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Persistent Voices: Feminist Efforts to Engender Paradigms of
Development in Jamaica

by

Suzanne Judith Lenon, B.A. Honours

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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submitted by Suzanne Judith Lenon as partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rudner', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Martin Rudner, Director
The Norman Paterson School
of International Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daiva Stasiulis', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Daiva Stasiulis, Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This piece of research focuses on feminist contributions to meanings of development in Jamaica. Specifically it examines the various strategies and forms of feminist activism employed to engender both a dominant and a transformative paradigm. I argue that the embrace of neoliberalism by the Jamaican state imposes a conservatizing force upon feminist strategies and significantly shapes such activism within both paradigms. The terrain of social action is generally limited within such a political economy. Hence there is a de-politicizing of strategies to achieve gender equality within the dominant paradigm, and marginalization of cultural forms of expression in the transformative paradigm. The neo-liberal political economy further exacerbates and heightens unequal social relations among women based on race and class by limiting ability to participate, and by creating conditions in which these unequal relations are themselves reproduced by those working for a liberatory agenda.

For Shelagh and Thomas

Dearest...My life may seem rough and bare, but there is something to compensate one for every hardship and trial. You must come to see me, though, for it is the spirit of the West that charms one, and I can't convey it to you, try as I may. It is a shy wild spirit and will not leave its native mountains and rolling prairies and, though I try to get it into my letters, I can't. I must warn you that if it once charms you, it becomes an obsession and one grows very lonely away from it. No Westerner who has felt its fascination ever is really content again in the conventional East.

Mary E. Inderwick
Pincher Creek, Alberta
1884

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In *The Shoemaker and the Elves*, the Brothers Grimm recount the tale of two benevolent elves who secretly toil at night to help a shoemaker through hard times. Even after the elves have danced their way out of the workshop, their magic remains to help the shoemaker and his wife onto a richer and more comfortable life. Although no elves worked on my thesis while I slept, family and many friends did nourish my mind and soul throughout the two years of this project, and weave their magic to enrich my life in countless ways. In particular, I offer great thanks to my Mom and Dad, for words of encouragement, generous material and financial support, and for leading lives committed to social justice; to Natasha Lenon, for re-kindled sisterhood and for your courage; to André Fontaine, for dishes washed, groceries bought and most important, for your blessed friendship and walking with me in times of change; and to Franca Gucciardi, a committed feminist, friend *e mia sorella nella lotta*: you handled my joys, grief and stresses of thesis writing with clarity, humour and wisdom - *Grazie*, SF.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Feminist activism and scholarship in the field of international development emerged in a context of social struggle and agitation in both the North and the South. Guided by assumptions of solidarity and sisterhood, this activism and scholarship were born out of an urgency to develop solutions to the problems of survival faced by women in the Third World. To this end, feminist academic and political practices have been the first to point out the gender impacts of national and international development policies on local political, economic and social structures.

Linking macro-economics to experiences at the micro level of households, feminist practices attempt to integrate the personal and the political, private and public domains, the household and local and global economies, thereby articulating and re-conceptualizing definitions and meanings of development. Indeed, the myriad of feminist engagements with the field of development studies has effectively questioned the ideology and paradigm of Western modernization and its utility for the political, economic and social empowerment of women.

A diverse women's movement in the English-speaking Caribbean exemplifies feminist efforts to re-conceptualize development in the region and their own particular countries. Here, feminist voices are anchored in historical and current political economic realities of this region. Caribbean women have created grassroots organizations to confront economic restructuring and poverty; they have sought and built collaboration between women's NGOs and government-established women's bureaux, which in turn network with regional university-based women's programmes. Caribbean women are also visibly active in

international fora, participating in the creation of feminist networks such as Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).

This study focuses on the strategies employed by feminist activists as they engage with and contribute to debates over the meaning of development in Jamaica. The terms of the wider development debate are, on the one side, provided by a paradigm that seeks to further the region's incorporation into the world economy, calling for a reduction in state intervention and less support for measures to reduce poverty and other social inequities. On the other side is a paradigm that seeks to elaborate development models aimed at achieving social and economic equality, self-determination, and popular participation in political processes.

My aim in this thesis is to highlight and analyze the heterogeneity of voices engaging in such a debate in Jamaica. Such heterogeneity is testimony to the critical work of a broad sector of women who define 'development' in their own terms, countering hegemonic and androcentric definitions. Indeed, women are not a homogeneous group; feminist goals have often meant very different things to women of different races and classes. An original theme of the research interviews and questions was concerned with "feminist development discourse" in Jamaica. Over the course of the interviews it became apparent, however, that there is no one singular or coherent feminist development discourse in Jamaica.¹ For example,

This concept of a feminist discourse...I don't think that it could be said that it exists

¹ Baksh-Soodeen (1998) situates the dominant discourse within Caribbean feminist politics (both theory and practice) as Afro-centric, as feminism in the English-speaking Caribbean has given pre-eminence to the historical experiences and present day situations of Afro-Caribbean peoples.

in the way that you project it. It has a more coherent ring to it the way you put it than exists...There are ideas developing within movements of women in the context of the 1990s as against the 1970s, where we talked of "the women's movement". Today we can talk more about "movements of women", areas of sentiment and action among women that might converge (Vassell. interview).

What exists, then, are a spectrum of strategies and forms of feminist activism to engender paradigms of development, persistent voices that engage, challenge and subvert. The concept of 'engendering' development paradigms is employed to denote feminist efforts to shift gender perspectives and women's concerns from their marginal location, in both institutional and ideological terms, to the centre of the development agenda; and to promote the rethinking of priorities and goals of development (Jahan 1995).

The existence of varied strategies and forms of feminist engagements with development raises the second aim of this thesis, namely to explore the power relations which construct differences among women. An enduring feature of the Jamaican women's movement is divisions among women based on race and class. In conducting research, I wished to explore further the implications of such social relations for feminist political practices. In analyzing the interview data, I was confronted by the seemingly lack of more radical feminist initiatives and visions for change. There is limited room for manoeuvre at this particular moment in Jamaica's history.

I argue in this thesis that the embrace of neoliberalism by the Jamaican state imposes a conservatizing force upon feminist strategies and significantly shapes such activism. Its philosophical hegemony and its overbearing discourse of economics present formidable challenges to feminist development initiatives. This conservatizing force is manifested in a number of ways including a de-politicizing of strategies to achieve gender equality within

the dominant paradigm, and marginalization of cultural forms of expression within the transformative paradigm. I also argue that the neoliberal political economic environment further exacerbates and heightens social divisions among women. It works to legitimize particular voices while excluding others, and creates conditions in which these divisions are themselves reproduced by people working for a liberatory agenda. The thesis is organized to develop my arguments as follows.

Chapter Two maps out the research practice of the thesis. I highlight debates between feminist epistemologies and state my own epistemological position based on this debate. I outline key themes of feminist methodology, namely positionality, subjectivity, qualitative methods, and research for change. Each of these themes is pertinent to cross-cultural research, particularly in the field of development studies. In exploring each theme, I highlight how each manifested itself within my own field research in Jamaica. The chapter then turns to a more detailed account and analysis of the actual process of undertaking the research itself. I examine the inception of the study; gearing up for data gathering; issues involved in gathering the data; and finally preparing for and doing analysis of the data. Here, I explore struggles and issues around interpretation of interview texts. Examination of the limitations of the research are woven throughout the chapter.

Chapter Three addresses the content of the debate over the nature of development processes in Jamaica (and the Caribbean) which is often articulated with reference to paradigms. As such, this chapter provides a framework of analysis which identifies key actors, salient themes and prevalent discourses within two development paradigms currently operating in Jamaica: a dominant paradigm premised on a neo-liberal philosophy, and a

transformative paradigm premised on the notion of human-centred development. The first section of the chapter briefly traces the emergence of the increasingly hegemonic neoliberal paradigm in Jamaica. Jamaica's *National Industrial Policy* (1996) is scrutinized to extricate the salient themes, actors and discourses of neoliberalism. The second section delineates the contours of a transformative paradigm, the actors involved and the themes articulated which seek to challenge the hegemony of neoliberalism.

