



Dependence as a Strategy

Fred Reno

► To cite this version:

| Fred Reno. Dependence as a Strategy. New Political Culture in the Caribbean, In press. hal-02539338

HAL Id: hal-02539338

<https://hal.science/hal-02539338>

Submitted on 10 Apr 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Dependence as a Strategy

Fred Reno, Université des Antilles

In Holger Henke and Fred Reno (editors) *New Political Culture in the Caribbean*, UWI press 2020

The relative democratic stability in the English-speaking Caribbean states tends to reinforce the idea that these countries benefit from a globally democratic political culture.

But this must also take into account another persistent reality, the dependence that seems to go along with the liberal democracy inherited from the European colonial powers.

The independence gained in the 1960s by Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and Guyana, those that followed in the Eastern Caribbean and Belize and the democratic and social reforms in the non-independent territories did not rid these territories of chronic dependence. History had not changed its course. Clearly, the Caribbean reality is contained in the significant expression of the late Norman Girvan: "In-dependence".

The Caribbean thus remains an area largely dominated by the political models and economic logics of the Euro-North-American center. While this situation is not new or exceptional, the present reality deserves a renewed analysis.

.

At the individual and collective level, dependence is generally perceived as the result of an inequality of resources between actors. The condition of the weakest and the capacity of the strongest to impose their will underpin both allegiance and domination.

At the political level, the dependent is often represented as a submissive person whose situation derives from the will of an authority holding the power of decision and coercion.

But observation reveals a much more complex reality. Far from being a unilateral act of the strongest and enslavement of the weakest, dependence is above all a relationship between actors whose interests can be complementary.

After long being seen as enslavement, it has been converted into a resource. It can now be analysed as an unequal but solidarity-based relationship between collective or individual actors who are usually aware of the interests at stake.

It may seem paradoxical to say that the elites and populations of most Caribbean countries make this relationship a rational choice. This idea, sometimes implicitly expressed, generally concerns non-sovereign territories. For essentially economic reasons these territories have chosen to maintain links with the former colonial power and to implement an original approach to decolonization (McElroy and de Albuquerque 1995; Hintjens 1995).

But the hypothesis can also be applied to states.

While the cases of the European or American trust territories readily come to mind, most of the Caribbean States also illustrate this strategic relationship which impacts the "classic" representations of political culture in the Caribbean.

Race, class, institutional mimicry, clientelism are often presented as the common elements of a plural political culture which is based on diverse types of colonial experience and political status.

As Anton Allahaar rightly shows, racial inequalities continue to strongly influence the social relations and political culture of the countries of the region.

"In other words, the political culture of today's Caribbean is both class-based and racialized, for the roots of their history are firmly planted in colonialism and slavery, and laterly in neocolonialism and global capitalism" (Allahaar 2003, 23).

Gender inequalities also mark political culture through the unfavourable representations of women and their exclusion from the political system.

Notwithstanding all these other similarities, what these societies may have most in common is that they are regulated by an assumed dependency relationship whose contemporary originality is based on strategies to convert dependency into a resource.

This process partially corresponds to what Fred Constant identifies as the advent of a New Political Culture (NPC). "What is certainly true of the Caribbean as a whole is particularly true of Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, three countries that have consciously embraced the new liberal orthodoxies" (Constant 2003, 5).

This NPC reflects countries' dependence on the Washington Consensus, but its content remains limited to economic considerations, as is the case with most of the work on the Caribbean and Latin America.

The examination of the situation of the countries of this region has been strongly marked by the theory of dependence. The centre - periphery paradigm and the resulting dependency reflections remain strongly focused on economics, and little attention is paid to symbolic and strategic dimensions.

In other words, the historicity of societies is not taken into account in the analysis of their entry into international relations. It is as if their destiny were reduced to a periphery status dominated by a centre that is both geographic and economic.

For example, Immanuel Wallerstein's World Economy ignores culture, let alone political culture.

"Centre and periphery are both geographical and non-geographical concepts. For me it is the activities, the productions, rather than the countries, that are central or peripheral activities. It is only out of convenience of expression that we say central states and peripheral states. I have come to think that the key to being central or peripheral is the degree of "monopolization" to which the economic activity is subject" (Wallerstein 2009, 157-170).

The aim of this chapter is to show that in the contemporary context of anxious globalization, the resource dependency of Caribbean societies is a strategy that reinforces a political culture of allegiance. To understand this hypothesis, it is necessary to reassess the situation in the light of contemporary realities.

Our proposal is based on two major ideas. The first is that the practice of the relationship of dependence contradicts the economic theory that has been devoted to it. Today, this relationship increasingly corresponds to strategies for optimizing inequality. The second idea is that political culture is trapped in this multifaceted and strategic dependence.

Practice versus Dependence Theory

Conventional approaches to the phenomenon implicitly deny it the status of a social relationship.

The observation of reality leads us to revisit the theory of dependence and the centre-periphery paradigm which inspires it. One way to do this is to analyze the limits of the

theory in taking into account the historicity and therefore the singularity of the political cultures of the Caribbean.

The hidden historicity

"The meaning of history, at the time of the advent of the global market, cannot be understood independently of the process or laws that made it possible - but this possibility does not refer to an irreducible and irrevocable uniqueness, since it is always composed by the trajectories and plural variations of human practice (institutes, mores, etc.) (Ansaldi 2008, 166-167).

This call for the singularization of human experience does not exclude *invariants* (Veyne 1976). But the meaning we give it is often conditioned by the history and the context of its unfolding. From this point of view, the Caribbean is a real laboratory.

