, but as tables D8 to D12 indicate, the differences in housing are not as extreme as those in Saint Maarten¹⁷.

¹⁷Housing data classified by nationality were not available for the Bahamas.

4.4.2 Access to education

As Proposition 187 became the rallying cry of nativist Californians, it was mainly held aloft by “the image of brown welfare moms streaming across the border to live off taxpayers and populate the schools with ‘illegal’ children of another language” (Ojeda and Schey, 1996, 98). The attempt was to reduce or cease the provisions of the major public services to undocumented migrants, the primary one being education.

In each of the four countries, the cost of educating immigrant children is seen as a heavy burden on taxpayers. In all of the cases, educators have variously used the protection of local laws to prohibit immigrant children from attending public schools, primarily because their numbers outstrip the available supply of classroom space, teachers and other educational resources. In the three countries in which governments have been involved in the migratory process or have given tacit support to it—the Bahamas suggests it has become an immigrant country to Haitians because it is in the direct path to the United States—there is no indication that any plans were developed primarily to minister to the educational needs of the children of expectant temporary immigrants.

4.4.2.1 Saint Maarten

Perhaps the most enlightened approach to the intractable problem of educating immigrant children is that expressed by education officials in Saint Maarten. This disposition appears to be a direct reaction to the recent realization of the *permanency of temporary migration* and the potential long-term pathologies that are associated with a dispossessed and uneducated underclass in their society.

Four categories of immigrant children were not allowed to attend public schools in Saint Maarten: children who are legally entitled, but who could not, because of a language problem, age, or the simple lack of school facilities; children of parents who have applied for legal status but who are *documented*; children of parents who are illegal residents but who have registered in the tent cities¹⁸; and children who are residing illegally and have not registered in the tent cities (Hodge, Groeneveldt and Harrigan, 1995). While noting that the legal school population of Saint Maarten had doubled in the five-year period between 1990 and 1995, and that a large segment of Saint Maarten natives “is of the opinion that Saint Maarten is not in an economically viable position to provide education to its large undocumented population”, Harrigan (1995) documents numerous problems in education that derive from a large undocumented immigrant population. Table C12 shows that between 1986 and 1993, the federal contribution to education almost doubled from NAf1.1 million to NAf2.1 million, and local expenditure almost quintupled from NAf8.6 million to NAf38.9 million in the same period. By any measure, this is an enormous effort to meet the needs of education for the burgeoning young population.

¹⁸In the absence of affordable housing, or in an effort to avoid the authorities, many immigrants occupied *shanty towns*. Hurricane *Luis* swept away most of this temporary housing in 1995, and government bulldozers were sent in to demolish the rest. The government urged these residents to occupy, and were accommodated in, tent cities that were erected as temporary but supervised living quarters.

In an effort to provide some rudimentary education to immigrant children, eight makeshift schools were in existence in 1995, all being managed by immigrants, all recognized as illegal, but all allowed to coexist because the government could not provide formal education.

Compulsory education came to Saint Maarten on 1 August 1996 and with it the stark realization that the facilities were inadequate to meet the challenge. Harrigan (1995, 4-5) states the position of one local group:

Granting permission to undocumented individuals to attend school without the proper support system to keep them there will burden the system in unprecedented ways with underachievers who want to drop out but can't because of the law... Dropping out of school generally has high costs for society as well as individuals. On average, dropouts pay less taxes; are more likely to be less productive workers, to need welfare assistance, to commit crimes and delinquent acts; and are less likely to participate in community affairs. Enforcing compulsory education without the proper educational infra-structure is detrimental to the existing standard and will lead to chaos.

Recognizing that the education system has never catered to the needs of undocumented children, that every child should be given a chance to improve oneself and make positive contributions to society, and that it is wiser and cheaper to invest in the education of all students, some education officials make the following recommendations. They suggest that the requirement of submitting residency papers by immigrants for entry to the school system be revoked immediately, that all illegal schools be discontinued and the structures be demolished, that children not now attending school be admitted to government-subsidized schools, and that adequate educational facilities be provided for all school-age children. (For one estimate of partial costs for education in Saint Maarten, see table 12 below.) Finally, they point out that in order to be in compliance with international treaties regulating fundamental human rights and the rights of the child, government should seek out financial assistance and human resources from national and international sources (Hodge et al, 1995). (See table C13 for educational attainment of Saint Maarteners.)

4.4.2.2 The Bahamas

The presence of Caribbean immigrants and their impact on social services seem to evoke a higher level of exasperation among native Bahamians than among Saint Maarteners. In recent years, their ire has focused on the high cost of educating undocumented children. With an increase by 289.8 per cent of the Haitian population between 1970 and 1980, such costs appear inevitable.

The policy of the Government in 1986 was reported to be one "barring children of Haitian immigrants from registration until their parents' status could be verified" (William, 1995, 6). This position was challenged by a local human rights association which argued that it violated

the Education Act and constitutional guarantees, and that “these Haitian children are not responsible for their status; to exclude them from Bahamian public schools will stigmatize them by keeping them illiterate for the rest of their lives... This continued isolation is also politically unwise, as it will result in the creation of a permanent underclass...” (William, 1995, 6).

