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GLOBALISATION AND THE CARIBBEAN

Introducing the uneven nature of globalisation

Scarcely uttered before the 1990s, *globalisation* has suddenly become one of the most common terms in our daily lexicon. The term is regularly invoked in corporate, political and academic depictions of worldwide trends, including those shaping the Caribbean. Despite the term's ubiquity, it is unusual to find a clear definition of globalisation or to see it interrogated against evidence. Too often, globalisation is presented as if it were some autonomous, pervasive and uncontrollable force. In the face of such an overwhelming force, people seem to have little choice but to adapt and make do. An additional problem with most discussions of globalisation is that they often imply that what is emerging is an inclusive and integrated 'global village' (cf. Klak 1998a). This chapter breaks with everyday usage of the term. Rather than presenting globalisation as its own force, and assuming the Caribbean under the common and typically over-generalised notions of globalisation, this chapter takes a more place- and issue-specific approach. The chapter will first provide an overview of the general nature of globalisation before getting to the specific case of the Caribbean.

By 'globalisation' we refer to increases in the geographical scale, volume and velocity of transnational interactions (cf. Held *et al.* 1999). At the forefront of these growing trans-border relations are often profit-seeking corporations, but the transnational flows and influences are multi-dimensional. In addition to the economic aspects of globalisation, we identify five other dimensions: technological, political, cultural, ideological and environmental. Other chapters of this book have touched on several of these dimensions of globalisation. Some of the key components of each of these globalisation dimensions, and important studies of them in both the global and the Caribbean contexts, are as follows:

- *economic* – the growing role of TNCs and, in particular, in organising globally networked production systems; growing gaps between the beneficiaries of globalisation and the global majority (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994; Gwynne *et al.* 2003);
- *technological* – the increased importance of electronic telecommunications and air travel (see Chapter 8; Castells 2000);

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- *political* – neo-liberal free-market policies; trade treaties such as the US 807 tax code, which encouraged maquiladoras to locate in the Caribbean region; treaties that extend CBI and give Caribbean exporters a cess to US markets in exchange for greater access to Caribbean markets for US exporters; NAFTA and the movement towards hemisphere-wide free trade through the Free Trade Association of the Americas or FTAA (see Chapter 8; Klak 1998a; Ugarteche 2000; Hall 2001; Ramsaran 2002);
- *cultural* – the emerging global culture of mass consumption; worldwide TNC name-brand marketing; global (mainly US) TV through the widespread dissemination of cable; the transnational impacts of music, food and festivals such as Trinidad's Carnival (see Figure 10.1 and Chapter 2; Dunn 1995; Brysk 2000; Hall and Benn 2000; Scher 2003);
- *ideological* – TINA (There Is No Alternative to free-market capitalism, Margaret Thatcher's famous utterance from more than two decades ago); the collapse of the state socialist bloc and of Latin American and Caribbean socialist experiments (Chapter 7; Gwynne and Kay 2004);
- *environmental* – the increasing transnational scale of ecological damage such as atmospheric pollution and warming, sea-level rise, the degradation of fisheries, coral reefs and freshwater supplies, and deforestation, both the institutional and grassroots responses to these problems are also crossing international borders (see Chapter 1; NRC 1999; Lee *et al.* 2000; Goodbody and Thomas-Hope 2002).

This chapter will elaborate on many of these aspects of globalisation while focusing primarily on the economic facets – Caribbean and extra-regional corporations, industrialisation and trade. Throughout the discussion, we stress that current economic and political transformations must be specified at the local level to understand their impacts on people and places. By taking a more place-specific approach to globalisation, it becomes clear that current economic and political trends are not really globalised but are instead highly uneven geographically as well as socially. Our main point is therefore that globalisation is highly uneven spatially and socially, and that this unevenness occurs across a range of considerations such as control, access, advantage and impacts. These specificities are crucial for understanding globalisation impacts in the Caribbean.

Many scholars have examined trends associated with economic globalisation but have come to very different conclusions about their significance and, in particular, how much the role and powers of the state have declined relative to TNCs. One of the most comprehensive reviews of this literature (Held *et al.* 1999) finds that the interpretations of the changes fall into three groups: the strong or hyperglobalist thesis, the weak or sceptical thesis, and the nuanced or transformationalist thesis.

- *Hyperglobalist thesis* – according to this view, globalisation represents a new epoch of human history in which traditional nation-states have become

Figure 10.1 Cable TV and Caribbean culture

TV CHANNEL LISTING					
Variety	39	Encore Action			
02	TBS	77	Sony TV		
03	TV Guide	78	Univision		
04	Bulletin Board	79	TV5 (French)		
05	Reggae Sun	80	LEC		
06	LOVE TV	81	DW		
07	TWJ	82	Zee TV		
08	Discovery		Variety		
09	CVM	44	Fox Sports World		
10	TNT	45	Nisgn		
11	USA	46	GOLF		
		47	Outdoor		
Children			83	Travel	
12	Disney		84	Weather	
13	Toon Disney		85	CSPAN	
14	Cartoon		86	Animal Planet	
15	Nickelodeon		87	A&E	
			88	History	
Variety			89	Arts	
16	National Geographic		90	Value Vision	
17	PBS		91	Fox	
18	Sch-fi		92	HBO Comedy	
19	LPN		93	Solid Gold Oldies (audio)	
20	Court TV		94	Lite Jazz (audio)	
Adult				Local	
21	*Exstasy (scrambled)			95	Community Channel
				96	Data Carrier
				97	Data Carrier
				98	Hype TV
				99	Cable View
News					Variety
22	CNN			100	A1 TV
23	CNNHh			101	Fox
24	CNN/Fr/Vnt			102	CBS
25	CNBC			103	ABC
				104	NBC
Networks				105	PBS
26	Fox			106	Goodlife
27	CBS			107	WE (Romance)
28	ABC			108	Bravo
29	NBC			109	MSNBC
				110	IFC
Movie				111	Real TV
30	Lifetime Movies			112	FXM
31	Western			113	Test Channel
32	HBO			114	TCM
33	Chemex			115	Test Channel
34	Showtime			116	BET Movies
35	TMC			117	Previews
36	STARZ			118	Test Channel
37	Encore			119	Test Channel
38	AMC			120	Test Channel

In recent years, many more Caribbean homes have obtained cable television hookups, whether through legal or, for some, illegal distribution systems. As this listing of channels in Jamaica suggests, the United States is the main source of programming, and this is having a significant cultural impact on the region.

and domestic, external and internal affairs. The geographical aspects of this thesis emphasise the continuation of global divergence – increasing inequalities between and within countries.