Charting these paradigms provides a sense of the macro contexts within which feminist strategies to engender development are deployed. Chapter Four elicits the salient themes in the debate between the two most influential feminist theories of development in Jamaica, namely Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD). It first briefly traces the historical background of WID and GAD in order to contextualize their emergence in the field of international development. WID seeks to correct women's disadvantaged status within the prevailing mainstream development paradigm. GAD is situated within an alternative paradigm which seeks to transform current social, political, economic and gender relationships. Chapter Four then provides a summary overview of WID theory, focusing on its liberal feminist roots transported into the international arena. How WID theory plays itself out in the Caribbean context as a means of understanding women's experiences of development is also elaborated upon. Finally, the chapter delineates the principle tenets of GAD theory and then examines its application to understanding development from a gender perspective in Jamaica. Feminist theories of development have provided critical insights into the gender biases of development paradigms. The assumptions inherent in the theoretical bodies of WID and GAD underpin feminist practice in Jamaica

with respect to engendering development paradigms. Critically examining them contributes to an understanding of the various forms and strategies employed in such a goal.

Chapter Five is concerned with illuminating the ways in which women are differentiated from each other on the basis of race and class. These two social relations are a ubiquitous feature of feminism in Jamaica. The chapter begins with a brief discussion on the correlation between class and race in Jamaica. It then maps out the terrain of Jamaica's economy, distinguishing three spatial circuits to illuminate the partly autonomous, partly intersecting modes of economic re/production: the household-domestic, the domestic-national, and the transnational-enclave. This framework is employed here so to more fully situate women as economic actors. The purpose of the chapter is to contextualize how the varied forms of feminist agency as race and class correlations as well as the various modes of economic re/production women participate in bear upon the character of feminist participation to engender development paradigms.

Chapter Six addresses feminist efforts which seek to render economic and social elements of the dominant paradigm sensitive to gender issues. It examines two distinct efforts by feminists to integrate gender issues into the prevailing dominant paradigm: the Consultative Group on Gender which focuses primarily on mainstreaming gender into economic policy, and the Women's Centre for Jamaica Foundation which focuses on social development within a neo-liberal paradigm. The chapter first briefly traces the relationship between feminism and the Jamaican state in order to contextualize the existence of feminist agency within this paradigm. It then outlines the activities of the Consultative Group on Gender, critically analyzing both the gains and limitations involved in mainstreaming gender.

The chapter proceeds to examine the gains and limitations of the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation in its efforts to integrate a feminist perspective within the dominant paradigm.

In Chapter Six, I argue that the hegemonic neoliberal philosophy guiding Jamaican development policy shapes the form of women's movements, strategies undertaken, and the spaces created for mobilization. First, it presents enormous challenges for activism and serves to weaken radical feminist visions of change. Second, it impacts upon who is able to participate in sustained activism and impinges upon whose voices and knowledge are heard and deemed valid. As such, the current neoliberal political economy also heightens the prevalence of relations of oppression among women based on race and class. Furthermore, strategies deemed to be the most politically feasible at this time themselves exacerbate these relations.

Chapter Seven analyzes one contemporary instance of feminist engagement with a transformative paradigm, namely the Sistren Theatre Collective. Caribbean feminism as a whole has been central in shaping the meaning of a transformative development paradigm within individual countries and as a region. Through the use of testimonies, participatory methodologies and by foregrounding women's experiences, Sistren imbues three principle tenets of the transformative paradigm, namely self-determination, equity and participation. Chapter Seven discusses Sistren's history and current programming activities as well as its cultural approach. It examines some of the specific challenges posed by a neoliberal economy to Sistren's work, specifically the marginalization of culture as a source of knowledge and the commodification of culture. Finally, the chapter argues that Sistren and its constituency challenge feminist activism in Jamaica, specifically around relations of power and privilege,

and act as a catalyst for transforming these.

Chapter Eight provides concluding remarks about the thesis. It summarizes the principle findings of the research, reflecting upon the lessons that can be learned from feminist engagements with development in Jamaica. Future areas for research are also highlighted. This research project has been a long journey and a process of learning with many twists and turns and moments of reflexivity. The following chapter examines more closely the research practice which informs the body of this study.

Chapter Two: Feminist Research Practice

This chapter orients the reader to the various influences shaping the knowledge produced in this thesis. The first section examines the manner in which debates in feminist epistemologies inform my research practice. Here I also clarify the epistemological framework guiding this research. The second section is structured around four key themes of feminist perspectives on methodology and methods, namely positionality, subjectivity, qualitative methods, and research for change. Each of these themes is pertinent to cross-cultural research, particularly in the field of development studies. In exploring each theme, I highlight and explore how each manifested itself within my own field research in Jamaica. The third and final section of this chapter is concerned with a detailed account of the research process itself. It explores issues involved with gathering and analysis of data, and some of the challenges involved in the interpretation of interview texts.

2.1 Epistemological Framework

An epistemology is a theory of knowledge, concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how to ensure that these grounds are both adequate and legitimate (Madge *et al* 1997). Tendencies within the dominant disciplines to marginalize feminist scholarship, the discovery of a pervasive androcentrism in defining concepts, methods, and interpretations of research, and the recognition of the political implications of the research process in the re/production of knowledge have inspired feminist interest in theories of knowledge and a quest for a feminist epistemology (Hawkesworth 1989). The question of what might constitute premises of a

"feminist epistemology" has produced three divergent responses: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint, and feminist postmodernism, all which legitimize women as knowers, albeit in differing ways.

Feminist empiricism accepts the tenets of philosophical realism which posits the existence of the world independent of the human knower. It argues that sexism and androcentrism are identifiable biases of individual knowers that can be eliminated by stricter adherence to existing methodological norms of scientific and philosophical inquiry (Harding 1991); only "bad science" is responsible for their retention in the research process. The eradication of these social biases is a necessary precondition for the achievement of objective knowledge, removing distorting lenses of particular observers (Hawkesworth 1989).

Feminist standpoint theories draw upon historical materialism's claim that oppressed groups possess a particular standpoint on inequality. The notion of standpoint refers to groups having shared histories based on their shared location in relations of power (Collins 1997). Thus standpoint feminist analysis is grounded on the specific perspective that emerges from women's oppression, and the knowledge generated through women's social positions makes visible a deeper level of reality allowing for a fuller comprehension of the social world (Harding 1991; Rose 1994; Smith 1987).

Feminist standpoint constructs new fields of meaning by putting the previously marginal at the centre of the theoretical terrain by listening to women's voices. As such, it is a subject-centred process. In creating knowledge, 'woman' is the subject, the agent of knowledge, "a source of privileged accounts of the world" (Ferguson 1991: 328). Differences are set aside as less important than that which connects women. Feminist standpoint is an

epistemological approach which constitutes women as a unity in order to compare them with men (Ferguson 1991: 333).

There is a growing understanding of the complexity of standpoints as women exist across race and class and many other social divisions (ethnicity, sexuality, etc.). Feminist standpoint theory in some instances has moved away from the early arguments of the primacy of gender to constructing standpoints across these differences. Patricia Hill Collins (1990: 22), for example, defines black women's standpoint as "those experiences and ideas shared by African American women that provide a unique angle of vision on self, community, and society". Class, race, and gender necessarily structure the individual's understanding of reality and hence inform all knowledge claims.

Drawing upon a postmodern deconstruction of ideas concerning truth, knowledge, power, self and language that have characterized Western thinking since the Enlightenment, feminist postmodernism advocates a profound skepticism regarding *a* truth about reality and universalizing claims about the existence, nature, and powers of reason (Hawkesworth 1989). Instead, these theorists call for a focus on localized reliable feminist knowledges which produce "maps of consciousness" reflecting the various categories of gender, class, race and nationality (Haraway 1988; Flax 1990). "There is no single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions" (Haraway 1988: 590). Hence, a feminist postmodern epistemology "discredits the idea of an epistemologically significant subjectivity in the name of which women can act in the world" (Goetz 1991: 134). In other words, the very possibility of female identity is rendered problematic by the deconstruction of the concept of 'woman' as a function of discourse. When the female subject

is dismantled, female identity is revealed as a shifting social construct. Instead of being a source of privileged accounts of the world, women are "...data to be accounted for..." (Ferguson 1991: 328).

While there is reason to believe vision is better "from below", there also lies a serious danger of romanticizing the less powerful; the standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions (Haraway 1988: 584). The task then for a feminist postmodern epistemology is to deconstruct meaning and knowledge claims in order to open a space for the emergence of countermeanings (Ferguson 1991).