In 1991, Haitian children constituted 7.4 per cent of the Bahamas public school population. (See table A6 for education attainment levels). With a budget of \$106 million, it was estimated that it cost the Government \$4.2 million to educate Haitian youth: \$3.1 million to educate 2,550 students at the primary level, and \$1.1 million for 796 students at the secondary level. “The sum spent by the Bahamas government to secure education for the Haitian students, in 1991 alone could have built a new Primary or Secondary school to the ‘tune’ of some \$4.2 million”. An additional \$163,551 was spent on materials and supplies for Haitian children (Stubbs, 1994, 5). Over the 10-year period between 1986 and 1995, capital expenditures remained stationary around \$B7 million, but recurrent expenditure rose by 36 per cent from \$B85.5 million (table A7).

In an attempt to reduce the cost to the Bahamas Government for services to Haitians, and to raise funds to support the education of their children, Stubbs (1994) proposed levying a “migrant tax” and imposing “a special school attendance fee”. He claims that this latter was necessary if the Bahamas were to maintain a quality education for its youth. Further, he suggested that \$4.8 million could be realized by assessing an annual fee—or tax—of \$120 on all resident Haitians for a total of \$4.8 million! And \$75 per school year on each Haitian schoolchild for a total of \$450 per year. No indication was given as to what would become of those children whose parents could not afford the tax, nor how to deal with the parents themselves who were too poor to afford the “migrant tax”.

4.4.2.3 United States Virgin Islands

By 1960, the number of school-age children in the United States Virgin Islands (between 4 and 19 years) stood at 11,719. Ten years later, pupils in that age group increased by 75 per cent to 20,497, and by 1980 it was augmented by another 78 per cent to reach 36,427—an overall increase from 1960 by 211 per cent. Meanwhile, very few classrooms were added, and the situation became increasingly intolerable to natives. Even though the Virgin Islands Department of Education did not allow a large number of immigrant children to attend public school¹⁹, natives expressed concern about the lowering quality of education caused by the children of foreign-born residents. It was reported in 1968 that there were no easy answers to the current problem. “It is not compatible with a democratic society to prevent large numbers of children from attending school. It is recommended that the Government of the Virgin Islands forcefully face this problem and make a point of requiring all alien children to be enrolled in school” (SERD, 1968, 7).

¹⁹The Virgin Islands Department of Education promulgated the regulation that non-citizens of school age may be enrolled in public elementary and secondary classes, provided that, among other things, they “do not cause the number of pupils in any class to exceed prescribed standards”, and that they “present satisfactory evidence of the inability of the off-island guardians to supervise them” (Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law [SICIL], 1975, 33).

By 1970, two events conspired to overwhelm the education system, such that it was several years before a period of normalcy was restored.

First, the Congress of the United States enacted Public Law 91-225 to address the reunification of families without reference to the Virgin Islands. The indirect effect was to permit family reunification on a massive scale as immigrant parents could now bring in their spouses and children. Second, a class-action suit by 'non-immigrant visitors' against the Department of Education for excluding immigrant children from school found the regulation to be in conflict with Virgin Islands Code, as it "imposes unreasonable and invidious discrimination on these plaintiffs and all members of their class and thus offends ... the Constitution". The quote below shows that the main defense of the Government related to the cost burden of educating non-immigrant children:

Defendants make much of the influx of aliens into the territory ... and suggest that the cost of admitting these plaintiffs and all others in the class to the public schools would create an undue burden on the Government of the Virgin Islands... Fundamental rights ... may be neither denied nor abridged solely because their implementation requires the expenditure of public funds. For such purposes, the Government must raise the funds (SICIL, 1975, 34).

The impact on the public school system was dramatic. In the fall of 1972, 80 per cent of the enrollees were immigrant children, and they also constituted 32.5 per cent of the total student body. 'Double session' of classes at morning for some students and in the afternoon for other students was introduced to cope with the large number of students who outnumbered available seats for normal session. More teachers and councilors had to be hired, and the cost of procuring other resources soared. Up until today, the budget of the Department of Education constitutes the largest of all institutions in the entire Government. Recent data show that the operating budget of the department increased from \$US63.1 million in 1986 by 75.8 per cent to \$US111.0 in 1995 (table D13; for data on educational attainment, see D14).

4.4.2.4 The British Virgin Islands

While the actual number of immigrants in the British Virgin Islands is the smallest in the four countries studied, the associated problems and attendant costs are no less daunting to government officials there. In the population census of 1991, there were about twice as many *belongers* as *non-belongers*²⁰ between the school ages of 5 to 19. Immigrants predominate throughout the reproductive age range—from 20 to 45—and beyond to age 59, and this is a clear indication that it is only a matter of time before non-national children become the majority in the school-age categories.

²⁰The terms *belonger* and *non-belonger* are commonly used in the British Virgin Islands to refer synonymously to natives or nationals and non-nationals respectively.

Attention appears to be given to the implications for the demand on resources for the construction of facilities, as well as on wages and salaries for relevant personnel. In some instances, the increasing size on the non-national groups is seen as a threat to the indigenous way of life. Like all of the cases discussed in this section, the British Virgin Islands also places limits on school attendance by non-nationals. Priority is given to the children of belongers, then of government contractual workers, of United States Virgin Islanders, and of immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean. Currently, the Department of Education is unable to place all requests made through applications—which all parents must submit. A wait time of two to three years is common for non-belonger children. A Ministry of Education official asserts that the ‘double session’ method which was introduced in the United States Virgin Islands to accommodate immigrant children in school is not an option for British Virgin Islanders. And with a relatively large size of Dominican Republican and Haitian non-belonger residents, the language problem of instruction creates a further difficulty for the education system.