Political culture, a sectoral variant of culture, is a privileged ground for identifying the historicity of societies.

In order to do so, a semiotics approach inspired by the work of Clifford Geertz seems relevant to us. We subscribe to the idea that culture is "... not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973, 5).

The scope of such an approach should therefore be questioned and the link between political culture and dependency should be understood.

Through the representations and the sense that people have of the institutions and power, one can consider that political culture is largely dependent on colonial history and the context in which these countries evolve today. The Caribbean singularity, compared to that of African societies, lies in the particular modalities of the implementation of the European model.

The latter is indicative of a deeper penetration of Caribbean societies, victims of an ethnocide favourable to the transplantation of the institutions and culture of the old continent (Reno 2018).

These aspects of the socio-historical trajectory of societies are ignored or marginalized by dependence theorists.

Their economic determinism leaves little room for the cultural variable whose importance seems nevertheless decisive in apprehending the domination of the center.

As an ideology of change, dependency seeks to inform militant practice, while feeding on the concrete experiences of political action in the peripheries in the face of the hegemony of the capitalist centre. As Tony Smith says in a stimulating text, "(...) dependency theory represents far more than the intellectual association of marxism and Southern nationalism. It also represents an effort at the practical, concrete unification of two of the most important historical forces of our century with potentially significant consequences for both local and world history" (Smith 1979, 248).

The lack of consideration of the historicity of societies seems already contained in the definition proposed by Cardoso and Faletto.

For them, "a system is dependent when the accumulation and expression of capital cannot find its essential dynamic component inside the system" (Cardoso and Faletto, XX).

These limits also appear in the following criticism: "Too little attention is paid to political motives behind imperialism or to the autonomous power of local political circumstances in influencing the course of change in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (Smith, 1981, 757).

The political dynamics and reaction capacities of the periphery are obscured or marginalized. "It is to assert that dependency theory has systematically underestimated the real influence of the South over its own affairs, and to point out the irony of nationalists who have forgotten their own national histories" (Smith 1979, 249).

Cardoso and Faletto seem to recognize a relative autonomy of the periphery in its relations with the centre. But social relations are still overshadowed by economic logics. As the following commentary by Holger Henke shows, even if enshrined in a total vision, the dependence logic remains economic. "Social and political forces and processes are regarded as a structured totality in which a single part (i.e. the economic) determines the relationship among all parts" (Henke 1994, 183).

The destiny of the periphery is perceived as problematic or even pathological. This seems to contradict the practice of elites and populations who often give a different meaning to their condition. It seems as if they have consciously chosen allegiance in a context of uncertainty.

The centre-periphery paradigm and the theory of dependence tend to homogenize the "peripheral societies" whose differences are poorly identified.

Most proponents of the theory share this approach.

According to Samir Amin, "Apart from a few 'ethnographic reserves', all contemporary societies are integrated into a world system" (Amin 1974, 3).

For Gunder Frank, "Not a single concrete socio-economic formation of our time can be understood except as part of this world system" (Gunder Frank 1972, 9).

Today, the functioning of developing societies is increasingly based on negotiation strategies with an intrusive global environment that local actors can hardly escape.

Regardless of the effects of universal globalization, in the countries of the South, dependency is far from being a constraint for all. It becomes a consciously chosen option. A sociology of dependence allows us to understand the stakes and permanence, as suggested by the following comment:

"But if the Third World cannot do with its dependent status, neither can it do without it. For what has occurred is that the local political elites in these areas have almost structured their domestic rule on a coalition of internal interests favorable to the international connection. Thus it is not the sheer economic might of the outside that dictates the dependent status of the South, but the sociological consequences of this power" (Smith 1981, 251).

Frantz Fanon, in his own way, had said so too. The middle class that came to power after independence is underdeveloped and has no economic power. Its historical mission is to act as an intermediary to the bourgeoisie of the Motherland (Fanon 1966, 122).

Recent work departs from these sometimes pessimistic approaches to show that some so-called emerging societies are advantageously integrated into international capitalism and new technologies (Gosh 2016).

Faced with the excesses of economism in which supporters and opponents of the centre-periphery paradigm are trapped, the trajectories of the Caribbean countries invite us to be cautious.

How can we explain, for example, the decision of the British, French and Dutch territories of the Caribbean to maintain and sometimes strengthen their ties with their

European metropolises against the tide of independence that marked the "Third World" of the 1960s and 1970s?

The questioning is not new, but the answers were often unconvincing because they did not take into account the historicity of societies.

Georges Balandier's following commentary offered us as early as 1951, a holistic approach to dependency, thereby surpassing the economism and over-determination of the relationship by the centre. "It is possible to grasp such a situation created by the colonial expansion of European nations over the last century, from different points of view," he said; "these are all particular approaches, so many differently oriented insights, carried out by the historian of colonialism, the economist, the politician and the administrator, the sociologist concerned with the relationships among foreign civilizations and the psychologist who studies race relations etc. And it seems essential, in order to undertake an overall description, to examine what can be learned from each of these particular contributions". (Balandier 2001,11).

In the wake of anthropological work on the colonial situation in Africa, the writings of Aimé Césaire on colonialism, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon on the portrait of the colonized, research on Caribbean societies has highlighted the cultural mechanisms by which domination is perpetuated and renewed.

While culture can be a symbolic weapon of resistance, it can also be a space of alienation. All the political action of Aimé Césaire was to counter European ethnocentrism by "a Negro cry" restoring the African part of the former colonies of Europe.