No single one of these epistemologies can address all of the concerns that have fuelled feminists' turn to epistemology. The totalizing and homogenizing elements of feminist standpoint which produces a privileged perspective on the world are at odds with the insights generated by the struggle of women of colour, that there is no uniform "women's reality". Yet, if women's identities are constructed, shifting and fluid, what becomes of the potential for collective resistance and struggle that women's voices provide?

There is a recognition in the literature (Sylvester 1995; Ferguson 1991; Hawkesworth 1989) that neither feminist standpoint nor feminist postmodernism is sufficient on its own, and that both are crucial to feminist epistemology. Feminist postmodernism, for example, is dependent on standpoint theory in order to have something to deconstruct. "Does postmodernist feminism not need more steady standpoints to light paths away from privileged accounts of 'the' world toward 'worlds' on the margins?" (Sylvester 1995: 953) Conversely, feminist standpoint is strengthened by a feminist postmodern approach so as not to "subdue dissonances inconvenient to its unities" (Ferguson 1991: 337). That is,

while the articulation of feminist standpoint is a radical project in that it proposes alternatives to patriarchal arrangements, feminist postmodernism insists on not treating the female subject or 'the community' as a unified whole (Ferguson 1991).

Both epistemologies are postures toward power and knowledge that need each other. Feminist standpoint as epistemology is dedicated to illuminating power relations (for example, patriarchy) in which claims to knowledge are embedded. It seeks to identify ways that male power and the production of androcentric knowledge have combined in the past to marginalize and belittle women's experiences (Harding 1997). Feminist postmodernism as epistemology abandons the struggle for universalist knowledge, searching instead for historically silenced voices in the creation of feminist knowledge. It heightens our understanding of the integral relations between power and knowledge, and how these relations "constitute us as subjects in a determinate order of things" (Hawkesworth 1989: 155).

The relationship between these two theories provides a useful epistemological grounding for this thesis. Jamaican feminists provide accounts of past and current development processes as part of efforts to construct feminist perspectives of development, within both mainstream and transformative paradigms. The source of these knowledges is situated in women's historical and contemporary standpoints within colonial, racist, capitalist and patriarchal systems of domination. Women, however, are also complicit in these systems and it is thus important to account for the ways in which race, class, and gender come together to structure women in different and shifting positions of power and privilege. These positions impact on the way women "experience" development and how they participate in

engendering development. Such an epistemological framework thus allows for uncovering the shifting positions of power within feminist projects.

An epistemological framework based on a conversation between feminist standpoint and postmodernism informs my methodology, as it draws attention to the link between power and knowledge. Room is made for locating the researcher as an actor in the research process. Doing so opens the way to recognition of the power relations within which the researcher is located. Some authors have argued that western feminists project a privileged identity - an identity modelled on a white, western feminist experience and divorced from the social contexts and relations of class, ethnicity and race in which women are situated - as a referent for the rest of the world. Mohanty (1991), for example, draws attention to the existence of neo-colonial discourses within Western feminist scholarship which have discursively colonized the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the Third World. This has had the effect of producing and reproducing through the term "third world women", a composite, singular, oppressed object for analysis (Ong 1994). As I have undertaken research in and about a different culture, such an epistemological framework draws attention to my own position and subjectivity as a Canadian feminist researcher.

This framework is also important in the process of interpreting interview texts for data analysis. This will be dealt with in more detail in a subsequent section of this chapter. Briefly though, the interview texts are taken as sources of knowledge, as realities that can be accessed. At the same time, this epistemological framework also makes explicit the processes of decision making which produce the interpretation of findings. It aims for reflexivity, i.e., a continuous critical reflection on the research process.

Finally, this epistemological framework is evident in my methods. My questionnaire reflects a recognition that women in Jamaica are not homogeneous. It acknowledges the power relations which shape interactions between women, and the fact that development may mean different things for women of different class and racial backgrounds.

2.2 Methodological Framework

Feminist scholarship has been at the forefront disputing the dominant social science tenets of objective, value-free, detached research. Feminist epistemologies challenge a patriarchal and androcentric conceptualization of social reality; feminist methodologies challenge positivist frameworks employed in creating such knowledge (Maguire 1987; Wolf 1996; Reinharz 1992). Such methodologies insist that research is never an abstract process of knowledge seeking. Rather, the social identities of both the researched and the researcher are considered central. Furthermore, feminist methodology maintains that there are power relations embedded in these social relations. Specifically, operations of power in research are discernible in three interrelated dimensions: (1) power differences stemming from different positionalities of the researcher and the researched; (2) power exerted during the research process through determining the course of the research; and (3) power exerted during the post-fieldwork period of data analysis, data interpretation and writing of findings (Wolf 1996).

The dilemmas, quandries and contradictions arising for the feminist researcher conscious of the above power relations in a research situation can be explored through an analysis of four key themes of feminist methodology: positionality, subjectivity, qualitative

methods, and action-oriented research. These themes are woven throughout feminist research literature, and collectively form a methodological framework useful to me in addressing my research question. This framework is able to evaluate research critically and to interpret it in its full cultural, social, political and economic context. This is especially judicious when engaging in cross-cultural research, as this research project does. Such research often constructs Third World women as "subjects" in subordinate positions to First World feminist researchers. While power cannot be erased completely from the research process, the four themes of this methodological framework enable me to critically engage with the dynamics of undertaking such a research project, reconstructing for the reader choices made along the way and questions asked throughout. The chapter now turns to an examination of each theme in the context of this research project.

2.2.1 Positionality

Positionality is a crucial element in feminist methodology where facets of the self are articulated as positions of power. Feminist researchers have become increasingly self-conscious of the ways in which their biographies, politics and relationships may influence the data collected and thus the information that becomes coded as knowledge (Rose 1997; Wolf 1996; Mblinyi 1992). Donna Haraway's work has been important in theorizing the notion of 'positionality'. According to Haraway (1988: 587), "positioning is..the key practice in grounding knowledge". The claim to universal knowledge, "distanc(ing) the knowing subject from everybody and everything" (Haraway 1988: 581), transcendence and splitting subject and object embody what Haraway (1988: 582) calls the 'god-trick'. In contrast,

situating or positioning knowledge claims allow researchers to become answerable for what we see and "implies responsibility for our enabling practices" (Haraway 1988: 587). The researcher appears then, not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority but as a real, historical individual with concrete specific desires and interests (Wolf 1996).

While reflecting on one's position as a researcher is a beneficial exercise, Jayati Lal (1996: 207) warns against the potential paralysis of action and analysis that ensues from attentiveness to authorial strategies of self-reflexivity:

A reflexive and self-critical methodological stance can become meaningful only when it engages in the politics of reality and intervenes in it in some significant way. Otherwise, we risk the charge of self-absorbed navel gazing.

Daphne Patai, too, gives a forceful critique of positionality where self disclosure on the part of the researcher sounds like apologies worn as tokens of shame and repentance or badges of pride. For Patai, consciousness of location and position is necessary but not sufficient for research to challenge prevailing systems of inequality. "It does not redistribute income, gain political rights for the powerless, create housing for the homeless, or improve health" (Patai 1994: A52).

While Lal and Patai warn us of the dangers of narcissistic centring, accounting for one's position has been glaringly absent in the field of development studies generally, and in the "women and development" literature specifically. Reflecting upon one's position in this academic field is important as it has historically valued Northern expertise, asserting its superiority in addressing development issues in the South (Escobar 1995; Parpart 1995; Mohanty 1991). Critically and self-consciously examining one's multiple positions involves the recognition that we are each implicated in systems of oppression that profoundly structure

our understanding of others (Razack 1998). Insertion of ourselves into the text may not substantially decentre the hegemony of Northern power and knowledge in Development Studies, but it *can* serve a purpose other than navel gazing or badges of pride - a building of critical consciousness.

Positionality raises issues of epistemic privilege² for the researcher engaging in cross-cultural research. As a white, middle-class, Canadian feminist researcher, can my interpretation, analysis, representation and conclusions be considered valid? Should only Jamaican women have the right to examine their own movements and struggles? Lal (1996) argues that the notion of epistemic privilege essentializes "insiders", reducing them to homogeneous entities. Mohan (1994: 226) points to instances of self-reflexivity which lead to the position of knowledge being vacated for the other, fetishized as having privileged access to the complete knowledge the centre can never have:

According absolute epistemological privilege to a margin (usually constituted in essentialist terms) is to reify and fetishize it and, ironically, to reconstitute it as centre in a discursive system reigned by the symbolic capital of the oppressed.