New construction projects expected to come on stream soon will likely create a new wave of immigration. And as the Government moves from the discussion stage to implementation of family reunion for current immigrants, the size of the non-belonger school-age group is certain to surpass that of the belonger group. However, with appropriate planning and allocation of necessary resources, the British Virgin Islands can avoid the worst aspects of this inherent aspect of labour migration such as that experienced by Saint Maarten or the United States Virgin Islands. Whether the Government can reasonably absorb these costs in meeting the obligations of the rights of children to an education can only be answered by the Government itself.

4.4.3 Health

An industrial society cannot function on an even keel and at an efficient level when large groups of people are denied access to social welfare programmes. A minimum programme of social services should be implemented for aliens. This should include emergency welfare services and adequate health care [SERD, 1968, 51].

This comment, made in respect of the United States Virgin Islands, applies generally to each of the countries under study. Each one provides health services to its immigrants, in varying degrees, but there is evidence that in at least two countries the burden of that cost has become so onerous that external assistance is sought to assuage the strain. There appears to be a direct relationship between the size of the undocumented migrant force and the overall cost of health services in the receiving country. One primary reason is that legal immigrants are normally expected to demonstrate at point of entry that they are not carrying “loathsome or contagious diseases” (as required by the United States in 1891), and “that they are not likely at any time to become a public charge”²¹ (Wolchok, 1996, 136). It is the fiscal crisis which partly motivated support for Proposition 187 in California which “limits the provisions of public services and of

²¹A *public charge* includes anyone who depends on public support because he or she is unable to provide support for oneself, does not have a communicable disease, nor a physical or mental disability.

public-funded healthcare only to those persons who are citizens of the United States or are lawfully admitted aliens” (Ojeda and Schey, 1996).

Comments from healthcare providers in the countries under consideration here suggest similar concerns as those raised currently in the United States which is now considering reform of its healthcare policy as part of its budget reduction process. Discussion of the cost of medical services is directly linked to a review of immigration policies by the Congress. A coalition of health, civil rights and immigration organizations has asserted that a system that denies healthcare to immigrants would not produce significant cost savings of this service. However, it made recommendations that would diminish the linguistic and cultural barriers which often discourage newcomers. However, while Congressional budget officers indicate that some \$17.5 billion would be saved over five years by excluding immigrants from assistance, public health practitioners take another view. They are almost unanimous in their argument that to deny immigrants’ access to government-supported public-health programmes is a myopic strategy. They further state (Wolchok, 1996, 137):

Many immigrants—both legal and illegal—are unfamiliar with the health delivery system, cannot afford private medical care or insurance, encounter language barriers to accessing healthcare, and may avoid using available services for fear of detection. As a result, they often neglect preventative healthcare, are more likely to delay treatment until their medical problems have advanced to more acute stages when more expensive interventions are necessary, and may turn to unlicensed healthcare providers. Denying non-emergency public health services ... is almost certain to ... increase the public health risks at a time when tuberculosis, parasitic infections, and hepatitis are rising within the immigrant community.

With the exception of the British Virgin Islands, the other receiving countries all indicate enormous public expenditure in trying to cope with the demand for immigrant healthcare services.

4.4.3.1 The Bahamas

In the Bahamas, the cost of health services is one of the issues to which reference is made as “the national burden resulting from many of Haiti’s nationals illegally residing in the Bahamas”²². An overall upward trend in the per cent of registered live births by Haitian mothers in the Bahamas during the years 1987 to 1991 is reflected in the following: 7.8, 9.9, 12.2, 11.8 and 13.4 per cent in respective years. These appear to exceed the per cent of Haitians in the Bahamian population at large, and constitute one more reason Bahamians are uneasy with the growth in the number of Haitians. In 1991, the national health allocation for services to Haitians was \$21.4 million (Stubbs, 1994).

²²The source is a 1994 memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Health, Bahamas.

Stubbs noted that “the impact of the Haitians on health care service in the Bahamas is tremendous”. He points out that in 1984, Haitians made up 9 per cent and 10 per cent of in-patients and out-patients respectively on Grand Bahama. In addition, he lists a number of hospitals and clinics that provided health services to Haitians that range from 13 per cent Haitian for out-patient and emergency room care at the Princess Margaret Hospital, to 72.5 per cent for child health and antenatal services at Carmichael Road Clinic. And to meet these “great demands” that non-nationals place on the healthcare system of the Bahamas, he again suggests that “to adequately meet this somewhat recurring demand, it is imperative that a special health tax be imposed on these nationals (the Haitians) if services are to be met timely and adequately.”

Health officials express genuine concern in respect of the level of infectious diseases found among Haitians, particularly those who are undocumented. One third of all new cases of tuberculosis between 1987 and 1992 were Haitians, and this is viewed with concern because of the length of time and cost associated with treating it. They also comprised 32 per cent of the typhoid fever cases between 1984 and 1992. The three leading causes of death among Haitians were pneumonia, influenza, injuries and intestinal infections. By 1993, 70 per cent of persons identified as HIV positive were non-nationals, and the overwhelming proportion of these were said to be Haitian. While 2 out of 100 Bahamian mothers are HIV positive, it is 5 out of 100 for Haitian mothers. The Bahamas does not now have any known cases of malaria, but there is a perceived constant threat of it being reintroduced by Haitians because of the prevalence of this disease in Haiti²³.