Like dependence, the understanding of the (political) culture of Caribbean countries has generally been addressed explicitly or implicitly from the perspective of domination. Cultural domination, in particular, perpetuated by the former colonial metropolises that bequeathed us their political-institutional model.

The ramifications of the theory of dependence in the Caribbean were presented by Norman Girvan in a remarkable synthesis that recalls the recommendations of Balandier.

According to him, "Dependency theory was a significant element in the ideological and political radicalization of the decade from 1960 to 1970, and it gave rise to great

academic debate and many critical evaluations. Its influence declined during the 1980s but recently it has received renewed attention which is as a result of the critique it provides for neoliberal globalization." (Girvan 2005, 9).

The interest value of this militant Caribbean approach, which revolved around personalities like Lloyd Best, George Beckford, Girvan himself and more broadly of the New World group, lies in its interdisciplinary character. The economic, the social, the political and the cultural are articulated in an original theoretical project. In this project, the plantation is the multidimensional institution of the history and development of Caribbean societies.

The colonization of minds is presented by some authors as the main cause of Caribbean underdevelopment (Beckford 1972, 234). This "total" approach, of which all avenues may not have been explored, relativizes the weight of the economic variable and external forces.

The idea of totality as the main feature of our definition of the relation of dependence, makes it a phenomenon that cannot be reduced to one of its components. These may be more or less important depending on the context.

This totality already present in Balandier's seminal article on the colonial situation is also present in his following questions

"How do you define a situation of dependency? At what point is this situation captured as such by the individuals or groups that suffer it, to the point of guiding their behaviours and reactions? he wonders (Balandier 1952, 48).

How can we explain why this situation is being converted into a resource by those who are supposed to be subjected to it?

Resource dependency

The resource dependency on which our analysis is based differs from that commonly used in economics or in organization theory. From the latter perspective, it is a question of understanding the mechanisms by which one organization depends on the resources or capabilities of another organization to achieve its own objectives. (Hawkins 2011, 684).

In the context of aid policies, this phenomenon undeniably contains a social dimension.

It corresponds in many respects to the welfare state. In a liberal logic of solidarity, it is a question of dealing with the effects and above all the excesses of the social inequality inherent in capitalism (Donzelot, 1984).

This assistance is based on a representation of a spoon-fed unresponsive victim who lives at the expense of society. More often than not, the emphasis is put on the responsibility of the assistance receiver and incidentally on the conditions that perpetuate his situation (O'Connor, 2001).

It is this last reified dimension which is used to describe the former French colonies, generally qualified as being "on a drip".

It is also the fear of losing benefits or "acquired rights" that explains, to a large extent, the choice. This is a choice insofar as these beneficiaries could choose to leave this relationship, if they were interested in doing so. Obviously the cost of leaving the dependent relationship seems to them to be higher than the benefit of maintaining it.

Our perspective differs from that approach but agrees with it in regard to the strategies deployed by the actors. Of course, we subscribe to the idea that this is a relationship and that its content can be both material and symbolic. But, our idea is that this relationship is less the result of unequal resources than the very purpose of the transaction. Dependence is the resource.

The issue is not to note the imbalance generated by the weakness of A's resources compared to the importance of B's, and to deduce A's dependence on B, or B's ability to mobilize resources for the benefit of A.

If the dependence was the result of an inequality of means, then how can one understand its durability in cases where the level of A's resource could lead it out of the relationship?

The case of the island of Saint Barthelemy (Saint Barth) is interesting.

The territory was a municipality of the Guadeloupe archipelago before gaining the status of an autonomous overseas community after a popular referendum in 2003. By breaking its administrative ties with the archipelago, Saint Barth refused to be a subdivision of Guadeloupe. St. Barth's GDP per capita, close to the average of developed countries, is higher than that of Guadeloupe. Its development, based on luxury tourism and reduced

taxation, exempts it from levying tax on its inhabitants and allows it to avoid the constraints of European law by leaving the European area while remaining attached to the French national territory. In 2017 its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was 38,994 euros. It was higher than the average of the French overseas departments (DOM) (19,201 euros) and that of France (32,404 euros) (IEDOM 2018). Saint Barth accessed autonomy to preserve **its** economic model but did not seek to sever its ties with France. In reality, the territory chose its dependence by leaving Guadeloupe for a direct attachment to the French state, a choice which was not based on economics. As the local chief executive, Bruno Magras, often says, "We don't pay taxes to the state, why would we want to ask for something?"

Symbolically, Saint Barth's integration into the French space is based on respect for an identity built among other elements on its Swedish past (Reno2011).

While dependence provides rewards, these are incidentally economic. They are primarily political.

The political dimensions of a total relationship

In the above developments we have sought to show the multidimensional nature of this relationship. It is based on various sources and strategies, the presentation of which will be completed in the second part. It provokes forms of political resistance whose limitations reinforce the idea that political culture remains largely a prisoner of dependency.

Political culture of (in)dependence

(In)dependence is Norman Girvan's way of summarizing fifty years of formal sovereignty in the English-speaking Caribbean. "Not fifty years, perhaps, of Independence; fifty years In Dependence" (Girvan 2012). The remark concerns all territories, regardless of their status.

In these postcolonial societies, political culture is both the product of dependence and a mechanism for its perpetuation. This is through a real appropriation of colonial institutions by elites and populations. Institutional mimicry is one of the best illustrations of the (in)dependence.

Trevor Munroe's analysis of decolonization in Jamaica, by transferring formal political authority to an institutionalized duopoly of parties, is an example of this mimicry in the

english-speaking territories (Munroe1972).