All three theses regard capitalism as having entered a distinctly 'globalising' phase, though the nature and outcomes are much in dispute. What is interesting geographically is that most perspectives (apart from the pro-neo-liberal one) do not see global convergence (that is, less inequality between and within countries) resulting from globalisation. Growing inequalities appear to be the result of production, trade and finance becoming increasingly transnational. The transformationalist thesis sees some (but by no means all) countries, regions, communities and households benefiting from being more closely linked to the fortunes of the global economy, while many others will suffer. Divergence and unevenness therefore have become interwoven with globalisation. As a result, some argue that 'globalisation' (a word that implies convergence) can be a misleading term for the unfolding process. David Harvey suggests that we jettison 'globalisation' entirely and replace it with the 'uneven spatio-temporal development of capitalism' (Harvey 1995). That is a mouthful, but it may point in a fruitful direction. Similarly, corporate manoeuvring on the world stage leads Hilbourne Watson to this stark yet useful characterisation of the situation: 'Globalisation is capitalism in the age of electronics' (Watson 2001). Many others that have studied the growing power of TNCs have labelled the current era as primarily one of 'corporate globalisation'. These are all improvements over the overgeneralised and undefined ways that globalisation is often presented.

Across the various interpretations of contemporary globalisation is a recognition that its technological underpinning is time-space compression. By this we mean that many places are becoming closer together in travel or communication time or costs (Knox and Marston 2004). Although such convergence has been occurring over centuries, the pace has quickened markedly in recent decades. To illustrate, consider three examples of cost reductions using 1990 as a benchmark: shipping costs have fallen by more than two-thirds since 1920; airline transport costs have fallen by more than 60 per cent since 1960; and the price of international telephone calls has fallen by 90 per cent since 1970 (Girvan 1999). But this is just the beginning. Satellites and the Internet have virtually eliminated the 'friction of distance' for communications. Messages, prices, television images and other information are transferred as quickly and cheaply across 10 miles as 10,000 (Harvey 1989).

Note, however, that access to these time-space compressing technologies is highly uneven. Time-space compression has opened the possibility for potentially new links between different parts of the world, and potentially new geographical configurations of the global economy. Computer-based technological advances have made it possible for certain types of production, capital flows, communication and decision making to become transnational in scope. Activities previously confined geographically can now be instantly coordinated across great

ill-suited for an emerging global economy. This thesis emphasises the economic logic underlying globalisation and argues that it 'denationalises' economies through the establishment of transnational networks of production, trade and finance. Within this thesis are two contrasting interpretations. One is the pro-neo-liberal version, which celebrates the dominance of the market principle over state power. The other is a neo-Marxist view, which sees contemporary globalisation as the triumph of oppressive global capitalism. The geographical implications of the hyperglobalist thesis include new patterns of regional winners and losers. In the creation of these new world geographies, the pro-neo-liberals stress the advantages of global competition. Some spaces within a country may be made worse off as a result of such competition, but other spaces will have a comparative advantage in producing certain goods for global markets. Those holding pro-neo-liberal views tend to see all countries (rich and poor) benefiting from globalisation although everywhere will experience significant restructuring. In contrast, the neo-Marxists believe that global capitalism creates and reinforces inequalities both between and within countries.

Sceptical thesis – sceptics argue that many of the fundamental features and empirical manifestations of global capitalism today remain as they were decades and even centuries ago. Using statistical evidence of world flows of trade, investment and labour from the nineteenth century, sceptics contend that contemporary levels of economic interdependence are by no means historically unprecedented. The sceptics think that 'true' globalisation requires a fully integrated world economy, which remains a long way off. One crucial economic factor of the world economy, labour, remains relatively immobile, particularly compared with capital. Sceptics emphasise the enduring power of national governments to regulate international economic activity. Thus, they regard the early twenty-first century as indicating only heightened levels of internationalisation. Geographically speaking, sceptics see globalisation as increasingly marginalising regions such as the Caribbean that are part of the world periphery. Globalisation provides economic growth for the core economies of the global North, and certain industrialising or natural resource-rich countries of the semi-periphery. However, a whole series of economic and political factors retard the economic growth in peripheral regions such as the Caribbean.

Transformationalist thesis – this interpretation sees globalisation as a powerful transformational force which is responsible for a massive 'shake-out' of societies, economies, institutions of governance, and the world order. The direction of this 'shake-out' remains uncertain, since globalisation is seen as an essentially contingent historical process replete with contradictions. Contemporary processes of globalisation are historically unprecedented such that all governments and societies need to adjust to a world in which there is no longer a clear distinction between international

distances and national boundaries. That time-space compression is made possible by technological breakthroughs should not be interpreted to mean that it plays out in politically or socially neutral ways. On the contrary, the capacity for, and the interest in, taking advantage of time-space compression is distributed highly unequally. In particular, corporate and individual capital emanating from core countries takes greatest advantage of time-space compression.

To capture the notion of economic actors operating on a world scale, we suggest replacing the more familiar term 'the multinational corporation' (MNC) with 'the transnational corporation' (TNC) (Dicken 1998). The evidence of global corporate power is clear. Although the world's 200 largest TNCs employ just 0.3 per cent of the total population, they now represent 28 per cent of global economic activity (Lietzner 2001). Relatedly, there is also increasing income inequality, as corporate owners and investors profit from TNC activity. In 1998, for example, the world's three richest people collectively had assets worth \$156 billion. These were Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft (not coincidentally, a computer software giant judged monopolistic by the US Supreme Court), and Warren Buffett of the global insurance and investment firm Berkshire Hathaway. Their wealth is as much as the combined GDPs of the world's 43 poorest countries, home to 600 million people (UNDP 1999). The concentration of economic power just described is related to the advantages and powers that time-space compression delivers to those able to tap into it. TNCs coordinate production across national boundaries, benefit from differences in resources and regulations between the states involved, and switch activities (for example, labour deployment, transfer pricing) between states in pursuit of the firm's interests (see Box 9.1 on Enron's methods; Dicken 1998).