In the report detailing these effects on Bahamian health and welfare systems, it is stated that the cost of providing humanitarian relief is “overbearing for a small country... We recommend that an appeal be made for significant assistance from the United Nations and regional organizations to assist us in our efforts”. National allocations to health services increased 40.7 from \$B69.3 in 1986 to \$B97.4 in 1995 (table A7).

4.4.3.2 Saint Maarten

There is general agreement in Saint Maarten that healthcare services are relatively expensive, definitely much more so than those in French Saint Martin (which shares the same island). In order to put healthcare within the reach of Antillean nationals, a system of medical insurance provides a safety net. Employers contribute to this insurance system on behalf of registered employees.

The plight of unregistered immigrant workers is put forth by Wyatt (1995) and Larmonie (1995). The basic theme is that while immigrants theoretically have direct access to healthcare services, they are often at great disadvantage, and they risk their personal health because of the severe limitations they face. This in turn means that they are subject to a greater variety of maladies which often result in shorter life spans.

²³Source: a 1994 report prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahamas.

Because of the undocumented status of many immigrants, the social security premiums withheld by their employers are often not paid in. The worker generally has no way of knowing this, and is incapable of ensuring that it is paid on his or her behalf. The direct consequence of this is that the immigrant has no medical insurance, and “has no access to the local government’s healthcare system for the poor. That access is an exclusive privilege of the Antillean citizen” (Larmonie, 1995, 5). When faced with a medical emergency in Saint Maarten, where strict pre-payment rules for emergency-room services are applied, the immigrant without health insurance crosses the border into French Saint Martin where the services are notably cheaper. This only serves to overburden the limited capabilities of the medical services in the French sector.

Two Saint Maarten physicians commented on the healthcare system by first noting that there is an uncollectable debt from immigrants of NAf 3.5 million over a five-year period (table 12). They affirm that most immigrants are uninsured, and most wait until an emergency situation develops before care is sought. This not only increases the cost of the treatment, but is often too late for preventive help. An estimate of overall health and associated costs (of education and welfare services) is given in table 12 (C.H. Dijkman, personal communication, 19 December, 1995).

The table shows that of the NAf 3.5 million of unrecoverable cost, 2.5 million were related to insurance, and 1 million for other health services. Ideally, these physicians who handle most of the immigrant cases suggest that one practical solution is to employ at least two physicians and two social workers—with housing and transport—who are versed in the vernacular of the Haitians and Dominican Republicans. These specialists would work in the field among immigrants at their homes or places of work. However, the cost of this proactive approach of NAf 2.25 million annually is beyond the means of their department. Their recommendation is that this be supported by external aid agencies primarily to improve healthcare among immigrants in Saint Maarten, and relieve the enormous strain on the French health services on the island.

4.4.3.3 United States Virgin Islands

As in the United States, applicants for permanent residency to the United States Virgin Islands are required to complete a physical examination. The majority of residents in the United States Virgin Islands during the 1960s and 1970s were bonded. Since their status was considered temporary, they were not obliged to undergo physical examinations or meet any other health requirements. At one point, it was suggested that because “bonded aliens ... bring with them contagious diseases and health problems” they should also be required to complete the same physical examination as required for those who seek permanent residency status (SERD, 1968, 9).

Prior to 1966, non-nationals in the United States Virgin Islands were denied access to a 50 per cent discount on all health services from which citizens benefited. When these restrictions were eliminated, the costs were assumed by the local government. While no specific

data were available on the expenditures of the health services during the 1960s and 1970s, nor on the direct contribution of immigrants to the overall debt, the following provide an indication of costs in 1967 during a period of heavy migration growth (SERD, 1969):

- By 1966, the policy of the Department of Health was to provide emergency health treatment to anyone, regardless of status or financial capability to pay.
- About one third of hospital patients were non-citizens, with one half of them claiming visitor status.
- Almost half of the live births were to immigrant mothers.
- About 62 per cent of the fetal deaths were to mothers born outside the United States Virgin Islands.
- Health problems associated with inadequate water supplies, poor housing and sewage disposal facilities appeared to be more common among immigrants.

Department of Health officials indicate that in the 1980s and 1990s, the number of non-immigrant females who come to the Virgin Islands primarily to give birth to their babies has increased. Apart from taking advantage of free basic health services relating to the birth of children, the mothers find it advantageous to have their children acquire United States citizenship by virtue of being born in a territory of the United States (see section 4.2.4 above). The total operating costs for the health services areas increased by 91.4 per cent from \$US35.8 million in 1986 to \$US68.6 in 1995 (table D12).

4.5 Political

Historically, many countries have placed economic and political limitations on the participation of immigrants on the basis of their race, religion or nationality. However, within the last 30 years, there has been a gradual extension of rights to migrant ethnic minorities within the advanced industrial societies—and by extension, in their dependencies. These developments have much more dramatic effects on microstates than they do on metropolises.