Europe benefits from the effects of colonization and in particular from the spread of its ubiquitous political models in the Caribbean. The French bureaucratic system, strongly imbued with Jacobinism, responded to the British Westminster liberal and parliamentary system. Both are influenced and infused with Creole culture and the weight of interpersonal relationships.

These European models, exported to territories violently emptied of their civilization, are gradually "naturalized" by populations who have no other references than those imposed on them by the metropolises. This promotes a political culture of allegiance to colonial political traditions that is perpetuated today in various forms.

Beyond this observation, which is true of all English-speaking and French-speaking territories with the possible exception of Guyana, it is necessary to question the meaning of this accession.

The resource dependence underpinning this fidelity refers to what Balandier describes as "active acceptance" in the colonial situation. The process, which extends into postcolonial society, resembles the dependency strategies deployed by the "peripheries".

"Passive acceptance implies the will to serve the purposes of colonial society, because of the advantages (material and prestige-related) granted by the latter... It may even imply an attitude of "collaboration"; giving this word the special meaning it assumed during World War Two. Very often, this attitude is ambiguous, leading to a kind of "double-play" that strives to maintain guarantees for the future, or to spare one or the other society via personal benefits" (Balandier 1981, 19).

While this observation is still relevant, the behaviours it describes are not always "collaborative" and are not limited to a minority. Resource dependency is not a capitulation and may be the decision of the majority sometimes against the will of the elites.

Whatever the status of the territory, acceptance translates into the reproduction of the institutions of the metropolis. This makes a lawyer say that "... we have chosen to define ourselves one way, as 'subjects' of the British Monarch rather than as we authentically are: the citizens of Independent States. It therefore bears emphasis that the continual reeling of this story functions critically in the ongoing construction of our constitutional

identity" (McIntosh 2002, 104). The French non-independent territories, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to name but a few examples, illustrate the "active acceptance" of a majority of the population.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, some see change as the transition from Westminster to Philadelphia, in other words, the choice of a presidential system to replace the parliamentary system (Ryan 2000). This transfer of regime would coincide with political-institutional mimicry and economic and cultural dependence. This vision is, for the moment, very much in the minority in the political class which has not yet put it on its agenda. The question of political change takes the form of a debate on the transition from monarchy to the Republic without fundamental questioning of the Westminster model.

In Jamaica, this debate is recurrent and fuels the local political game. In the elections of 2012, Portia Simpson-Miller put the constitutional reform on the political agenda against the advice of her opponent Andrew Holness. In the elections of 2016, he won a majority and became Prime Minister. Contrary to his position as an opponent, he envisages a change of institutions. But like Portia Miller-Simpson, he has thus far failed to change the constitution.

The case of Barbados is also interesting. The following statement by historian Hilary Beckles reflects on the relationship of the population to colonial institutions and their political representatives.

"My expectation shall be that Barbados will probably become the last country in this region to become a republic. I can't see it," he said, and continued, "If you imagine that we cannot even get government to move Lord Nelson (Statue) out of Parliament Square... A slave owner has a monument in our parliament square. And every time there is a conversation to move it, there's a public revolt. So how do you become a republic if you cannot remove an imperial warmonger slave owner... out of your parliament square?" (Beckles 2016).

Another relevant example is the referendum held in 2009 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines by Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves. Against the advice of the head of government, 56% of voters preferred the continuation of the monarchical system in which the head of state remains symbolically the Queen of England.

In the face of contemporary challenges, what Matthew Bishop calls the "Westmonster" system (Bishop 2011) would be ill-equipped to meet the expectations of the territories that adopted it. Yet, despite its limitations, the "monster" is only viewed askance by the elites. Like the French departmental status, it is sometimes used by the people as a means of resisting the changes proposed by the elected representatives.

The relationship of the populations to their elites informs us about the political culture of the countries concerned. Democratic theory posits the limitation of personal and clientelistic allegiances for rational connections based on the shared defence of a public space.

In reality, interpersonal relationships are often a significant dimension of the relationship between populations and political actors (Stone 1980). In the Caribbean, this closeness to elected officials does not exclude conservative behaviour based on voter distrust, as previous examples show.

The metropolitan institutional framework that houses these tensions reveals another dimension of resource dependency.

Beyond its structuring and regulatory functions of societies, the colonial political model is often used by the people as an asset against the elites, accused of patrimonialism and of forming a class that seeks to concentrate power for their own benefit.

This is probably one of the explanations for the resistance to change that we see here and there. There is a diversion of the use of exported institutions.

The Westminster model and the departmental system in their various versions are deeply rooted in local political dynamics and are therefore also used as shields against the contested political elites.

That's what Orlando Patterson's heartfelt cry translates:

"Oh you greedy cabal, you fools, you cannot lead the people to independence wearing a waistcoat, you have been brainwashed in the rank urine of British culture" (quoted by Girvan 2012).

Faced with the domination of the colonial model, various initiatives of resistance are taken within the countries.

Economically, resistance may take the form of a protectionist discourse favourable to local production and consumption. "Economic patriotism" is presented as a necessary reaction against dependence. This is the case, for example, in Barbados.

"Confronted with the seemingly imminent death of the industry, the government and manufactures of the small developing microstate moved in 2002 to mount a buy local campaign. Despite external opposition, the "Buy Bajan" campaign is still being run today, some thirteen years later" (Knight 2015, 2).