A key point to take from the above paragraphs is that TNCs (as well as individual capital), through their capacity to exploit time-space compression, have accrued certain advantages *vis-à-vis* national political actors, whose powers derive from immobile jurisdictions. Indeed, this imbalance has many impacts on the relationship between globalised economic actors and localised political actors. Globalised economic actors are now better able to reduce state regulatory oversight, and to move capital in and out of jurisdictions as they see fit. States are less able to tax mobile capital, and are therefore forced to downsize, which further weakens their authority. In turn, global capital has become involved in a greater range of activities, from the privatisation of state assets to a range of offshore activities made lucrative by the reduction in state oversight and regulation. Labour too is less mobile than capital and is therefore at a growing disadvantage.

What is the relevance of contemporary globalisation, as we have described it, for the Caribbean region? Time-space compression is highly uneven across global regions. Access and participation are highly correlated with a country's position in the world-system hierarchy. Core countries, especially their global cities (Taylor *et al.* 1999), are much more connected than peripheral regions. Concerns about airline transportation accessibility loom large in the Caribbean and are discussed later in the chapter. Furthermore, the roles that actors and interests

from different regions play in transnational interactions are also hierarchically arranged. Core countries play most of the high-end, high-value and decision-making roles, whereas peripheral countries are involved mainly at the low end, concerning low-value and labour-intensive activities.

This chapter therefore primarily focuses on the way that advanced electronics-based communications and computer technologies have influenced activities in the Caribbean. These activities certainly include a range of economic sectors, but also the related policy responses. The four main themes are:

- the globalised origins and history of the Caribbean region in the plantation economies;
- new global divisions of labour, and mainly addressing the region's export-oriented apparel factories;
- the mass media, especially the print media, and air transportation;
- Caribbean transnational corporations (TNCs) and how they are faring in the globalisation era.

These globalisation issues are united by the fact that they involve transnational capital flows in and out of the Caribbean. Many of the issues discussed here have behind them an impetus on the part of transnational capital to invest in the Caribbean region so as to avoid some of the regulations and restrictions in the legal codes of core countries. The regulations and restrictions pertain to employee wages and benefits, and rights, finance and various profit-making activities. At the same time as transnational capital goes offshore to avoid these restrictions, it remains bound to those core countries because they represent the world's largest consumer markets for the products of that capital. This world-system hierarchical relationship holds true over a wide time frame and for a wide range of products. It can be applied to the slave plantations producing sugar for Western Europe, the factories employing low-wage labour to sew garments for the United States, and the Internet firms providing offshore tax havens or gambling opportunities for US clients, which were discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.

Globalisation and the Caribbean past (sixteenth to twentieth centuries)

For Caribbean people, all the talk today about the uniqueness of the present era of globalisation is cause to chuckle. They know their histories, and realise they have been through many earlier rounds of globalisation. The Caribbean region is shaped now, as it has been under previous phases of capitalism, by the ideas and actions of outside investors and political leaders. This chapter therefore looks to the Caribbean's past experience with globalisation for clues to its present and future prospects.

Historically, the Caribbean is perhaps the most globalised world region. Since the 1500s it has been controlled by outside powers, based economically on

of Liberia, Malta or the Bahamas to factories owned by South Koreans but located in the Dominican Republic, where female sewers are reliable, inexpensive and without union representation. In fact, this Asia–Caribbean–US triangle is one of the world's most important inter-regional production networks (Bonacich 1994; Pantoflas 2001).

Economic geographers and sociologists have labelled and conceptualised these multi-step labour and production processes. They are defined alternatively as extended commodity chains (to emphasise the networks of people, firms and states behind the products), or as vertically disintegrated production (to emphasise the segments or nodes of production, which are often discrete in terms of knowledge, control and ownership) (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994; Johnston *et al.* 1994).

As we continue to assess the distinctiveness of the current round of global restructuring, it is important to note, as the globalisation sceptics have emphasised, that a complex division of labour and production across international borders is not itself new (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1994). What is new is the number of commodities involved, their contributions to global trade, the accelerated speed of transactions, and the reduced costs of movement. Note further that the commodities conceptualised in this way include not only things conventionally manufactured, but also much more. In the current era of globalisation, they encompass an array of services from tourism, other entertainment such as music and festivals, agriculture and medicine, to computers, data processing, offshore banking and e-commerce. The diverse list of globalised commodities points to the fact that divisions of labour and production are also shifting rapidly in terms of where, how and what. Any production advantages or investor interests in the Caribbean are likely to be highly ephemeral. Caribbean policy making becomes especially difficult in this context, and the experience of the workers in export-oriented activities becomes highly volatile, as the examples in this chapter illustrate.

For now, we should return to the above example of the global voyage of a conventional commodity, a shirt. It is highly relevant to the Caribbean's recent experience with globalisation. More than any other industry, apparel factories have relocated to the Caribbean (and Central America) during recent decades. This foreign investment has been the principal response to policy efforts to find new productive roles in evolving global commodity chains. Indeed, the 'export market niche' strategy of neo-liberal development is all about identifying specialised roles in current global trade (Klak 1998a, 1998b). Unfortunately, as apparel exemplifies and as Chapter 8 discussed, the Caribbean has been able to contribute to the new global economy primarily at the low end of the value-added continuum. At the same time, global consumer culture has much more thoroughly infiltrated the region. The result is strong Caribbean domestic demand for imported consumer goods, mainly from the USA, and huge negative trade balances. Even the region's most industrialised country, Trinidad and Tobago, faces this problem. Its exports of petroleum products, steel and other manufactured goods to the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico give it a huge intra-regional trade surplus. But this is more

imported labour, cleared to create monocultural landscapes of sugar cane, bananas or other crops, and reliant on the import of virtually everything else needed to sustain local populations (Richardson 1992; Mandle 1996). Caribbean sugar cane processing was industrialised before European production was. Because all dimensions of Caribbean society were exogenously constructed and transplanted there, the culture of Afro-Caribbean people from the outset has been detached from its historical and geographical roots, and therefore modern and global. In other words, the organisation of Caribbean societies and their associated production systems have for half a millennium been devoted to distant markets and profit-making demands. During centuries of colonial rule, Caribbean culture emerged as a unique and distinctive result of the myriad contributions of a wide range of African and Asian traditions, West Indian adaptations, and many foreign influences introduced by Europeans or picked up during circular migration for work in other parts of the hemisphere and in Europe (Richardson 1992; Mintz 1996).