As noted in the previous section, feminist postmodern epistemology is sceptical of 'truth' and totalizing knowledge claims; it reminds us that knowledge is always mediated by the knower's location in a particular social context. In its emphasis on situated knowledges and concerns with who is included and excluded in the creation of knowledge, such an epistemological approach requires continual questioning of our own positions and claims.

The question remains, however, how one can understand, responsibly and

² Uma Narayan (1989) defines epistemic privilege as the critical insights generated by oppressed groups into the conditions of their own oppression.

respectfully, another's point of view. Perspectives generated from cross-cultural research are simply that, perspectives. As one interview participant remarked to me,

Remember one of the things, when you do a thesis as you do coming from another society, is to speak with your voice, your perceptions to locate that...I think when you write it is useful to do that and it gives you the credibility to be able to have the experience and write from it and also allow somebody else a different experience. It allows all of us space to write differently (Mohammed, interview).

The researcher brings to her interaction with research participants, her social location, culture, motivations, limitations, ignorance, skills, education, resources, and outside perspective that may be useful as well as troublesome (Gorelick 1996).

I want to account for four intertwined personal positions that shaped my fieldwork and interview relationships: my nationality (Canadian), my race, my class, and my feminist identity. First, there was not an assumed notion of 'sisterly' solidarity in most of my interview scenarios. I was positioned as a Canadian researcher, with all the privileges in the global political economy that accompany this identity. I found rapport was more easily established in interview situations after I had signalled somehow not a non-hierarchical, non-exploitative shared-sex relationship but rather an acknowledgement that I occupy a privileged position and role in the global arena.

Linda Carty (1996: 139) writes about her experiences as a woman of Caribbean origin, having lived most of her adult life in North America, undertaking research in the Caribbean. In critically analyzing her insider/outsider status over the course of her field work, she comments

Being from the Caribbean was not enough. Because I had spent most of my life in North America, I had to fight the erroneous assumptions that I could only examine the society through imperialistic lenses and also that I had taken on the distorted white, middle-class feminist notions of what the emancipation struggle for the

majority of the world's women meant. Each step of the way I fought the ideological power of neocolonialism and imperialism. Ironically, a white woman researcher would not necessarily have had the same negative perceptions applied against her. Certainly, she would not have experienced any overt expressions; whiteness would have somehow given her more privilege, if not legitimacy.

My whiteness did confer privilege, I believe, and this will be discussed momentarily; nonetheless the fact remains that I needed to address that I was a Canadian, a First World feminist, coming to "study" Jamaica. In handing out interview consent forms at the beginning of a session, for example, I was called upon to state my research topic as well as goals for undertaking such a project. I interpreted this as a call to recognize the reality of North-South relations particularly in the area of knowledge production.

Each interview session may have been the first time I met each participant but the encounters were not fresh ones, where we started from zero as one human being to another, each innocent of the other (Razack 1998). Rather, much of what we know about developing countries is generated by Northern research and international financial institutions, and mediated by the interpretations of men, all which shape what can be known, thought, and said about the Third World. Feminist scholars, for their part, have actively participated in reproducing the binary of the civilized and western woman and her oppressed Third World sister. Furthermore, countries of the North still economically and militarily dominate those of the South. Canada is part of the imperializing North in its relations with its aboriginal peoples; it is a nation which polices its borders with respect to immigrants and refugees while denying its role in helping to create the conditions which force people to leave or flee; and, specifically relevant to this research, Canada has a long history of ancillary colonialism in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Paragg 1988; Tennyson 1990; Guy 1990). I understand my

position as a Canadian undertaking research in and about Jamaica to include these contexts.

The issue of race is a complicated one in my methodology and field work. Race infuses itself into the research process and into the interview situation. It does not simply exist as an object of study or a variable in the analysis; it is also a characteristic of the researcher (Edwards 1990). I had expectations that differences of race would be much more verbalized in the interviews, and to be positioned as a *white* Canadian woman. I was certainly conscious of positioning myself as such, particularly as there is little if any theorizing or discussion of race in the field of development studies. Perhaps part of being positioned as a Canadian includes the element of race, as Canada is viewed as a predominantly white society.

I sense that race was a silent characteristic of the research relationships. The manner in which race is intertwined with class, and skin colour corresponds with socio-economic status and privilege, were discussed as processes structuring women's lives and interactions with each other. But these issues were not articulated in the interview relationships. I was not as conscious or knowledgeable about the intricacies and meanings of race in Jamaica as perhaps I should have been prior to undertaking the field work. I can only surmise whether this would have made any difference to the interview relationships or not. Such knowledge, however, would have provided a reference point for questions and observations. I am extremely thankful for a personal conversation with two women the last night of my stay in Jamaica, and for an interview with Honor Ford Smith, both of which dealt with race in an illuminating and educational manner. The personal conversation centred on struggles over issues of identity and what it means to be black in Jamaica. The interview provided

moments of reflection on the silence around the issue of race in Jamaica:

It is a very threatening discussion to people. When you think that Jamaica is a society which has produced some of the most fundamental African nationalist philosophers like Garvey, it must be that race is very fundamental; and Rastafaria which is a race-based religion. So clearly it is very fundamental (Ford-Smith, interview).

These encounters were pivotal to my gaining some understanding of the history of race dynamics in Jamaica and of the struggle to come to terms with the legacy of slavery. They also articulated the interlocking of race and class as a salient feature structuring the relations of power between members of Jamaican society, an insight which assisted in the analysis of my research data.

Class is a third aspect of my position in this research. For all but one of my interviews I do not believe that it was a barrier to the research relationship. The majority of women I interviewed were in middle-class positions. My language and somewhat academic jargon were understood. They spoke to me in "standard" English. In only one interview, with a member of the Sistren Theatre Collective, was I extremely conscious of a gulf between us, based on class, which is tied up with race and language. It manifested itself most clearly in communication. At times I had difficulty understanding her and comprehending expressions; the language and wording of the interview questions appeared at times to be inaccessible to her as she made use of a dictionary.

A fourth and final relevant aspect of my position is my identity as a feminist, as it has influenced my research interest as well as informed the interviews. I define feminism broadly as a movement to end sexism and sexist oppression, and also as a movement which engages one to seriously address oneself in relation to an entire structure of domination of which patriarchy is but one part. Thus my feminist politics operates on the assumption that power

relations profoundly shape interpersonal encounters. A large part of my feminist political practice involves developing and promoting critical consciousness around my own and other's complicity and participation in interlocking systems of oppression, including racism, classism *and* the subordination of other women. There is little chance of disturbing relations of domination unless we consider how relations of power such as race and class structure our own subject positions (Razack 1998). This feminist consciousness has been a tool in my feminist political organizing work. It has been a guide in my sojourn into academia, and bears upon the choice of subject matter for this thesis and informed its development over the past two years.

My identity as a feminist also informed the interview relationships. "Feminist" is not always or necessarily the operative definition of the strong and vibrant "movements of women" (Vassell, interview) that exist in Jamaica. In a discussion on the impact of feminist activism, one interview participant said,

A lot of Caribbean women would tell you "I am not a feminist". I wouldn't say that, but a lot of Caribbean women would because they would say "I am not involved in those theoretical discussions and discourse. I know the reality of my life and I struggle against the reality of my life". I think that is what a lot of women would say.... A lot of women would say to you, "I am not in any feminist movement. I am just fighting for the realities of my life" (McKenzie, interview).

Differing meanings and understandings of feminism and feminist agency stimulated engaging discussions with interview participants. I felt no hostility towards my explicit positioning as a feminist. Rather it provided a point of departure for the interview participants to illuminate the diverse strategies, appearances and forms of feminism operative in Jamaica.

2.2.2 Subjectivity

One of the major challenges with which feminist epistemologies confront mainstream science and social science is a powerful critique of positivism. Methodologically, positivism encourages distance and non-involvement between the researcher and researched, and assumes that the researcher can objectively see, judge, and interpret the life and meanings of his/her subjects (Wolf 1996).