In the early 2000s, several non-independent French and Dutch territories, several English-speaking states engaged in debates and consultations on the modification of their institutions. The aim of such consultations is usually to offer alternatives to the metropolitan model.

Some French territories sought to break away from the assimilationist departmental status established in the aftermath of the Second World War. This assimilation went so far as to create a legal monster by superimposing two two governance councils on the same territory. In France in the 1980s, a reform created Regions which consist of several Departments.. In order to preserve legislative and institutional identity with the metropolis, regions were set up in the French communities of the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean and the territorial base of each region coincided with that of the department. This indiscriminate mimicry led to the proliferation of power centres and jurisdictional entanglements criticized by some as ineffective, but appreciated by others for the additional financial transfers generated by the system.

After several years of public debate, the voters of Martinique and French Guyane, after two referenda, opted in 2015 to consolidate the department and the region into a single institutional entity, the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique and the Territorial Collectivity of Guyane

Guadeloupe preferred the status quo, namely keeping the Département and the Région as separate institutional bodies sharing the same territory. But Saint Barth and Saint Martin, which were two municipalities of the Guadeloupean archipelago, decided to opt out and change their constitutional status. These two new overseas communities (COM) have strengthened their autonomy by combining the prerogatives of the municipality, the department and the region in a single political-administrative entity. Saint Barth and Saint Martin thus chose to "leap-frog" Guadeloupe for a direct institutional link with mainland France. While the form changes, the substance remains unaltered.

When political consensus is achieved by the elites, people tend to validate change even partially, without altering the relationship between them and the French state.

The island of Saint Barth has changed its status with Guadeloupe and with the European Union because it has managed to renegotiate the terms of its relationship with the State. Its direct link with Paris allows it to get around earlier obstacles with Pointe-à-Pitre. Its choice of OCT status (Overseas Country and Territory) gives it autonomy within the French Republic by applying a legislative specialty regime that frees it from the constraints of European law. These are all illustrations of the periphery's ability to negotiate the content and form of its exchange with the centre.

If the other territories prefer to maintain a closer link with the centre it is because there is no coalition or consensus within the periphery in favour of greater autonomy. Guadeloupe's failure to change its status is a case in point.

It may also occur that the community makes its menu and specifies the ingredients of its dependence. The example of Saint Martin attests to this. The territory has the same status as Saint Barth without the level of autonomy because it has chosen to favour the legislative identity regime and to remain in the European area by adopting the status of UltraPeripheral Region (RUP).

In other French territories, the political elites have shown a form of resistance through consultation with the population on a project of autonomy.

In Martinique, the country of Frantz Fanon, the protesting parties chose to use the ballot box as a weapon to fight the system from within. One of the first manifestations of this strategy was the victory in 1971 of an independent at the head of a small town in the south. In 1973 and 1978, Alfred Marie-Jeanne, the new mayor, clearly displayed his leanings by successively creating two "patriotic" organizations, the Word to the People and the Mouvement Indépendantiste Martiniquais (MIM). From 1997, under the banner of the latter movement, he was elected three times as member of the French Parliament for Martinique. In 2007, a second MIM representative would join him in the French National Assembly. Two other mayors of another pro-independence party were elected in Sainte Anne in the south and Macouba in the north of the island. Both at the municipal level and in the French Parliament, the separatists won seats. They then managed to win the executive of the Regional Assembly and then the Territorial Community of Martinique in 1998 and 2016. The results of this "separatist" experience remain to be

seen. Martinique's status has changed without changing the legal system of legislative identity which marks the highest level of political dependence in the French constitutional order. Martinique is a community without autonomy. The nationalist movement is in crisis. The practice of power led it to deal with the French authorities, thus legitimizing a system it described as colonial. Gradually the nationalists became de facto regionalists like Corsicans and Bretons. This explains why one can vote for separatists without voting for independence. From now on, the identity of the territories is not associated with the claim of sovereignty. The dependency is all the greater because the separatists legitimize and strengthen the system through their management of French institutions. They demonstrate their ability to govern and are satisfied with it. But they are thus involved in the regulation of the system. Today it is less the state than the local people who refuse change. This is the outcome that was foreseen by the French authorities.

The case of the Dutch territories, although different, bears some analogies with the French communities.

In October 2010, the Federation of the Netherlands Antilles imploded, unveiling different strategies for the relationship of the territories to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Curacao, Sint Maarten remain autonomous communities with regard to both The Netherlands and Europe, as does Saint Barth. But Bonaire, Saba and Saint Eustatius, after coming out of the Federation of the Netherlands Antilles, became municipalities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This brings them closer to the French local authorities and makes them eligible for the RUP status.

These territories could then, like the French ones, be associated with the European diplomatic apparatus which seeks to establish itself in the area of influence of the United States. As a negotiating mechanism, diplomacy is also one of the new areas of resource dependency.

The diplomacy of dependency

The hegemonic position of the United States in the Caribbean is true in virtually every respect. Cuban or any other resistance is not allowed to overshadow a very strong economic, cultural and political presence of the US neighbour. This reality stems from a

strategic policy adopted by Washington with the Monroe Doctrine of 1822, according to which **Western Hemispheric** affairs fall under the purview of the United States. It also stems from the accession of many Caribbean territories to the American way of life.

"Increasingly the United States have played the part of a surrogate re-coloniser, and there has even been talk of 'a voluntary beneficial erosion of sovereignty' as an option for independent Caribbean territories vulnerable to natural disaster and criminal networks" (Hintjens 2001, 27).