For the Caribbean, therefore, current 'globalising' trends represent yet another round of powerful external influences for a region historically shaped by exogenous decisions and events. The Caribbean's historical global integration, modernisation and industrialisation underlie the region's current abject dependency within the world system. The importance of path dependency in world systems theorising leads to the expectation that the Caribbean's historical dependency is an ongoing situation. The historical relationship between the Caribbean and core regions established a pattern that is difficult to break out of today. The Caribbean region is now mostly independent from Europe politically, but it is still reeling under the historical legacies of dependency on outside authorities, suppliers, markets and geopolitical agendas, as the World Trade Organization's banana rulings aptly illustrate (Payne and Sutton 2001). The Caribbean's extreme trade dependency, primarily involving the trade imbalances with the United States shown by the data in Table 8.3, is an important current manifestation of the continuity of external dependency. Now that the entire world has entered the present era of (US-dominated) globalisation, the Caribbean's long-term predicament offers a chronicle of the impacts of exposure to many previous rounds of transformation of global capitalism, and valuable lessons for other economically peripheral regions.

Globalisation and the Caribbean today

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, one distinctive aspect of the global economy today is the integration of production across space and, more importantly, across national borders. The production of a particular consumer good often involves a host of contributors and intermediaries from several world regions. Take the example of a relatively simple item such as a dress shirt. Before it is displayed for sale in a department store in the United States, it may have circumnavigated the globe. A garment begun as cotton grown and processed into fibre in India or China may well have been shipped by companies flying the flag

Box 10.1: A globalisation whodunit

In 1995 and 1996 at least 88 fevered Haitian children under the age of six died mysteriously after their parents gave them a sweet-tasting medicine. After the children weakened from an initial dose of the medicine, their parents, thinking the original fever was worsening, gave them more of the medicine. The children first lost their ability to walk, stand and crawl, and then died of kidney failure. Most were from Cite Soleil, the hemisphere's worst shanty town located near the outskirts of Port-Au-Prince. An international investigation by the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Center for Disease Control eventually discovered the cause. The medicine, which was supposed to be sweetened with glycerin, was actually laced with similar-tasting diethylene glycol, a toxic but common ingredient in antifreeze, solvents and lacquers. Parents had unknowingly poisoned their own children. The investigation traced the poison to Haiti's largest pharmaceutical company, Pharval, which had purchased barrels labelled as glycerin from the Vos shipping company in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Vos had purchased the mislabelled toxin from a German firm, Helm AG. Helm in turn had bought it from SinoChem (China National Chemicals Import and Export Corporation), a state-owned firm and the world's 307th largest TNC. SinoChem was itself supplied by another Chinese firm, but the investigation has been unable to determine which one. The trail has reached a dead end. Neither the US nor the Chinese governments has publicised the name of the firm that originally produced and mislabelled the substance. US Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's explanation for the non-disclosure is that 'the only consideration that is important in Washington DC is the money that is involved in the US-China trade'. Because the production costs of the toxin are less than half that of glycerin, the mislabelling may well have been motivated by profit (Beck 1997; Public Citizen 1997).

than offset by a continuing trade deficit with the United States, totaling \$1.3 billion in 1998 (CARICOM 2000).

For many of those imported consumer goods, it is difficult to track their entire production paths because they change hands so often (Box 10.1). Under the veil of anonymity, consumer standards and safety can be compromised. But that assumes that there actually are standards to uphold. With commodity chains increasingly fragmented and extended across many national territories, individuals may behave ethically and safely within the confines of their legal jurisdiction and/or their narrow knowledge of those affected, but then cause harm down the line. Legal experts are grappling with a growing number of such cases of questionable transnational accountability. Too often those negatively affected by such transnational labyrinths are poor people. They are least aware of the globalised nature of trade and most vulnerable to any 'cost saving' that compromises safety.

When the women who work in the Caribbean apparel factories learn how much the clothes they sew sell for in the United States, they invariably totter in disbelief. Their surprise comes from a simple comparison of the relatively high prices the consumer products fetch abroad and their own wage rates, which are often below subsistence level. Ironically, Caribbean wage rates are relatively high compared with competing locations for the same factories such as Indonesia or China. The workers' shock points to two telling features of the commodity chains that locate their labour-intensive assembly operations in the Caribbean and Central America. We will next examine each of these features for their lessons concerning the Caribbean's insertion into the capitalist world system in the era of electronic globalisation.

The first feature is the class- and region-based differences in knowledge of, and access to, the mechanisms and technologies of time-space compression that underlie this contemporary form of production. There is now an extreme contrast between those that direct the global commodity chains and practically everyone else. On the one hand, the factory owners are mostly from core or semiperipheral countries, and are globally oriented and aware. On the other hand, the direct producers in the capitalist global economy have a very narrow understanding and awareness of the global commodity chains in which they participate. The factory workers' limited vision extends to their products' consumers in core countries, and to most other people living in the Caribbean. People in the USA shopping at Target, K mart or Wal-Mart know little about the conditions behind the products. Similarly, few people in the Caribbean outside those working in the factories even know that their island exports products to Disney, Sears or Victoria's Secret, let alone how sales prices compare with wage rates.

The second feature is the decoupling of production and consumption. In the heyday of industrial capitalism in core countries, workers earned enough to buy the products of their own labour, and that of other factories. Workers' earnings were, in Marxist terms, enough to reproduce their own labour power. For the export-oriented factories of the Caribbean and many other peripheral countries, that basic principle of industrial capitalism no longer holds. Box 10.2 explains how women working in garment factories manage to survive on such paltry wages.