In contrast, inherent to feminist methodology and research is the recognition of the subjective experience of the research process. There is a recognition that the researcher is positioned in a particular relationship of power in relation to the researched. As such, developments and innovations in feminist methodology to reduce the impact of power relations have suggested numerous alterations of traditional data collection techniques including interviews, oral and life histories, and participant observation. Feminist researchers seek to allow for dialogue, mutual exchange of information, and development of a relationship during an interview session (Wolf 1996; Reinharz 1992).

In conducting fieldwork in Jamaica, my relationship with the women I interviewed was central in data collection. Three inter-related issues arose in the course of my interviews which relate to this relationship and to the subjective experience of the interview: an unequal power structure; vulnerability; and the spirit of the relationship.

During the course of the interviews, subjectivity and positionality were intertwined to generate an unequal power structure. My position as a graduate student from a developed country was one negotiated both by myself and the interview participants. Recognizing that I held a certain amount of power in the interview session, I did what I could to address it. I

did not overtly assume a relationship of sisterhood or solidarity based on possible common experiences as women. Instead I made verbal attempts to acknowledge that it is something that must be built and worked towards. I took the time to explain my goals for the research, and I began the interview sessions with a personal introduction. The interview sessions followed more or less the structure of the interview questionnaire; however I encouraged free-flow dialogue and exchange of ideas throughout and was not frustrated by frequent interruptions and disruptions in a session. Sessions were concluded with an opportunity for the women to pose questions and make comments on the research. This is taken up in section 2.3.3 of this paper. I do not want to create the impression that interview participants were in any way powerless as they all had power to impart or not impart their knowledge, and controlled the content and extent of knowledge and information they divulged.³

Vulnerability on the part of the research subjects results from a lack of control of the interview situation. What did I do to lessen it to the best of my ability? I stressed confidentiality and had a consent form that was given at the beginning of each interview. It was made clear that participants could end the interview at any time and could request the tape recorder to be shut off. I was willing to listen to feedback and their own comments on my research focus. Vulnerability may explain in part the difficulty in establishing contact with one interviewee. Initial contact was made while I was still in Canada, and from the beginning I sensed resistance to meeting with me. I had to go into much detail about what it was that I wanted, why I thought it was important and why I thought her opinions would

³ Indeed, some of the interview participants were university professors and researchers with greater status in those terms than myself.

be useful to the research. After three attempts at making contact by telephone while in Jamaica, I stopped because I believed that I would be "pushing" too far and crossing some sort of un-named boundary if I continued my attempts. Eventually she made telephone contact with me, leading to an eventual telephone interview. During this moment, I again took pains to reiterate the goals of the project and why I considered her thoughts and opinions important to my research. Her resistance spoke to me of one of two things (or maybe both). Either she did not consider the research project important enough or there was no desire to take a risk by agreeing to be interviewed. I perceived much hidden emotion on certain issues during the course of this particular interview so there may have been resistance in opening up to me. To reduce these feelings of vulnerability I reassured her that I was eliciting a spectrum of voices and her criticism of certain issues would give me a better understanding and balance.

One area where I recognized risk-taking and vulnerability in all the interviews was the discussion about power. These women imparted their views, in an open and forthright manner, on global power structures, power relations between women and men, and on the exercise of power among Caribbean feminists. In return, I was honest about my own musings and attempts to muddle through this issue in my own feminist politics in Canada. For myself, and I think for the women I interviewed, this was the most engaging and stimulating part of the interview.

The interview is more than an instrument of data collection; it is also a sharing of ideas, philosophy and experiences (Kirby and McKenna 1989). But what is the basis for such sharing? The development of a relationship and the spirit in which one enters the research

process and an interview session is contested in feminist literature on methodology. In defying the tenets of positivism and objectivity, feminist researchers have sought to break down the hierarchical and potentially exploitative relationship between researcher and researched by cultivating friendship, sharing, and closeness that would lead to richer pictures of women's lives (Mies 1993; Lugones and Spelman 1983; Kirby and McKenna 1989). Some argue, however, that the relationship can never be egalitarian or reciprocal. Reinharz (1992) contends that feminist scholars' striving for empathy and intimacy should not be confused with friendship. While feminist researchers may attempt to equalize relationships while in the field through empathic and friendly methods, these methods do not transform the researchers' positionality or locationality in the global political economy. Indeed, because of distance and time, most friendships cultivated during field research are short-lived. (Wolf 1996).

Only one interview session was held with each woman, although I spent time with one of them in a non-work/non-academic environment, and followed up on clarification and information gathering with others. So I would hesitate to name our relationships 'friendship'. Nonetheless, the sessions were at times very animated, particularly around the issue of power, and relaxed. The short time I spent in the field prevented the development of closer bonds. In the end, I have control over the information they passed on to me and the reins of power are in my hands as I have walked away with data analysis and interpretation under my control.

2.2.3 Qualitative methods

The selection of the research method is a critical aspect of a research project and is based on what kind of information is sought, from whom, and under what circumstances (Kirby and McKenna 1989). My research employs primarily qualitative methods of data collection. Wanting to explore processes of engagement and contribution of Jamaican women to meanings of development necessitated a research tool that would elicit information and allow for interaction and dialogue. Semi-structured interviews allowed for realization of these goals and capturing the information I required. Interviews offer researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher (Reinharz 1992). Research based on interviews also brings in the subjects of the research, which makes interviews social events and research more clearly a social process (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994).

Feminist researchers have preferred using qualitative methods such as the open-ended interview as a way of allowing for different ways of knowing which do justice to the complexity and indeterminacy of human experience (Wolf 1996). "Giving voice" to women through interviews has been part of the effort to counter the masking of women and their experiences through positivist methodologies and approaches. "Giving voice" and "allowing" women to speak is, however, a problematic concept in the context of First World/Third World research. Indeed, the language of "giving" or "allowing" women to speak suggests that First World feminists are yet again wielding their hegemonic power to allow Third World subjects an audience (Spivak 1988, cited in Wolf 1996). In working with the transcripts of my interviews, I do not merely "give voice" to the views of the participants. After all, it is

I who formulated and posed the questions, I who transcribed the interviews and read them, I who selected the materials to be placed in the final text.

"Giving voice" or the process by which interview participants are represented in the research report raises an important issue for the method of interviewing, namely interpretation. The interpretation of interview material is a power laden process. I want to ensure that my research results fairly and accurately reflect the aspects of social life that I claim they represent (Acker, Berry and Esseveld 199: 74). I also want to create space for the diversity, complexity and contradictions of interpretations. This issue of interpretation is further elaborated upon in section 2.3.4 concerning research analysis.

2.2.4. Action-oriented Research

Research with the goal of change is prevalent in recent literature on feminist methodology. Feminist research with the desire to create meaningful change, generate awareness of how societal structures and processes oppress women, and to empower is intimately linked with the political aims of the women's movement (Acker, Barry and Esseveld 1996).

My role as researcher was not one of an initiator or catalyst for change in the lives of the women I interviewed. This was not my goal and I am not comfortable with the neo-colonial intrusions such roles awaken in me. Mies (1993: 38) states that women who are committed to the cause of women's liberation cannot be satisfied with giving the social sciences better, more authentic and more relevant data. For Mies, consciousness-raising is the primary motivator of feminist research. I find this highly problematic as in my case it

would imply that I, a First World white feminist researcher, need to raise the consciousness of my Jamaican research subjects about the conditions of their lives! In fact, the opposite happened on many occasions: it was my awareness which grew with respect to issues such as the dynamics of feminism in Jamaica, and sites of struggle over meanings of development.

So my research is not action-oriented in the participatory sense of the word. Does this negate its political impact? Can the data collected contribute to an agenda of change? I would argue that for such an agenda, it is important to understand people's critiques of neoliberalism, why such critiques are articulated in a particular way, what is permitted at particular historical moments, and why alternatives may be difficult to formulate in particular instances. It is critical to discern who says what, where they are located in the mosaic of social relations of power, and through what mechanisms positions of power are secured. This is valuable knowledge as exploration of the ways meanings of race, class and gender come together to structure women in different positions of power and privilege is a strategy in unsettling relations of oppression and domination.

It is my hope that I will be able to establish some sort of feedback loop with interview respondents which could lead to dissemination of research findings. There is also the consideration of publishing articles based on this thesis in publications accessible to Jamaican and Caribbean women. By delineating in public fora the processes by which women engage with development in issues in Jamaica, my hope is to contribute to feminist research on development which attempts to create transnational political projects and alliances across the North-South divide.