Nowhere in the United States—the primary receiving country in the hemisphere—is there any evidence that political movements are founded on ethnic groups, nor any to suggest strong influence on foreign policy. Further yet, there is no information that any immigrant ethnic groups have sought to change the basic political institutions of any country in the western hemisphere. Yet in each of the countries under study, there is deep-seated apprehension about the long-term effects of migrants on the political life of their native lands. One response to that anxiety states (Simon, 1996, 67):

... When voluntary immigration is the major source of a society's ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, ... the diverse ethnic, racial and religious groups are likely to identify with the political community and are not likely to seek to destabilize or disrupt it. Most immigrants came ... to seek a better life. They sought relief from economic, political and religious distress. They found the freedom to accumulate wealth, to pursue their religion, and to gain full political rights of citizenship.

Ethnic minorities within the receiving countries studied are characterized by common origins, history, culture, experience and political background. Ethnicity by itself as expressed through cultural practices is hardly of any political significance, but when groups begin to take on coherence and develop organized units for their self-expression, they present threats to nationals. In each of the four cases, the immigrant ethnic minority suffers a degree of marginalisation or exclusion, and thus embodies the potential for social and political conflict. Nationals therefore resort to political closure, a process by which the status group establishes implicit rather than explicit criteria by which ethnic minorities are excluded in the retention of political power.

Perhaps the greatest expression of the perceived political impact of immigrants may be drawn from the case of the United States Virgin Islands. At the height of its migration experience, the United States Virgin Islands had a larger immigrant ethnic minority than any of the other countries. Moreover, United States immigration laws make it less difficult for foreigners to become citizens and participate in the political process than any of the other countries. But underlying the theme of politics was the abiding fear, expressed publicly in several forms, that the last bastion of patrimony in the form of political power would somehow be wrested from nationals.

The deteriorating economic conditions and the increase of the unemployment rate in the early 1970s helped to focus attention on the political implications of the presence of the large number of "temporary" workers in the United States Virgin Islands. In May 1970, it was stated that "more than 40 per cent of the Virgin Islands labour force was barred from full participation in the political and social life of the Islands because of their nonimmigrant status" (SICIL, 1975, 36). The political implications were that there was no sense of urgency in granting permanent residence—and ultimately citizenship and the right to vote—to this large number of immigrants, because it "would in all probability cost those who are now citizens, including the native-born population, political control of the islands" (SICIL, 1975, 17). One of the major findings in a congressional report relative to the effect of immigrants in the Virgin Islands was that there was "serious concern among native Virgin Islanders and elected officials that regularizing the status of H aliens will eventually lead to the loss of political control of the islands" (SICIL, 1975, 51).

Despite the fact that a commissioned study of the migrant problem recommended that "the most basic problem that must have attention from Federal and Virgin Islands agencies and the people of the Virgin Islands is that it is completely inimical to the democratic process to cut off so completely from participation in society a group such as the aliens" (SERD, 1969, 7), government officials responded in 1971 to the demands for the expulsion of immigrants by summarily deporting 8,000 undocumented workers. In testimony before the United States Department of Justice in 1978,

a representative of the Governor testified to the “increased fears by the indigenous population of political domination from without”, and of the “trends that are threatening to overwhelm native Virgin Islanders and to remove them from their one remaining position of control: operation of the local government” (Collins, 1978, 12).

Forty years after the period of recent migration began, United States Virgin Islanders have not lost, nor are they about to lose, political control of their islands. The first foreign-born nominee for a cabinet position was rejected by the legislature in 1975, but as most bonded immigrants were regularized in 1983 and have become voters, the situation of political integration and participation has improved markedly. The first foreign-born senators were elected in the 1990s, and there are three current members of the Governor’s cabinet who are of Eastern Caribbean origin. Political control by denizens of foreign stock has not materialized.

4.6 Incorporation and ethnic diversity

The ethnic diversity of migrants impacts on receiving societies in many ways. Perhaps the most significant are issues that relate to political participation, cultural pluralism and national identity. Newcomers tend to exert trends of increasing diversity on the societies of immigrant countries, and they are usually distinct from the resident nationals. Immigrants’ baggage often include different traditions, political institutions, language, style of dress, religion and other cultural behaviors. It is this aspect of a new cultural diversity and its impact on social structures which often bring into question the matter of national identity.

Nationals expressed varying degrees of threat on the issue of diversity. In each case, the increasing size of the immigrant stock induces conditions of life for natives which appear to change in unpredictable ways, and these in turn cause the nationals to identify the immigrants with their insecurity. The xenophobia that was sometimes evident appears to be the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Its justification lies in the way the outsiders are cast as socially and culturally alien who will, with time, want to take over the areas in which they live. By implicitly denying access to adequate housing, immigrants are forced to live together—albeit in poor housing—for mutual protection, and this creates the very visible concentration of ethnic enclaves that the natives want to prevent. The newcomers are perceived as contributing to a lowering of living standards, as a disruption to life styles and as eroding the social cohesion that predated their arrival. It is likely, then, “that native-born populations will continue to press for restrictive measures out of fear that the ‘core culture’ of their nation is being assaulted, diluted, or transformed to an unacceptable degree by culturally distinct immigrants” (Cornelius *et al.*, 1994, 37).

It is evident that as permanent migration has taken place, cultural forms have become diversified, and varying forms of migrant incorporation have evolved. What is also observed in the four societies is that none has explicitly identified the type of migrant incorporation that it wants for its permanent immigrants. The type that evolves—among assimilation, integration, exclusion or multiculturalism—is therefore largely a function of the rules of the society that govern citizenship, and the degree of ethnic and cultural homogeneity that it wants to—or can—preserve. In the final

analysis, both increasing ethnic diversity and incorporation inevitably require significant political and psychological adjustments in all of the migrant-receiving societies.