From 1990 to 1994, the hyper-exploitation of female factory workers illustrated in Box 10.2 was the basis for substantial growth in CARICOM's manufacturing exports to the United States. Exports grew from \$283 million to \$508 million over those four years. However, for many female factory workers in St Lucia and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the bad situation described in Box 10.2 has only got worse. Despite the fact that wages are below subsistence level, they are nonetheless considered high compared with many other countries outside the core that are competing for the same investment. Since 1 January 1994 and the implementation of NAFTA, foreign owners have closed Caribbean factories and relocated

Box 10.2: How to survive where wages are below subsistence level

For the typical female factory worker in the Caribbean, the pay level is less than what is required to meet their basic needs. These women are forced to resort to a wide range of additional and creative survival strategies. The example of St Lucia helps to reveal how the factory workers and their families survive (Figure 10.2). For many St Lucian women these strategies include some combination of wage work, informal sector activities, homework, backyard gardening, food provision by relatives and neighbours, monthly support payments from one or more fathers of the children in the household, and rural living to minimise the cost of living. The factory pay rates are not high enough to allow many of the workers to live in an urban area, where public services and other amenities are better but rents are higher and subsistence food production is not possible.

Figure 10.2 Typical monthly wage and expenses (in US\$) for female workers in export-oriented factories in St Lucia

1.	Wages: \$148; plus \$74 child support (if father provides it)
2.	Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. rent for housing in the countryside (cheaper than in town): \$87 b. utilities: \$37 c. minibus transportation to and from work (EC\$1.50 per ride): \$22 d. other costs (these must be covered by the \$126 of remaining monthly income, or the equivalent of about \$4.20 per day): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. food: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) supermarket prices are approximately 64% higher than in the U.S. for comparable products (2) women must obtain as much food as possible from subsistence sources (grow own, get donations from family and neighbours, exchange, barter) ii. other children's needs including school supplies, familial health care, clothing, household needs, other transportation costs, entertainment, savings ...

Data source based primarily on figures provided by Theo Van Katwyk, Managing Director of National Gloves, a division of Maine Brand Manufacturing, for workers in his factory; reconciled with data from other factories and the St Lucia National Development Corporation in September 1997; food prices in supermarkets in Castries and Oxford Ohio were compared by the author in November 1997; US\$1 = EC\$2.67.

Source: Klak (1998b)

them to Mexico in large numbers to take advantage of lower wage rates and better access to the North American markets (Pantojas-Garcia 2001). Factory owners have found even lower wage rates in China, Indonesia and other parts of East Asia. Since 1994, CARICOM's manufacturing exports to the USA have fallen

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every year. They stood at \$422 million in 1998, the most recent available year (CARICOM 2000). Many Caribbean factory workers that had underpaid jobs now have no jobs at all.

Both of the features of the global commodity chains described above demonstrate how third world producers and first world consumers are now disconnected. They are separated by distance, borders and ignorance of each other's reality and the commodity chains that link them. Their ignorance helps to perpetuate what is otherwise an unstable and unsustainable, let alone unethical, form of global production and consumption (Hartwick 1998). Compared with the impersonal nature of most components of contemporary mass consumption, Caribbean tourism is an unusual economic sector whereby citizens of the global North visit peripheral countries. But most tourists see little of the islands they visit, because they are mostly confined to cruise ships or to all-inclusive resorts (Chapter 11).

The mass media and communication linkages in the wider Caribbean

In an era of dramatic time-space compression, good intra-regional communication and transportation linkages are essential for Caribbean development. In the light of this concern, the following discussion focuses primarily on the printed news media and commercial airline traffic. The intent is to illustrate some of the broad patterns of information flows, media politics, connectivity, external influence and local expression. We have already noted that the widespread availability of cable TV stations from the United States has provided an additional avenue through which the Caribbean is heavily influenced by US culture (Figure 10.1). While US news broadcasts, soap operas, comedy and drama series, and movies dominate television in the English-speaking Caribbean, local TV stations struggle to provide serious local programming. Similar points about regional vulnerability and external influences could be made through the examples of radio, film, Internet access, shipping and other forms of communication and connectivity (see Dunn 1995).

The Caribbean's only region-wide newspaper is the international edition of the *Miami Herald*. That the Caribbean itself has no region-wide daily newspaper comes as little surprise given its geography and history. It is a less industrialised region of small islands separated by vast swaths of sea. The region is also divided by language, culture, national identity and, last but not least, mercantile capitalists-cum-publishers who protect their newspapers' home markets.

None of these obstacles is assuaged by the intra-regional transportation limitations left over from the 'hub-and-spoke' trade and communication patterns of the colonial powers. For the last century, the United States has considered the Caribbean part of its backyard (Kenworthy 1995). Miami, Florida, is the wider Caribbean's regional capital (Portes and Stepick 1993). Consider the commercial

airline linkages that are fundamental to integrating and fostering a regional agenda through CARICOM. The US cities of Miami and, secondarily, San Juan, Puerto Rico, are more accessible (in terms of travel time, trip frequency and cost) to virtually any Caribbean country than they are to each other (Negrón-Muntaner and Grosfoguel 1997). Try to arrange some flights through an Internet travel service to see for yourself. You will find that ticket prices within the Caribbean are often several times higher than for travelling to and from Miami. Many Internet travel services do not even offer round-trip tickets between such CARICOM members' capital cities as Paramaribo, Suriname and Port-au-Prince, Haiti. And if you want to get to Kingston, Jamaica, from Port-au-Prince, add 1000 miles to what would be a 300-mile direct trip because you are routed through Miami.

Concerns about these intra-Caribbean transport limitations prompted the ACS in 1999 to launch a programme called 'Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea'. The programme seeks to establish a region-wide transportation policy and to have resources shared among regional carriers (Pantojas-García 2001). Meanwhile, several developments in the air transport situation are not encouraging. Many government-supported Caribbean regional airlines have lost money. During the 1990s, Air Jamaica stopped serving the southern Caribbean after trying it for only a few months, while several regional airlines have folded. The casualties include Carib Express (it flew for only 15 months), Air Caribbean and, most recently, Guyana 2000 Airlines. Those few Caribbean locations with direct flights from Miami on US carriers in recent years, such as San Juan, Antigua, Grenada and St Lucia, have had to pay for that service with \$1.5 million or more in annual subsidies to the airlines (American and TWA, both owned by AMR Corp.).