2.3 The Research Design

Chapter Two now turns to an analysis of the phases of research, namely getting started; gearing up for data gathering; gathering data; and preparing for and doing analysis. These particular phases are drawn from Kirby and McKenna (1989). The goal of this third section is to map out the steps I took, clearly demonstrating how they were appropriate to addressing the research question. Constraints and obstacles I faced will be woven throughout the discussion.

2.3.1 Getting Started: Inception of the Study

Feminism is the terrain where academia and political practice converge for me. A combination of Women's Studies and Development Studies as academic disciplines have shaped my understanding of local and global power relations. It has developed my consciousness about relations of privilege and complicity in relations of subordination. At the same time, I am involved in feminist politics and activism in Ottawa which seek to counter the hegemony of neo-liberal discourses in Canada, through work in the anti-poverty movement and as an educator in the anti-violence community. This research project was undertaken then as part of the journey towards greater understanding of feminist visions of development.

Why was Jamaica chosen as a site of study and analysis? I was familiar with literature coming from the Caribbean on the search for sustainable models of development which are people-centred. Reading this literature revealed a substantial amount of feminist thought and agency contributing to this search. In talking with people about the Caribbean as a possible

site for research, it was suggested to me that Jamaica might be a fruitful place to do research on this issue. The country was also the most accessible for me in terms of travel cost: I also knew someone there who was able to, early on, assist me in identifying potential interview participants as well as locating affordable accommodation. Thus early on in the process, concrete decisions were made as to the possible direction of the research: that the research would be limited to Jamaica and not include other larger English-speaking Caribbean (for example, Trinidad and Barbados) as this was all my budget would allow for.⁴ During my fieldwork I discovered a long history of movement and exchange of ideas and resources between feminist activists from differing countries within the region. Expanding the research question to include other countries would have resulted in different discoveries and knowledges.

2.3.2 Gearing up for Data Gathering

Once a research focus was decided upon, I began the task of searching for willing participants and preparing interview questions. I submitted a research project proposal to the Carleton ethics committee (see Appendix A). I obtained a list of addresses and phone numbers of women involved in the women's movement in Jamaica from a contact at Match International. I also wrote to a woman in Jamaica whom I had met in Ottawa in the Spring of 1996, outlining my research topic and requesting names.

The criteria I employed to determine potential interview participants include (a)

⁴ This research was financed for the most part at my own personal cost, with a small contribution from the Graduate Studies Research Fund of Carleton University.

Experience: here I was looking for a variety of involvement and knowledge in engaging with feminist issues around development based on class, race, academic, non-government, cultural work, etc. (b) *Geographic location*: as mentioned above, Jamaica was chosen in part because it was affordable to me in terms of travel. The women I contacted were located in Kingston. Thus another decision was made that determined the direction of this research, namely it was urban based. I view this as a significant limitation to the research as Jamaica is still very much a rural country and many living in urban centres still have connections to rural areas. Nonetheless, all the principal women's organizations in Jamaica and principal players are located in Kingston. Moreover, choosing the research site was done in part to ease the risks involved in traveling alone on public transportation in Jamaica. The cost of other forms of travel were prohibitive. (c) *Access*: it was possible to locate and make contact with participants as telecommunication (telephone, fax) between Ottawa and Kingston was not an obstacle; and (d) *Responsiveness and willingness to participate* in interviews and share their experiences: most women were extremely receptive and willing to participate in an interview. I encountered some resistance from one interview participant; another participant agreed to participate although she wondered aloud at the beginning of the interview why she was contacted as she had moved out of the development field. I was not aware of this when I made contact with her to establish a possible interview; an interview was set up with one participant active in government politics prior to leaving Ottawa. Due to time constraints on her part, she sent another woman in her place; finally, an interview was set up with one participant but upon arriving at the interview site, she had to cancel. Ultimately we were unable to reschedule another interview because of personal reasons on her part. This was

disappointing as she had tremendous knowledge of and experience with mainstreaming gender into official development policies, one of the salient questions of this thesis.

Once I had names of potential participants, I proceeded to contact women by mailing out a letter of introduction (see Appendix B) which also described the goal of the research project, and how it was being conducted. I also asked the women if they could recommend names of other appropriate participants in this project. This proved to be quite useful in identifying participants. Upon receiving responses from women (most responded by fax), I followed up with a telephone call to acknowledge receipt of response and to confirm an interview time. Some interview sessions were set prior to leaving but most were established once I arrived in Jamaica. I wrote letters of introduction to 18 women and interviewed a total of 12, one of the interviews being held in Toronto (see Appendix C).

I maintained control over the process of formulating the interview questionnaire. The participants were not involved in any way in its creation. The main reason for this was time, in that I wanted to accomplish my fieldwork in a relatively short period of time. This decision impacted on the nature of this research project and the data gathered, and is a definite limitation. Obviously, when questions are determined from the outside, they may not always be pertinent to what is being lived and experienced by those being interviewed. While I received some positive feedback on some of the questions, they were not always clearly understood. This issue is taken up in the ensuing section.

The questions were formulated with the goal of researching feminist understandings of development and why engagements with it are organized as they are. The questionnaire was divided accordingly into two parts (see Appendix D). The questionnaire was transmitted

via facsimile to participants prior to my departure in order to inform them fully about the nature of the questions and to allow them to reflect on the answers.

2.3.3 Gathering Data

The primary data-gathering technique was interviews, conducted over a period of three weeks. The interviews were located either in the participant's office or in her home. The interviews commenced with a personal introduction. I talked about the issue of consent and had consent forms for them to sign (see Appendix E). This gave the interviews a somewhat formal tinge. They were tape recorded and lasted anywhere from thirty to 120 minutes; some were longer than others because of numerous interruptions.

In interview sessions, the research participant is not passive, in simply talking about her experience in response to a set of questions. She may know better or clearer questions to ask, of gaps in the interview plan, and even of potential participants (Kirby and McKenna 1989). This is evident in my experience as I received substantial feedback on my questions in a number of areas. First, some apprehension was articulated around the concept of 'feminist discourse of development'. One respondent stated her unease and unfamiliarity with the concept:

The term 'feminist discourse' filled me with a little bit of embarrassment...I certainly don't feel I participate enough in what you call feminist discourse. I feel that it is too hifaluted a word (McKenzie, interview).

Another questioned the coherence of the term within the Jamaican context:

This concept of a feminist discourse...I don't think that it could be said that it exists to the extent in the way you project it (Vassell, interview).

Comments such as these opened the doors for engaging conversations on meanings of

feminism. Second, respondents challenged the use of the word 'development' in the context of the first interview question, "What do you see as the current development model in Jamaica?"

The first comment I had when I saw your questionnaire was that it is not a development model at all. It is not a model for development. it is a model for underdevelopment (Vassell, interview).

and

I hesitate to call it a development model because it gives credibility to the current or popular or dominant paradigm that says that structural adjustment is development (Wedderburn, interview).

These comments, coupled with respondent's analysis of the history of the Jamaican political economy provided reference points when I undertook the research and writing of chapters Four and Five which are concerned with development paradigms and the circuits of the Jamaican economy, respectively. They also propelled me to historically locate my research questions so as to better grasp current social relations. Third, there was substantial discussion over the types of alternatives being articulated within the context of a hegemonic neoliberal paradigm. These discussions significantly impacted upon the focus of the research as I originally sought to investigate feminist contributions to the struggle for alternative development paradigms. The information imparted by the respondents sensitized me to the fact that there exists feminist agency within the dominant paradigm that also needed to be accounted for and understood. This data ultimately added to the complexity of the research project. Finally, in a conversation after one interview, one participant questioned the appropriateness of Jamaica as a case study for the research project, stating that there were perhaps other arenas such as the Caribbean Policy Development Centre in Barbados which

might prove more useful for researching Caribbean development alternatives.

Different interview situations call for different kinds of interaction between the researcher and the participant. Both have the freedom to choose the kind of interaction in which they are willing to engage and indeed whether they want to continue in a specific interview situation (Kirby and McKenna 1989). Interviews conducted in office settings were more formal than those conducted at the participant's home. One interview participant requested not to be tape recorded which proved to be challenging as my energies centred more on ensuring that I was writing as much down as possible than engaging in reflective dialogue. One interview was conducted via the telephone which raised another set of issues such as more distant and less spontaneous interaction due to lack of eye contact or body language.