This relationship between David and Goliath does not mean that the weak are completely destitute in negotiating with the strong. The current Venezuelan crisis is instructive from this point of view. It shows how some Caribbean states benefiting from the Petrocaribe programme set up by Hugo Chavez have monetized their support for Venezuelan President Maduro's isolation by US President Donald Trump.

Faced with Washington's dominance, the Caribbean seeks to diversify its partners by turning cautiously to Brussels, especially through the Ultraperipheral Regions of the European Union. Europe's development assistance in the Caribbean and Latin America officially meets the now traditional goals of international solidarity and the fight against poverty. However, the new trends of this aid policy based on respect for the democratic and liberal creed should be questioned. Democratic conditionalities and open markets led at best to respect for human rights, and at worst to the end of preferential regimes enjoyed by the Caribbean under the Lomé agreements. Now, the and the associated Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) postulate an illusory competition between objectively unequal partners in order to comply with WTO rules.

To the historical political influence of Europe, therefore, is added a policy of aid and cooperation that could perpetuate the relationship of dependency. This took the form of the signing of an EPA with the CARIFORUM countries in 2008 and the development of neighbourly relations between the Ultraperipheral Regions of the European Union and the non-European territories of the Caribbean.

Cooperation with the UPRs is fuelled by funds from the European Interreg Caribbean programme. Established in 2000, this financial intervention aims to strengthen trade with more than 40 neighbouring territories.

French local authorities, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique and Saint Martin are also the active borders of the European Union in the Caribbean. They thus participate in French diplomatic action and European economic intervention in the area. This is a complex

situation of regional authorities that illustrates the idea of *a la carte* identity. French and European by history, law and political status, but Caribbean by geography and culture. By this multiple positioning, they contribute to the definition of a multi-storey dependency.

The first level concerns the relationship of the French island territories to their state. The decentralized cooperation encouraged by Paris leads to their accession to regional organizations and in particular to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). This opening is a real window of opportunity which could in turn influence their relationship with the state.

The second concerns the relations between European Union and the OECS.

At this level, because of their political status, the French regional bodies are seen as credible intermediaries because they are both European and Caribbean.

Martinique and Guadeloupe are at the forefront of the territorialization of French and European diplomacy.

In 2012, they became associate members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPALC). Martinique joined the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 2015 followed by Guadeloupe in 2019.

Membership in the OECS is an advantage for the organization, according to the then Authority Chair PM Ralph Gonsalves of St Vincent:

"The accession to associate membership of the OECS by the French overseas departments, first Martinique and then Guadeloupe, adds immensely to the OECS... Each has a Gross Domestic Product in excess of US \$8 million. Each has a high level of development of infrastructure and services ... Before our very eyes the regional integration movement is being transformed with the entry of both Martinique and Guadeloupe as associate members of the OECS. Is Barbados next? ... (Gonsalves 2019).

Their Europeanness is not an obstacle to rapprochement with their Caribbean brothers and sisters. It is first of all the geographical and cultural proximity that is prioritized according to Didacus Jules, the director general of the OECS.

"Guadeloupe and Martinique have a different language, currency and political status from other OECS member states. However, they have a fundamental similarity that is found in their Caribbeanness, i.e. their Caribbean identity. They are both inside and outside the Caribbean, and the citizens of the OECS and the governments of the member

countries recognize and accept Guadeloupeans and Martiniquais as Caribbeans. They are both in the eastern Caribbean geographically, so it is natural... to consider them as members of the family" (Jules 2019, 9).

But it is also France and Europe that are welcomed into the OECS. The Director General's comments are unequivocal. Beyond the sharing of identity and fraternity, the political status of the French territories of the Caribbean will promote exchanges with France and with the European Union.

"For Guadeloupe in its political persona as France, as Europe in the Caribbean, it is an expression of the EU policy of allowing, even encouraging outermost regions to integrate with their immediate neighbours: the so-called "Neighbourhood Policy" (Jules 2019).

The OECS regional model is likely to support this type of membership. Indeed, it constitutes a "unique subregional identity" combining supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. "In the subregion, sovereignty was still closely associated with West Indian Nationalism which was the patron of the independence movement" (Gilbert-Roberts 2013, 200-201).

This originality is also manifested by a receptiveness to innovation and could explain the ability of the regional institution to integrate the differences of the French territories. This singularity and hospitality have had consequences for the political culture of the French regional authorities accustomed to being represented internationally by a Parisian official according to the centralizing logic of the French state.

It is the combination of this Caribbean closeness and European belonging that is at the heart of the special relationship that is being built between the UPRs, Europe and the Caribbean.

In this play of actors implied by the relationship of dependence, Europe seeks to maintain and renew its positioning in a zone largely occupied by the United States American. This position of intermediaries in the diplomacy of dependence seems to be consciously assumed by the local authorities of the French territories.

The speech delivered on 4 July 2019 by the President of the Guadeloupe Region and the reactions it provoked, bear witness to this.

To a journalist's question about the meaning of Guadeloupe's accession to the OECS, President Chalus' response corresponds to the feeling of a large part of Guadeloupe's public opinion.

"I know they need us. Can you tell us what this cooperation will bring us? the journalist asked the Guadeloupean chief executive.

"They need us because they have difficulties with Europe. They want us to be a relay," replied the president of the Guadeloupe Region (Chalus 2019).

The following is just as interesting. Marie-Luce Penchard, Vice-President in charge of Caribbean cooperation and European affairs expresses with strength and finesse her opposition to this vision. :

"Please don't talk about the Caribbean in these terms! It's true that they need us, but we also need them. Please note they can bring us a lot, we do not cooperate only to conquer markets, they have a culture, a know-how that can enrich us, we have the example of sargassum. We must establish a relationship of trust with our neighbors ”.