The US war on terrorism, and especially its war against Iraq in 2003, only made the economically precarious conditions facing the region's airlines worse. Air Jamaica, after surviving a US\$90 million loss in 2002, saw reservations fall by nearly 40 per cent during the first two weeks of the US assault. This decline forced Air Jamaica to reduce flights to some US cities it regularly services, thereby worsening the airline's decline in passengers (Jacobs 2003). The other two surviving and smaller Caribbean airlines, BWIA and LIAT, are in even worse shape. The already financially strapped governments of the region needed to provide multi-million dollar bailouts to keep them afloat during the first half of 2003, and the two airlines laid off employees and agreed to merge in April 2003 to help them through the crisis. As Jean Holder, secretary-general of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, described the situation: 'It is something of a miracle that LIAT, BWIA and Air Jamaica, which have been teetering on the brink, can remain in business' (*Financial Times Investor* 2003). These events vividly demonstrate how the Caribbean region's enduring external dependency leads to economic crises triggered by faraway events that have nothing directly to do with the Caribbean. Furthermore, the impacts of dependency appear to be accentuated and more immediate in the era of globalisation.

The 'hub-and-spoke' pattern, which applies to the flights in the Caribbean by the major international airlines, carries over to the print news media. As one

of the major US dailies, the *Miami Herald* has had access to the capital, transportation and communication linkages, and electronic technologies to overcome the networking obstacles that are endemic to the Caribbean. The newspaper has for decades printed English and Spanish editions, and has distributed them via the commercial aircraft bound from Miami to the island capitals. In the late 1990s it began transmitting its daily paper electronically to the Caribbean. The *Herald* went first by satellite, and now goes more cheaply by the Internet, to the presses of major country-based papers. Newspapers in eight Latin American and Caribbean territories (the Bahamas, Cancun (Mexico), Curaçao/Bonaire, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama and St Maarten) print and circulate the *Herald* locally. The *Herald* is further distributed on a daily basis to proximate islands by passenger boat. Note that the *Miami Herald* has been able to extend and deepen its Caribbean regional presence despite the recent decline across the US newspaper industry (including the *Herald*) owing primarily to falling advertising revenues.

The regional impact of the *Herald* should not be exaggerated, but its availability across the Caribbean is unparalleled and its editorial voice is without competitors at that regional scale. Regarding Caribbean politics, the *Herald* emanates from an environment in south Florida that has been tolerant only of views that are fully anti-Castro and anti-communist, and which favour isolating Cuba. As a *Human Rights Watch/Americas* report on metropolitan Miami remarked on the subject of Cuba, 'only a narrow range of speech is acceptable, and views that go beyond those boundaries may be dangerous to the speaker' (*Human Rights Watch/Americas* 1994). Right-wing terrorists in Miami have for years threatened or punished media voices daring to express other views. Jim Mullin has identified 68 acts of violence by Miami's right-wing Cuban community between 1968 and 2000 (Mullin 2000). As an example of the group's ideology, The *Miami International Edition* on 2 June 2001 carried a photo of Cuban American singer Gloria Estefan wearing a tee-shirt saying 'CUBA B.C.' (Before Castro). Asked why she created the tee-shirt, Estefan replied, 'I wanted to celebrate the Cuba when everybody was happy'. Research provides an alternative view of Cuba in the 1940s and 1950s by documenting the prostitution, corruption, US mafia activities, poverty, and gender and racial inequalities (Pérez 1988; Cirules 1993; Segre *et al.* 1997).

Similar to the *Miami Herald* in terms of their conservative politics and their perspective emanating from the core are US weekly news magazines. The international editions of such magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek* have for long been sold at Caribbean newsstands and been read by higher-income Caribbean people. The region-wide presence of conservative news sources from the USA influences how Caribbean people see the world and themselves.

The local print media are largely confined to individual islands. Caribbean newspapers demonstrate some qualities that are valuable to open political debate and expression. Much of the print news media in many European ex-colonies is modelled after European traditions of journalism. The Caribbean is well represented by the more politically conscious news media traditions that come out

of the liberal democratic societies of Europe. Representing that tradition are the *Trinidad Express* and the *Trinidad Guardian*, and two Bajan newspapers, the *Nation* and the *Barbados Advocate* (see the following section on 'Caribbean TNCs' regarding ownership of some of these newspapers). The *Advocate* has been a long-time supporter of the social democratic Barbados Labour Party (BLP). Both islands have literacy rates over 97 per cent, well-developed journalistic traditions and significant readerships. There are also some quality print media in the non-independent Caribbean. French dailies are distributed and read in Guadeloupe and Martinique, for example.

As is the case for many cities in the USA and the UK, several Caribbean countries have their own afternoon newspaper tabloids that are widely read. Some of these tabloids are notorious for their photos of nude women and their sensationalist stories. Perhaps less well known, however, is that many Caribbean tabloids also present politically informative points of view. For example, the *Bomb* in Trinidad has always been a successful outlet for political critiques and exposés of political wrongdoing. The *Star* in St Lucia also has a long tradition as a watchdog and oppositional newspaper.

The Caribbean is also well represented by long-time conservative institutions such as Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner*, founded in 1834. The clearest and most decisive impact of the *Gleaner's* conservative leanings was its 'ideological war', in the words of one of the paper's senior contributors (John 1999), against the Democratic Socialist regime of Michael Manley in the 1970s. While the CIA's destabilising interventions against Manley are better known (Blum 1986), the *Gleaner's* consistent portrayal of a society out of control were no less significant. The paper's daily and graphic presentation of chaos and violence during the final years of the Manley government helped to ensure a huge electoral win for the conservative Jamaican Labour Party in 1980 (Meeks 2000).