4.6.1 The Haitian challenge in the Bahamas

The largest ethnic minority in the Bahamas is Haitian—followed by Jamaicans and Chinese. Haitians have been described as hard-working and industrious, and perform jobs that many Bahamians will not do, including agricultural work, construction, tailoring, masonry and fishing. They are cited for their worker reliability and scrupulous honesty. Bahamians will readily hire them to perform domestic house or yard services. Their crime rate is rather low, except for domestic violence. But most importantly, they do not appear to pose any threat to the political order of the Bahamas.

On the other hand, the large number of Haitians poses an oft-described threat to the ethnic and cultural homogeneity with which Bahamians perceive their country. The migrants from Haiti are accused of tenaciously clinging to their patois language and creating a problem of instruction for Haitian pupils in school. Annoyance is expressed at their preference for their ethnic drink *taffir* and for their love of *poquino*, a gambling game. It is also claimed that their community is rife with illiteracy, the production of illegal bush alcohol, prostitution, gambling and drug running by juveniles. But even as Bahamian-born Haitians achieve social mobility to the top as lawyers and as police officers, there is still fear that they will subvert the social and political system to that of their Haitian-born parents. This psychological disquietude does not appear to be grounded in prior experience, but seems to be more emotionally grounded and vicarious in nature.

4.6.2 The British Virgin Islands faces cultural differences

There appears to be no ambiguity in the British Virgin Islands concerning the need for *temporary* immigrants to provide the labour that drives the economy. Dominicans—from the Dominican Republic—and Guyanese are the choice of employers because they are readily available, are skilled, and their labour is cheapest in the market place. They fill the construction and low-level service jobs that British Virgin Islands belongers abandon for government, banks, trusts, other office jobs and hotels.

Because of the relative smallness of the British Virgin Islands community and the interrelationships between natives and immigrants, belongers are less publicly outspoken about the impact of foreigners on their culture. However, one government official perceives the major challenge to be the protection of the patrimony from the newcomers. It is particularly irksome that some British Virgin Islands-born children of immigrants consider themselves as belongers. Another concern was that long-term immigration would introduce teachers into the system who may not share British Virgin Islands values, thereby eroding the very sociocultural foundation that defines the British Virgin Islands society to be what it is. Dominicans are accused of fervently retaining their Spanish language, and this creates problems of communication at all levels for belongers. Natives point out that many Dominican Republican women are involved in prostitution, but there appears

to be very little willingness to deal with it officially. The clannishness of Dominicans is described as discomfoting: they patronize their own bars, drink their own beer, play their own sports, and perhaps most grating, they make no effort to integrate. In a final condescending act, it is alleged, they retain their Spanish language and Dominican Republican values as culturally superior to that of their hosts. Citizenship is extremely difficult to acquire, and in this respect, permanent immigrants have exerted very little influence on the political life of British Virgin Islanders.

4.6.3 Ethnic and cultural diversity in Saint Maarten

The population of Saint Maarten is probably more diverse than that of any of the other countries studied. This is largely explained by the fact that it is one of the *family* islands of the Netherlands Antilles where the Dutch and papiamento languages are primary. Its shared location of an island with a French neighbour, together with its geographic position in proximity to English-speaking islands as sources of immigrants, further increases that diversity. And in recent years, because of the influx of Spanish-speaking Dominicans and patois-speaking Haitians, its diverse population elements have increased even further.

The value of denizens to the economy of Saint Maarten—in which about 70 per cent is foreign—is fully recognized by most Saint Maarteners. However, there is no concomitant recognition of the inevitability of the adjustment that nationals have to make in the face of the impact of such different ethnic groups on their culture.

The incorporation of immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean has been in progress for more than 50 years, and the recency of Haitians and Dominicans presents the greatest difficulty to which Saint Maarteners must adjust. As in the Bahamas and the other islands, Haitians in Saint Maarten are described as going to extraordinary lengths to learn English and to teach it to their children. This is certainly of assistance to school-age children in reducing the communications problems associated with Dominicans. Their reputation for hard and honest work is also here preserved. Family life is marked by a seeming pattern for males not wanting their women to work, and the family as a social unit appears strong.

Dominican Republicans are identified as the immigrant group exerting the most inimical influence on Saint Maarten society. The tendency to insist on the use of their language in communicating with non-Dominicans exasperates Saint Maarteners, particularly when Haitians are observed in making efforts to speak the prevailing language. Some cultural habits are considered irksome: for example, the nonchalant disposal of their garbage, or the indifference shown to neighbours by playing their foreign music loudly for 24 hours, including Sundays. Family life among Dominicans is seen to be dysfunctional: reference is made to the injurious treatment of children and to the abusive relationship that males have with their females. They also appear to run afoul of the law more often than other immigrants. However, some of the strongest expressions are reserved for the effects that Dominican females are exerting on Saint Maarten.