That much was later endorsed by President Chalus..

The relationship between Guadeloupe and Martinique with the rest of the Caribbean is primarily identity-based. Both the French authorities and the OECS understood this.

In 2009, after one of the most important crises in the history of these two countries, the French government, in response to social demand, incorporated in its political offer the greater integration of territories into their geographical environment. This was done in the name of a Caribbean identity shared and claimed locally.

Mission officers appointed by local executives have been installed in several French embassies and consulates. The English-speaking island of St. Lucia is home to both the headquarters of the OECS and the French Embassy which covers all the member countries of this regional organisation. This explains why Martinique and Guadeloupe have decided to each send one mission officer to St Lucia. The membership of the two territories changed the status of these representatives. At the initiative of the regional organization, with the tacit agreement of the French Foreign Minister, the representative of Martinique moved to the premises of the OECS, with the status of Commissioner. This change gave the mission officer a function comparable to that of ambassadors of the member states to that the organization, without explicit validation

by the French law and state.

This experience illustrates the political impact of this rapprochement and the benefit that Martinique has derived from it within the regional institution. While Martinique can be a mediator in the exchanges between the Caribbean and Europe, the OECS for its part, can be an asset to Martinique in relation to France through its initiatives and the activation of the identity variable.

The Martinique identity discourse is thus reinforced from the outside, and this could eventually change the local political culture in the direction of greater autonomy as is evidenced through the current debate on the flag and anthem that divides public opinion in Martinique.

As of 10 May 2019, after three years of reflection and consultation, Martinique officially has distinctive identity signs that can be used for international sports and cultural travel.

At the unveiling ceremony of the flag and anthem in front of representatives of the Martinique sports and cultural worlds as well as delegations of international consulates, the President of the *Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique* (CTM) addressed the OECS in the following terms:

"As a partner of the OECS, since our official membership in 2016, you have repeatedly asked us for our identification symbols. From now on, Martinique will stand out within our organization, with an anthem and a flag as our international passports." (Marie-Jeanne 2019)

Clearly, the OECS is associated with a political discourse that goes beyond mere sporting and cultural considerations. The French state is called upon to accept separate signs of recognition from its own in order to comply with a request from the regional organization that does not intend to use the signs of the former colonial powers.

It is too early to assess the impact of this cooperation in the Eastern Caribbean and the political culture of the French territories. But the debate and the controversies associated with it are an indication of the strategies at work in the context of multi-level dependency.

This multi-level dependence could have unexpected effects.

Indeed, it could contribute, through territorial diplomacy, to redefining Caribbean regionalism. A renewal of regionalism whose stakes were already announced by Jessica

Byron in the following terms, about Martinique:

"The deepening of Martinique's relationship with its neighbours within a multilateral framework may offer new practical possibilities for regional integration. In academic terms, it may also provide new Caribbean perspectives on comparative regionalisms and the construction of regional spaces" (Byron 2017, 279).

It is probably this symbolic impact of membership on Caribbean regionalism that makes it possible to grasp the meaning and scope of dependence in the transaction between French territories and the other territories of the eastern Caribbean. Beyond the identity discourse, the accession of French territories to regional organizations makes their political and economic dependence, an element in the renewal of this relationship space.

Conclusion

Without calling into question their ties with France, the accession of French territories to regional organizations in fact contributes to the current of autonomy that is characteristic of the political culture of English-speaking territories, contrary to the centralizing tendency of Francophones. This movement which is operating at the local level is all the more likely to succeed because it is encouraged by the French authorities who are experiencing a process of recomposition and rationalization of the liberal state. These processes reinforce a consensual resource dependency. In this uncertain globalized context, interdependencies are developing without fundamentally challenging inequalities. The unequal and solidarity-based relationship of dependence, is one of the strategies of the weak to face globalization. Indeed, weakness tends to be one of the structuring parameters of contemporary international relations (Badie 2018).

Bibliography

Amin, Samir, 1974. *Accumulation on a World Scale : A critique of the Theory of underdevelopment*. New York : Monthly Review Press .

Ansaldi, Saverio, 2008. « Pour une théorie critique des historicités, Mondialisation libérale et fin de l'histoire ». *Multitudes* n°32, 163-168 .

Badie, Bertrand, 2018. *Quand le Sud réinvente le monde, Essai sur la puissance de la faiblesse*. La Découverte.

Balandier, Georges, 1952. « Contribution à une sociologie de la dépendance ». *Cahiers internationaux de Sociologie*, vol 12 1952, 47-69

Balandier, Georges, 2001. « La Situation coloniale : approche théorique ». *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, 2001/1 n°110, 9-29.

Beckford, George, 1972. *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World*, Londres, Oxford University Press

Beckles, Hilary, 2016. <https://www.barbadosday.bb/2016/12/10/no-republic-status-anytime-soon-sir-hilary/>.

Bishop, Matthew Louis, 2011. « Slaying the 'Westmonster' in the Caribbean? Constitutional reform in St. Vincent and the Grenadines », *British journal of politics and international relations*, vol. 13, 420-437.

Byron, Jessica, 2017. « Martinique's Accession to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean states : A New Chapter in Caribbean Regionalism », *The Round Table*, vol 106, No 3, 279-302.

Cardoso, Fernando and Faletto, Enzo, 1979. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, University of California Press.