Caribbean TNCs

How are the major indigenous firms of the Caribbean faring in the era of electronic globalisation? Are they competitive in the fast-paced and fluid international environment? How committed are Caribbean TNCs to regional development? The region can boast of many diversified firms with deep historical roots that offer an array of quality products, ranging from foods and beverages to chemicals, construction materials and professional services. The growing openness of borders and regions, however, suggests that these firms be measured by wider international standards. Some comparisons are therefore made with major US and global TNCs.

Of course Caribbean economies and firms are small by global standards, but the scale of difference is worth considering as the hemisphere and the world move towards greater openness, more all-encompassing free-trade agreements and head-to-head competition. As Jamaica's ambassador to the US, Richard Bernal, pointed out in US Congressional testimony over FTAA, 'The seven largest

US companies each have sales revenue larger than the combined GDP of the 21 Caribbean and Central American countries' (Bernal 1999). The Caribbean's largest firm in terms of sales is Neal and Massey of Trinidad and Tobago. It is highly diversified and owns operations in more countries (14) than any Caribbean firm besides Goddard (discussed later). Neal and Massey's *annual sales* are little more than General Motors' sales *per day* (Table 10.1).

Similarly, the USA's largest employer, Wal-Mart, with a staff of 675,000, is 100 times bigger than the Caribbean's larger employer, Lascelles deMercado, with 6,800 workers. Lascelles deMercado is a Jamaican firm involved in liquor, sugar cane, drugs, insurance and car sales. The family traces back to Spanish immigration to the island in the eighteenth century. A size disparity of 100–150/1 continues down the list of major US and Caribbean corporations (Table 10.1).

Comparisons can also be made with major global TNCs. The 500th largest TNC in the *Fortune Magazine* annual list is The Limited, a US clothing retailer. It had assets of US\$4 billion and sales of US\$9.7 billion in 1999. No Caribbean firm approaches this size. With these proportions in mind, we briefly profile a few of the other top Caribbean firms that are involved in manufacturing, drawing from a range of sources, most notably *Executive Time Magazine* (2001a). All but two of the top 20 firms are headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica or Barbados.

The Ansa McAl conglomerate from Trinidad and Tobago ranks second in the region in both sales and employment (Table 10.1). If measured in terms of its assets of more than US\$500 million, Ansa McAl ranks first. It has been one of the region's most aggressive firms in terms of acquiring assets in other countries, particularly Barbados. Perhaps best known for Carib Beer, Ansa McAl also produces bottles, chemicals and building materials, invests in banking, insurance and real estate, sells cars, imports and exports a range of products, and publishes the *Trinidad Guardian* and *Barbados Advocate* daily newspapers.

The Grace Kennedy conglomerate of Jamaica ranks third in the region in sales and eighth in employment. It specialises in food production, distribution and finance, and has been judged as one of the Caribbean's most consistent performers over the decades. Barbados Shipping and Trading is that country's largest corporation, and the region's seventh and ninth largest in sales and employment, respectively. It specialises in retailing, distribution, manufacturing, maintenance services and insurance. Goddard of Barbados ranks 11th in sales and seventh in employment. Goddard is an especially diversified company involved in catering, importing and exporting, food and beverages, car rental and real estate. It owns firms in more Caribbean and Latin American countries (18) than any other Caribbean company. In 1999, Goddard had \$210 million in assets, while its sales grew to \$354 million.

The largest firm in Puerto Rico, Popular Inc., is considerably larger than any entity in the English-speaking Caribbean. Its sales revenues were \$2.2 billion in 1999. Popular Inc. is a diversified financial firm involved in banking, mortgages, insurance, leasing and investing. It has offices in San Juan, Caracas, Miami and Santo Domingo, and clients in 12 Latin American countries. Still, Popular Inc.

does not approach the size of the world's 500 largest firms. It is about a quarter of the size of the 500th ranked firm, The Limited. In fact, if the 300 largest Puerto Rican firms were considered as one, in aggregate they would rank just behind the world's 206th largest firm, the drug and bathroom products firm Bristol-Myers Squibb, with \$20.22 billion in revenue (Lozano 2000).

Caribbean TNCs are indeed small compared with the global Fortune 500 firms, but unlike the global giants, their capital investment portfolio tends to stay within the region. Caribbean TNCs therefore contribute more positively than global firms to regional development. In contrast, global TNCs tend to expropriate the capital and profits from non-core regions in a more 'counter-development' dependent relationship. While development economists commonly bemoan the lack of domestic capital in the global South, domestic/regional TNCs such as those of the Caribbean are providing much-needed local control of capital investments in agricultural industries, manufacturing, services and commerce.

We leave the last words on the future prospects of Caribbean TNCs to CARICOM. As regional economic borders become increasingly porous, and as the need arises for Caribbean firms to be competitive beyond the region, CARICOM sees the only hope for the future for Caribbean TNCs through regional integration of production, which has thus far proved elusive:

The challenge facing the Region remains the imperative of implementing programmes to make its productive sectors, both in goods and services, internationally competitive. This requires a fundamental paradigm shift in the modes of business organization.

The trends in CARICOM's trade with the EU is indicative of the stagnant or declining relative position of the Region in the EU market both in terms of growth and importance. No single CARICOM country has the resources - human, technological, financial, or otherwise - to effectively respond (CARICOM 2000).

Conclusion and policy implications

As has been the case throughout Caribbean history, the region is now largely shaped by political and economic structures established for the benefit of outside interests or local elites. As with previous rounds of globalisation, most policies within the region are reactions to outside stimuli, rather than proactive attempts to promote sustained development. The potential for developmental success through such reactive tactics is greatly hampered in the current era of electronic globalisation. The world is growing more unequal at all levels (Wade 2001), and it is harder for peripheral regions such as the Caribbean to make relative gains. Much of the capital that the Caribbean has recently been able to attract is fleeing regulation. Such capital is unlikely to provide a basis for the region's sustained development. The exodus of apparel factories over recent years in pursuit of lower wages and