A focus group of Saint Maarteners²⁴ excoriate Dominican women for their role in houses of prostitution—some houses are “legal”, but there appears to be tacit connivance with “illegal” ones. Male Saint Maarteners are described as demonstrating a preference for female Dominicans who have “straight hair” and are “more fair” in complexion than native females, and also for those who are more “shapely”. “Dark” female Dominicans do not appear to be sought after with the same passion. Particularly vexatious because of the potential for severe family discord is the practice of the adoption of Dominican children by male Saint Maarteners. It was pointed out that some of these men accept payment from Dominican mothers for the adoption of one or more of their children. The advantage to the mother is that this extends certain rights to the youth, and by extension, to the mother. Females with children fathered by native men must first get—and they make every effort to get—these fathers to “acknowledge” their children, with the consequent naturalization of the child and concomitant rights. These practices seem to be creating anxiety among some Saint Maarten spouses and others who see their family estate as now shared by totally unrecognized strangers. At the moment it appears that only native females are expressing concern, but the potential for social disharmony exists when the estates of these males have to be probated.

4.6.4 Incorporation in the United States Virgin Islands

Perhaps the primary difference in the process of migration between the United States Virgin Islands and the other migrant-receiving countries in this report is that children of foreigners born in the United States Virgin Islands, irrespective of their immigration status, automatically accede to United States citizenship with all the rights and privileges that this status confers—*ius soli*. However, the overwhelming majority of immigrants who entered the United States Virgin Islands, documented or undocumented, were defined by law to be “temporary”, and were indeed so treated by federal and local government agencies as well as by natives of the islands. It is primarily because of this persistent belief in the temporary nature of the residency of immigrants in the face of the reality of non-legal permanent residence that incorporation of migrants into the United States Virgin Islands is so different from that which prevailed in the United States before the recent massive immigration.

Even though the majority of immigrants to the United States Virgin Islands are linguistically, ethnically and culturally similar in most respects to United States Virgin Islanders, the incorporation of migrants does not approximate that of the traditional *melting pot* variety in the United States of Europeans into that society. This type of incorporation—or more precisely, assimilation—is defined as the adaptation to the local community of migrants by which they become homogeneous with, or indistinguishable from, the majority. Rather, what prevails in the United States Virgin Islands is more of a *salad bowl* that may be termed multicultural or pluralistic. This implies a society that is composed of different ethnic and racial groups that retain certain distinguishable characteristics from the host, but which are granted equal rights in most spheres of life.

²⁴Members of the group included physicians and staff from the Department of Health, officials from the Department of Social Health, the Social Unit (of Education) and the Department of Social and Labour Affairs.

For the 26-year period between 1955 up until the Alien Adjustment Act of the United States regularized the majority of bonded and undocumented workers in the United States Virgin Islands, the foreign-born coexisted with natives in an uncertain state of incorporation. The status of immigrants being “on bond” kept the idea of their eventual repatriation alive for natives, but when the Alien Adjustment Act of 1981 virtually ensured that the majority of foreigners would retain long-term residency in the United States Virgin Islands, multiculturalism appeared to be the apt descriptor of migrant incorporation rather than assimilation. Immigrants have been chastised for adhering to some elements of the culture of their homeland, but it is precisely the many expressions of not being wanted, together with their uncertain migration status, that prompted immigrants to retain the belief that at some appropriate time they would return home to retire or to die, and therefore justified their adherence to their ethnic and cultural identity.

Meanwhile, the use of the word *alien*—as distinct from its judicial meaning—by natives to describe foreigners, particularly from the Eastern Caribbean, is considered by immigrants to imply contempt. However, in the improved atmosphere of the 1990s, it is regarded to be in extremely poor taste to use it in public. While the term is not legally applicable to the whole second generation of children of immigrants born in the United States Virgin Islands, there still persists a degree of association between the sociocultural use of the word and native-born children of immigrants.

From the days of massive migration in the early 1960s, immigrants were held responsible for a number of social ills. In addition to those described above relative to education, health and social services, housing, depression of wages and potential inimical impact on local politics, immigrants have sometimes been held culpable of the erosion of traditional United States Virgin Islands cultural values. At the same time, however, more liberal thinking ascribes some measure of positive impact by immigrants on local culture by the introduction of cricket, soccer, the steelband, “mocko jumbie”—a festival event—and certain types of Caribbean cuisine.

The incorporation of migrants into United States Virgin Islands culture did not, and is not taking, the route epitomised in the American Dream. Rather, the processes of marginalisation and isolation at the beginning of the migration cycle have created a multicultural society with which the majority natives have to live. In the final analysis, this kind of incorporation literally requires major political and psychological adjustments if the ethnic groups will not form an unassimilable underclass, and if they all are to move harmoniously and productively into the twenty-first century.

5. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The evidence provided in section four above makes clear that various aspects of migration present two major challenges to these Caribbean receiving countries. The first is: how to manage the flow of migrants. The second: having allowed—or having failed to prevent the entry of—migrants into one's country, how should they be treated? What rights—civil, social and political—should they be allowed? What form of incorporation of these newcomers should be adopted? Should they be assimilated or incorporated? Or should they be deported if they are undocumented?

Recognizing that the migratory process to a particular receiving country needs to be viewed, not in isolation, but as part of a complex system of socioeconomic interactions within a broad scope of institutional structures in countries of origin and destination, the following perspectives are offered.

Three primary means for reducing migration pressures in the advanced countries have been put forward (Martin, 1996). The economic policies which they adopt and the protection accorded to human rights will strongly influence the pressures they will face. The economic instruments that can be used to control migration that is economically motivated are: trade, investment, and aid. A fourth non-economic measure that is sometimes applied by advanced immigrant countries is that of political or military intervention in the sending country. By and large, these methods are beyond the current capabilities of each of the four microstates, and they must perforce adopt other measures to control their own futures.