Césaire, Aimé, 1955. *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Editions Présence Africaine.

Constant, Fred. 2003. « Is there a new political culture in the Caribbean ? ». In *Modern Political Culture in the Caribbean*, edited by Holger Henke and Fred Reno, University of the West Indies Press, 3-20.

Donzelot, Jacques, 1984. *L'invention du social. Essai sur le déclin des passions*

politiques. Paris, Fayard.

Fanon, Frantz, 1966. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York : Grove Press

Gilbert-Roberts, Terri-Ann, 2013. *The politics of integration, the caribbean sovereignty revisited*, Ian Randle Publishers.

Girvan, Norman, 2005. « El pensamiento de la dependencia en el Caribe anglofono » *Revista Mexicana del Caribe* jun, Vol. 10 Issue 19, p7-55.

Girvan, Norman, 2012. *50 Years of In-dependence in Jamaica : reflections. Delivered at the SALISES 50-50, Conference, 'Critical Reflections in a Time of Uncertainty', Kingston, 22 August.*

Geertz Clifford, 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books

Gosh, Chor Boon, 2016. « From Dependency theory to Creative Innovation ». In *From Taders to Innovators : Science and Technology in Singapore since 1965*, 1-27. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Gonsalves, Ralph, 2019, *Address delivered at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Meeting of the Authority of the OECS for the Accession of Guadeloupe to Associate Membership of the OECS*, <https://pressroom.oecs.org/guadeloupe-formally-joins-the-organisation-of-eastern-caribbean-states>

Gunder-Franck, André, 1972. « The development of Underdevelopment » in James D. Cockcroft and others, *Dependency and Underdevelopment : Latin America's Political Economy*, New York : Anchor Books 1972, p.9 .

Hawkins, Christopher, 2011. Smart Growth Policy Choice: A Resource Dependency and Local Governance Explanation, *The Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4.

Henke, Holger, 1994. « Foreign policy and dependency : The case of Jamaica 1972-89 », *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1 March, 181-223.

Hitjens, Helen, 1995. *Alternative to independence : Exploration in Postcolonial Relations*, Dortmund Pub Co.

Hintjens, Helen, 2001. What is Freedom ? Competing Notions of Rights & Responsibilities in the French Caribbean, *Itinerario*, Volume 25, Issue 2, july, 23-41

Jules, Didacus, 2019 Les citoyens de l'OECS acceptent les guadeloupéens comme des Caribéens, *France-Antilles* 15 mars

Jules, Didacus, 2019, *Adress by the Director General of the OECS H.E Dr Didacus Jules to the accession ceremony of Guadeloupe to the OECS*, 14th March , <https://pressroom.oecs.org/guadeloupe-formally-joins-the-organisation-of-eastern-caribbean-states>

Knight, Joseann, 2015. « Can a Buy Local Campaign Save Barbados' Manufacturing Industry? Considering Dependency and Post-Colonial Consumption Theories ». *Journal of Eastern caribbean Studies*, 40(1) 1-37

Marie-Jeanne, Alfred, 2019, *Allocution du Président de la Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique, Cérémonie de dévoilement du drapeau et de l'hymne pour les déplacements culturels et sportifs de la Martinique et à l'international*. Vendredi 10 mai, IMS

McIntosh, Simeon C.R, 2002. *Caribbean Constitutional Reform, Rethinking the West Indian Polity*, The Caribbean law Publishing Company,

McElroy, Jerome L and de Albuquerque, Klaus, 1995. « The Social and Economic Propensity for Political Dependence ». In *The Insular Caribbean, Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2/3 June/September , pp. 167-193

Memmi, Albert, 2002. *Portrait du colonisé*, Gallimard.

Munroe, Trevor, 1972. *Politics of constitutional decolonization: Jamaica, 1944-62*. Jamaica, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.

O'Connor, Brendon, 2001. « Intellectual Origins of welfare Dependency », *Australian journal of Social, Issues* Vol. 36 No. 3 August.

Reno, Fred, 1997. "La créolisation des modèles politico-institutionnels métropolitains". In *Les Iles caraïbes*, edited by Justin Daniel. Karthala-Crplc, 75-104

Reno, Fred, 2001. "Re-sourcing dependency : decolonisation and post-colonialism in french overseas departments", *Itinerario, European journal of Overseas History*, vol XXV, 9-22

Reno, Fred, 2011. « La mise en place des collectivités de Saint Barthélémy et de Saint Martin : l'autonomie en pratique ». In *Les Outre-mer à l'épreuve du changement* coordonné par Daniel Justin L'Harmattan, 149-160.

Reno, Fred, 2018. « Greffe et bouturage en politique ». In *La démocratie, entre exigences et faux-semblants* edited by Olivier Pluen et Valérie Doumeng Institut Universitaire Varenne 89-104.

Smith, Tony, 1979. « The Underdevelopment of Development Literature, The case of Dependency Theory », *World Politics* Vol. 31, No. 2 247-288

Smith, Tony, 1981. « The Logic of Dependency Theory Revisited », *International Organization*, 35,4, 755-761.

Ryan, Selwyn, 2002. In *Caribbean survival and the global challenge* edited by Ramesh Ramsaran Ian Randle pub p237-263

Stone, Carl, 1980. *Democracy and Clientelism in Jamaica* New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.

Veyne, Paul, 1976. *L'inventaire des différences*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil.

Wallerstein, Immanuel, 2009. « Les économies-monde et leur histoire ; Entretien » in *Le Débat* 2009/2 (n°154) p. 157-170