Table 10.1 The 20 largest Caribbean corporations

Rank	Corporation	Sales revenues (in millions of \$)	Rank	Employees	Corporation	Rank	#1 in US for comparison
1	Neal & Massey (T&T)	500.0	1	6,800	Lascelles Demerardo (Ja)	1	1
2	Grace Kennedy & Co. (Ja)	321.4	2	6,000	Neal & Massey (T&T)	2	2
3	NCB Group (Ja)	293.7	3	5,000	Jamaica Producers Group (Ja)	3	3
4	telecom of Jamaica (Ja)	250.0	4	4,500	telecom of Jamaica (Ja)	4	4
5	Jamaica Producers Group (Ja)	243.5	5	4,435	Ansa McAl Ltd (T&T)	5	5
6	Jamaica Producers Group (Ja)	229.0	6	4,355	NCB Group (Ja)	6	6
7	Barbados Shipping & Trading (B'dos)	184.6	7	2,783	Goddard Enterprises (B'dos)	7	7
8	Atlantic Tele-Network (St Croix)	169.2	8	2,700	Grace Kennedy (Ja)	8	8
9	Trinidad & Tobago Unit Trust Corp. (T&T)	165.8	9	2,500	Barbados Shipping & Trading (B'dos)	9	9
10	Bank of Nova Scotia (Ja)	159.0	10	2,223	Royal Bank of T&T (T&T)	10	10
11	Goddard Enterprises (B'dos)	138.4	11	2,161	Republic Bank Ltd (T&T)	11	11
12	Lascelles Demerardo (Ja)	128.4	12	1,591	Bank of Nova Scotia (Ja)	12	12
13	Republic Bank Ltd (T&T)	117.9	13	1,572	Banks DIH Ltd (B'dos)	13	13
14	Desnoes & Geddes (Ja)	108.9	14	1,500	Desnoes & Geddes (Ja)	14	14
15	Jamaica Broilers Group (Ja)	91.2	15	1,300	Life of Jamaica Ltd (Ja)	15	15
16	Barbados External Telecom (B'dos)	86.7	16	1,100	Atlantic Network Inc. (St Croix)	16	16
17	Barbados Light & Power (B'dos)	80.0	17	1,100	Demerata Distillers Ltd (Guyana)	17	17
18	Little Switzerland, Inc. (St Thomas)	62.43	18	1,022	First Citizens Bank Ltd (T&T)	18	18
19	Carib Cement Co. (Ja)	58.54	19	1,000	Bank of Commerce (T&T)	19	19
20	Jamaica Flour Mills Ltd (Ja)	28,818.0	20	884	Bank of Nova Scotia (T&T)	20	20

Data are for the English-speaking Caribbean in 1996; key: T&T = Trinidad and Tobago; Ja = Jamaica; B'dos = Barbados Source: Bernal (1999)

Rank	Corporation	#1 in US for comparison	Rank	#20 in US for comparison
1	Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	675,000	1	141,700
2	Dayton Hudson Corp.		2	

better market access should provide a broader lesson about relying on the various types of mobile capital discussed in this chapter and the previous one on offshore services.

The most promising ventures for regional development are likely to be found among those with strong local roots and commitments. These might be found amongst Caribbean TNCs, and perhaps the international success of the Jamaica-based Sandals group of resorts could serve as one model to which regional firms can aspire (see Chapter 11 on tourism). Regional development might also be fostered through the newly emerging non-traditional exporters from the region, local media outlets, and locally run e-commerce operations. This is not to romanticise local firms. They need to be scrutinised carefully and supported selectively by state policy based on their potential longer-term contributions, their commitment to collaborating with policy makers and other local firms with forward and backward linkages, and their interest in contributing to meeting national and especially CARICOM developmental goals. This kind of targeted, strategic state support follows the East Asian development model. It runs counter to the dominant neo-liberal way preferred by the World Bank and the United States, which treats all firms equally (Wade 1996). Policies that 'treat all firms the same' spread scarce public resources too thin and waste subsidies on footloose or unscrupulous investors. This leaves inadequate resources to target and support the most promising firms (Klak 1998b). On this neo-liberal 'level playing field', bigger, more mobile and more internationally experienced foreign firms dominate (Klak 1995). The Caribbean has enough negative experience coddling footloose and exploitative firms while neglecting the most promising ones. It is time to try a different development model.

What does the future of corporate globalisation hold for the Caribbean? A western hemisphere region-wide free-trade zone looms on the horizon. But this involves a negotiation process on very uneven grounds. The hemispheric power disparities are hard to exaggerate. The United States is but one of 35 sovereign states in the hemisphere, but its GDP comprises 76 per cent of the total. CARICOM countries account for only 0.2 per cent of total hemispheric GDP. Adding in the six other small countries between Mexico and South America still does not reach 1 per cent of hemispheric GDP (Girvan 1999).

Unfortunately, the rules and regulations recently drafted for the FTAA (FTAA – Negotiating Group on Investment 2001) reproduce and extend the neo-liberal model with which the Caribbean has ample experience to seek to avoid. That document's chapter on investment greatly facilitates the trans-hemispheric mobility of capital and capitalists. International military incursions are allowed to secure and protect investments. 'Key personnel' (read: TNC management) are allowed to move freely throughout the hemisphere unencumbered by national discretion or even passports. Labour is not similarly mobilised. The document desires to outlaw any 'buy local' campaign. For their part, the small countries are seeking special short-term protections within the FTAA. The intent is to buffer the

immediate and devastating impacts of head-on competition with foreign TNCs. But how many concessions the small countries can obtain remains in doubt.

Useful websites

The Ansa McAl (www.ftol.co.tt/ansamcal/) conglomerate from Trinidad and Tobago is the region's second largest firm and perhaps the most diversified; it produces beer, bottles, chemicals and building materials, invests in banking, insurance and real estate, sells cars, imports and exports a range of products, and publishes regional newspapers.

New Internationalist (www.newint.org/) is a monthly news magazine critical of top-down economic globalisation and sympathetic to building capacities to resist and define local priorities at the grassroots level.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2002) *Globalisation and Development*, available at www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/0/10030/P10030.xml&xsl=/tpl/_p9f.xml&bbase=/tpl/_top-bottom.xml. A major report providing an overview of globalisation's economic impacts and restructuring patterns, and the relative successes, failures and continuing vulnerabilities of Latin American and Caribbean states.

The World Bank (www.worldbank.org/data/) collects and makes publicly available some of the best data on globalisation trends.

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