The immutable law of immigration asserts that there is nothing more permanent than temporary workers! The experience in the advanced industrial societies—and shown to be the case in the Caribbean—is that as long as there are temporary or guest workers in a country for any reasonable length of time, networks inevitably become established, and they extend themselves readily with modern communications.

Governments cannot expect to control the flow of migrants if the process is left up to employers. Varying degrees of monitoring by government agencies occur, but in no case did it appear that control was adequate. When employers reap the profits of cheap labour but contribute little or nothing to workmen's compensation or health insurance, the burden falls on all taxpayers. The fundamental consideration here is that the objectives of employers are largely different from those of the government which has a responsibility to its entire society.

The following recommendations are put forth for consideration when strategic plans for immigration policy are being crafted.

5.1 Demographic

- (a) Given the permanency that is associated with *temporary* migration in receiving countries, population control efforts must transcend family planning. Each country should establish an immigration agency with the specific function of working with other relevant government offices to manage immigration issues, and it should be supported with the requisite authority to enable it to implement its mandate.
- (b) Uncontrolled immigration has the capacity to distort normal demographic patterns, and an immigration agency should be equipped to constantly monitor the characteristics of migrants.
- (c) While employers may contribute to the establishment of the need for migrant labour, their role should be limited, and they should not be a part of the recruitment process.
- (d) In countries where immigrants have higher fertility levels, special attention should be given to the necessary adjustments that are needed when planning for public services.
- (e) Countries which practice *ius sanguinis*, and which promote single-sex migration, should give thoughtful consideration to family reunification and family migration. Equal consideration should be given to a meaningful plan that incorporates the cohorts of offspring who otherwise become permanent residents without a sense of belonging.
- (f) Unprotected borders, particularly in archipelagoes, facilitate undocumented migration which can derail carefully developed socioeconomic planning. The enormous costs involved in border protection should be partly supported by international assistance.
- (g) The impact of immigrants on microstates is too important an issue to be treated in an *ad hoc* way, and it is strongly recommended that efforts be devoted to a methodic and continual programme of the collection and analysis of migrant data.

5.2 Economic

- (a) If the savings rate of temporary and/or recent migrants is notably higher than that of natives, and if much of these savings are repatriated to families, imaginative measures ought to be developed that would retain migrants' savings for investment in the local economy.

- (b) There is little or no conviction among recent immigrants that employers pay fair wages, or make required deposits to their social security schemes. An immigration agency should be empowered to ensure that all benefits are appropriately set aside for all migrant workers.
- (c) The effect of youthful and middle-age migrants in the workforce is to reduce the age dependency and economic dependency ratios. The delayed impact of these cohorts should be closely monitored because of the effect that will manifest itself years later when these migrants become eligible—together with natives—for social and other benefits of the retired and the elderly.
- (d) In general, economic growth results from the use of cheaper foreign labour, and it raises the standard of living for the host country. But natives should be publicly educated to the fact that a part of the profits derived are in fact costs delayed, and that the debt cannot be paid by deporting migrants during economic recessions.

5.3 Social welfare

Housing, education and health services are among the most costly programmes associated with migrant labour, but resolute action in anticipation of future problems can substantially reduce costs.

- (a) Bonding of immigrants generally requires employers to provide adequate housing, but there appears to be little enforcement of this provision, thereby passing the costs of government-sponsored housing programmes on to local taxpayers. The immigration agency should be equipped to enforce the terms of the bond, thus removing the worst abuses of low-quality housing and infrastructural overload.
- (b) There is nothing in social policy that justifies the deliberate denial to children of the right to public education. An uneducated underclass of unassimilable immigrants poses so many real threats to a modern society that a host country should recognise the education of migrants as an investment in human capital, and should actively provide basic education to all its youth.
- (c) Evidence suggests that undocumented migration can put severe strain on planned education programmes, and in cases where this threatens to overwhelm receiving countries, international agencies should be called upon to assist.
- (d) Higher fertility rates, higher median ages and unscreened undocumented migrants, possibly with diseases, suggest the need for more health services to immigrants than to natives. Planning for these needs is also immensely costly, some associated migrant costs cannot be anticipated, and external sources should therefore be sought out for assistance.

5.4 Political

Western democratic societies are not at liberty to regard migrants as mere providers of labour, and must come to terms with the “trilogy” of rights—civic, political and social—that must be accorded denizens for their wholesome participation in the political process.

5.5 Cultural

Citizenship by descent from parents who are citizens, or through birth in the country, largely determines the kind of migrant incorporation that each country espouses. The former tends to exclude some migrants and marginalize others, while the latter allows the creation of a multicultural society. None of the countries studied has enunciated the kind of incorporation it wants for its foreign-born residents.

Because cultural incorporation affects the social and political status of immigrants, and because today’s migrant stream is so ethnically diverse and represents powerful elements for social and cultural change, it is fundamentally important that the government or its surrogate, an immigration agency, announce clearly its policy on the kind of incorporation it wants for its foreign-born residents.

Finally, whatever is the mechanism for overseeing the strategic planning of a rational immigration policy, there is no circumvention of two major challenges that must be confronted in a migrant receiving country.

The first is to put in place effective means of managing the flow of immigrants into the country. The second is the promotion of a declared policy whose aim is to harmoniously integrate migrants into the fabric of society.

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