My days and time in Kingston were structured around the interviews. Concerted effort was made, however, to gather secondary sources that would have been difficult, even impossible, to access in Canada. Two of these documents, namely the *National Industrial Policy* and *Engendering the National Industrial Policy* were subject to a content analysis upon arrival in Canada. I made use of the library of the Consortium School of Graduate Studies (University of West Indies) and I spent several mornings there, reading and photocopying. Through the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, I was able to obtain some tapes of Symposia held on related issues. I made use of Kingston's daily newspapers, including *The Gleaner* and *The Daily Observer* in order to remain updated on current events. Finally, Melody Walker of Women's Media Watch has been a continual source of information, sending items upon request. I am indebted to her for this.

Reflexivity is the tendency of feminist researchers to reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process (Mbilinyi 1992). I wrote a daily journal to regularly record and reflect my observations, conversations, and interpretations of the daily events. It was a useful way to identify gaps in my knowledge and additional people to be interviewed or consulted.

Overall, the plan for gathering data was appropriate and provided the information I required. Interviews allowed for feedback and discussion on key issues. Managing the data included listening to interviews on tape in the evening and clarifying any points with the participants in the following days. Four copies of the transcribed text were sent to interview participants upon request.

2.3.4. Preparing for and doing analysis

There was a two month gap between data collection and the beginning of data analysis due to personal circumstances upon my return to Ottawa. One interview in Toronto, however, was conducted during this period. Towards the end of October (1996), I began transcribing the interview tapes word for word which engaged me once again with the research. The notes from one phone interview and the one un-recorded face to face interview were transcribed also.

I read through each transcript several times, making summary notes in the margins. I organized the interview material by themes pertaining to the major questions of the thesis. This resulted in the data being broken into the following categories: current development paradigm, alternatives, feminist agency in both paradigms, its impact; comments on race and

class; reflections on power. This proved useful as a tool to draw links between the transcripts. The post-fieldwork period was also a time where I read a wide body of literature regarding both historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural, political and religious aspects of Jamaican society. This assisted in contextualizing the issues arising from the interview material.

As mentioned in section 2.2.3, the interpretation of interview transcripts was a huge issue for me. An entry in my research journal reflects some of my struggle: "Fear of interpretation, editing, not reading it right, superimposing. How do I ask the right questions of my data? How do I make sense of what they are doing?" Deciding whether, or how, we can arrive at authoritative conclusions about the nature of other people's experiences is problematic and laden with power.

Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994: 125) state that

(t)he many possible ways of interpreting interview transcripts face feminists, like other researchers, with a problem of validity. More baldly, we can be questioned about what sort of truth we can attribute to our conclusions. Coming to conclusions is not just a process of following rules of method to the end point of a research project, but a very active and complex process of social construction that raises questions about what we mean when we claim that feminist knowledge should be believed.

Holland and Ramazanoglu suggest that researchers should treat conclusions about data as a social process. This would highlight interpretation of interview texts as a political, contested and unstable process between the lives of the researchers and those of the researched. It would also underscore the process of interpretation as a site of struggle at a critical point of the research and one on which the presence of the researcher has a profound effect. My "evidence" for how women are creating meanings of development and why such agencies

are organized as they are required some process of interpretation. Women's accounts have not just remained as such but have been actively interpreted to create knowledge about the processes involved in engendering development paradigms. Interpretation based on my feminist epistemological position derives insights from both feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism, as discussed in section 2.1. This position contends, on the one hand, that there is a material reality which can be accessed through the interview text. On the other hand, it also holds that there are diverse and heterogeneous voices to be accounted for in creating valid knowledge.

One example of interpretive problems I encountered with the interview texts is with respect to the notion of alternatives. The interpretation of data as a process is filtered through my own values and beliefs and I struggled with what I heard defined as alternatives to the dominant neo-liberal paradigm of development. An entry in my research journal questions: "what am I assuming about alternatives? maybe my conception of power is too simplistic, too dualistic. How do I make sense of what they are doing, of what they have told me? of the fact that there seems to be no "active" alternative?" Working through the interview texts entailed re-examining some of my notions of the exercise of power. Wiping away a monochromatic notion of power revealed struggle, compromise and accommodation, negotiation, and strategic compliance.

The act of interpreting the interview material raises the issue of reflexivity. My research journal notes: "I don't want to patronize and fall into the trap of glorifying, you know 'These women are so great', like in some literature I have read. Am I making excuses?" I was and am confronted in the writing of this thesis and in the presentation of my "findings"

with my own biases and my own privileges. Engaging in the process of interpreting data and presenting the findings compelled elements of reflexivity as 'doing analysis' is a dialectic process. My position, subjectivity, values and beliefs have thoroughly informed this research project. At the same time, the content of the interviews and thinking through issues raised in the interviews have significantly contributed to my feminist political beliefs over the last two years, particularly around issues of power, feminist process, accountability and 'diversity'.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has delineated the epistemological and methodological frameworks which will structure investigation into feminist efforts to engender development in Jamaica. It situates the thesis within a feminist epistemology based on a relationship, or 'conversation' between feminist standpoint and feminist postmodern theories. This epistemological framework will prove useful for investigating feminist efforts to engender development paradigms as it draws upon the standpoints of women in their experiences of dislodging androcentric knowledge claims about what development means. At the same time, this framework draws attention to the shifting positions of power operating within such feminist projects. It calls attention to the social relations of power which underpin feminist efforts in concrete ways and hence the salient themes.

This chapter lays out a methodological framework based on positionality, subjectivity, qualitative methods and research for change. Analysis of these four key themes exemplifies the many operations of power embedded in research design, in interview

encounters and in analysis and interpretation of data. The act of reflexivity in the process of analyzing and interpreting data could have been expanded to allow for distribution of interview transcripts for comments and feedback, and/or second-round interview sessions. Time and financial constraints hindered this from actualizing. By focusing on the issue of "process" in research methodology, the researcher acknowledges this and demonstrates steps taken to address power dynamics at the micro level of the interview. Furthermore, this framework allows the reader access to rationale for decisions taken, thereby allowing her to evaluate the research project critically and to interpret the arguments and findings within a holistic context.

Finally, this chapter offers a detailed and candid discussion of the research process itself. It has examined the specific phases of a research project and demonstrated their appropriateness to addressing the research question. Reading and learning about someone else's trials and tribulations in conducting research can prove beneficial for future research endeavours. It is hoped that analyses of this particular piece of research will provide useful information, tips for process, and reflective experience to people wishing to conduct future research in Jamaica and in other cross-cultural contexts.

Chapter Three: Elements of Dominant and Transformative Paradigms of Development

Around the world, diverse social and political movements are struggling to come to terms with the globalization of capitalism and the transnationalization of social, political and cultural processes, what Robinson (1996: 12) calls the 'fundamental dynamic of our epoch'. The increasingly hegemonic discourse of global capitalism is re-shaping the terrain of social action, posing deep constraints as well as opening new possibilities. This chapter seeks to explore the processes of capitalist globalization in Jamaica and the presence of opposition to it.

As such, this chapter provides a framework of analysis that identifies key actors, salient themes and prevalent discourses within two competing paradigms of development. A paradigm of development is a constellation of theories, questions, procedures and ways of thinking about the concept of development which generate knowledge for development policy and action. Development paradigms wax and wane over time, developing in response to specific historical conditions. Thus, particular historical junctures may be characterized by the predominance of one paradigm over another (Rahman 1991; Long 1992).

This chapter is concerned with two different development paradigms currently operating in Jamaica: a dominant paradigm premised on neoliberal philosophy, and a transformative paradigm premised on the notion of human-centred development. These two paradigms differ fundamentally in their assumptions, in how to make sense of social reality, in what is labelled problematic, and in what methods are preferred for action (Maguire 1987). Both paradigms, however, do share a similar discourse predicated on economics, in which the conceptualization of poverty and solutions for its amelioration and eradication are

primarily economic (Ramphall 1997). Yet here they also diverge. The dominant paradigm is homogeneous in its ascription to the free market unfettered by state intervention; the transformative paradigm is multi-layered and heterogeneous, consisting of aspects which problematize social reality outside the economic realm.

The first section of the chapter briefly traces the emergence of the increasingly hegemonic neoliberal paradigm in Jamaica. Jamaica's *National Industrial Policy*, promoted by the current PNP government as that which will "thrust Jamaica forward into the twenty first century" (Wedderburn, interview), is scrutinized to extricate the salient themes, key actors and operative discourses of neoliberalism. The second section focuses on the contours of a transformative paradigm which is continually constructed by a broad range of actors in the English-speaking Caribbean; thus it is not only specific to Jamaica. A brief historical overview is offered, tracing the intellectual history of Caribbean radical development thinking. The stage is then set to scrutinize contemporary transformative meanings, the actors involved and the themes/discourses articulated which seek to challenge the hegemony of neoliberalism. Mapping out these two paradigms provides a framework through which feminist agency and engagements with development in Jamaica will be analyzed in subsequent chapters.

3.1 The Neoliberal Paradigm and the Politics of Development

For the greater part of the twentieth century, the English-speaking Caribbean has occupied a peripheral position in the global system of capital and has been characterized by high levels of poverty. Development thinking and practice have been aimed explicitly at the

elimination of poverty in the region. In the post World War II era, and with the process of decolonization, redistributive politics and the elevation of the state as a primary economic actor was accepted as the norm.

Over the past decade, however, the English-speaking Caribbean, has witnessed a generalized decline of statist development policies that emphasized central state commitment to social welfare, regional integration, protection of industries, self-reliance and multilateralist trade, investment and aid policies (Dietz and Pantojas-Garcia 1994: 19). A definitive shift in the paradigm guiding development policy in the region, and in Jamaica specifically, has occurred with the emergence of an increasingly hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism which calls for tighter integration of the region into an increasingly globalized capitalist economy.

The origins of the embrace by Jamaican governments of neoliberal economics are found in the entry of IMF and World Bank stabilization and structural adjustment programs in 1977. They marked a turning point in the economic management of the country with the government "transformed into the local executing authority of programmes designed by the Washington-based agencies" (Levitt 1991: 24). These supra-national economic planning agencies are key actors within this paradigm. The inception of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) in 1984 further marked the rise of neoliberalism throughout the region. It was designed to induce a series of economic changes and adjustments that were congruent with US interests in the global process of capitalist restructuring during the 1980s. It was also employed as a political instrument to reward or punish declared socialist regimes in the Americas (Marshall 1996; Hyett 1993). The IMF and World Bank adjustment policies

together with the CBI promoted a transformation in the region's export structure, re-defining it as a major competitive export platform for US labour-intensive manufactures and agro-industrial products (Dietz and Pantojas-Garcia 1994). In the present historical conjuncture, with US attempts to restructure its regional hegemony in the Americas through NAFTA and further integration with other Latin American countries like Chile, the region's structural position is again being reconfigured within the international system (Marshall 1996).

As early as 1977, restructured global capitalism and the ideological ascendancy of neoliberalism have together shaped a new paradigm of 'development' for Jamaica⁵. Neoliberalism is concerned with promoting the benefits of international specialization in the production of commodities for the global economy, intensifying the already initiated process of export-led industrialization (Dietz and Pantojas-Garcia 1994). Three of its principal characteristics pertinent to Jamaica are outlined in Table One.

Table 1: Salient Indicators of Neoliberalism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● an emphasis on international competition as key to economic growth and progress; ● a belief in the superiority, efficiency, rationality, and dynamism of the market to allocate resources, and hence a greatly reduced role for the state; and ● a major reorientation of social welfare away from redistributive concerns towards more productivist and cost-saving concerns.
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(Sources: Vilas 1996; Dietz and Pantojas-Garcia 1994).

⁵ I place the word development in parentheses here because, as demonstrated further in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, there is considerable hesitancy among some social actors to equate neoliberalism with any notion of development.

3.1.1 The National Industrial Policy

Jamaica's *National Industrial Policy* (NIP), brought out in 1996 by the current PNP government exemplifies the country's definitive embrace of a neoliberal economic philosophy. It is a significant document because it

...is intended to provide the necessary basis for a clear, coherent, and consistent set of policies to guide the Jamaican economy on a path of renewed growth and development. It is to pave the way for our entry into the 21st century (Government of Jamaica 1996a: v).

There are four inter-related objectives and subsequent policies framing the NIP: a stable and predictable socio-economic environment favourable to foreign investment⁶ based on a *macro-economic policy* of monetary controls, Bank of Jamaica autonomy, and a Social Contract; growth and diversification via international competition of strategic sectors of the Jamaican economy through an *industrial policy*; equality of opportunity and access through a *social policy*; and finally, protection of the country's natural resources from the negative effects of industrialization based on an *environmental policy*. The chapter now analyzes the NIP according to the indicators found in Table One.

⁶ That social stability is viewed as a pre-requisite for economic growth is evident in an initiative of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC). In response to a World Bank report indicating that *political* violence in Jamaica is a disincentive to overseas and local investment, the JCC launched a petition in August 1996 demanding that politicians make a major effort to curb political armed conflicts (*Gleaner*, August 18, 1996). The initiative, received much media attention. Content analysis of newspaper articles (August 12-21, 1996) reveals that while there was a willingness to sign the petition among the populace, there was also skepticism about the JCC's motives: that it was in response to the World Bank and not to the Jamaican community (*Daily Observer*, August 12); cynicism that the JCC is concerned now that financial investment is affected (*Gleaner*, August 18); and questioning the JCC's neglect of socio-economic conditions as the roots of violence (*Gleaner*, August 16).

3.1.2 International Competition

One of the salient characteristics of neoliberalism is its emphasis on international competition. For Jamaica in the 1990s, the imperative to be internationally competitive is replacing the former goal of development (Dietz and Pantojas-Garcia 1994). This shift in discourse is evident by comparing the objectives of Jamaica's *Five Year Development Plan 1990-1995* with the *National Industrial Policy*. The former articulates quite clearly a "development imperative" (PIOJ 1990: 7), i.e., addressing high levels of poverty, social alienation and skewed income distribution. "The view is that economic development must be a means to social development" (PIOJ 1990: 7), with the welfare of the people given primacy in the development policy. While the market economy and the private sector are recognized as the main vehicle for economic growth, the imperative of economic policy is towards social development. In contrast, the NIP document resonates with the imperative to be internationally competitive. A count of the words "development" and "international competition" in key sections of the NIP reveals quite clearly this shift in discourse: in Chapter One, "The Rationale of Industrial Policy", "international competition" is used three times, "development" zero; in Chapter Two, "The Strategy of Industrial Policy", "international competition" is used nine times, "development" zero.

The fundamental rationale driving the industrial strategy and indeed the entire Policy matrix is based on the ideology and discourse of international competition. For example, the NIP states:

Far-reaching transformations are currently taking place in the world economy, such as to alter fundamentally the conditions of competition that confront us as producers and as a nation. All countries...must strive...to adapt to the changing circumstances in order to keep up with or ahead of the competition, or else lose out in the

competitive race" (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 16).

Moreover,

In this changed environment, what must drive the new approach and what then distinguishes it from all previous policy, is the focus on international competitiveness as the key element of policy (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 19).

The crucial premise of international competition and trade liberalization is comparative advantage, that is, "specializing in those activities which give a country a leg-up on the competition" (Drache 1996: 35). The NIP states that

International competitiveness, or comparative advantage...is rooted in a flexible and dynamic structure of production that produces a changing mix of goods and services which can win for themselves a place ("niche") in the international market in competition against rivals (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 22).

The strategic sectors of the Jamaican economy where advantages are said to be found in this document are tourism, agro-business, telecommunications, and apparel and light manufacturing.

3.1.3 Reduced Role of State

A second salient characteristic of neoliberalism is a reduced role for the state in its capacity and leverage to pursue, manage, and control independent economic policies (Quick 1993; Marshall 1996). Throughout the post World War Two period, the Jamaican state has been a vehicle for addressing the inequities in the social system and for promoting economic development of a kind that would benefit the mass of the population (Anderson and Witter 1994). It has provided a wide range of institutional, administrative and legal arrangements to promote and regulate economic activity, providing the private sector with the infrastructure and the impetus for development (Lewis 1994).

The task of pursuing such objectives in a highly globalized capitalist era, however,

is becoming more complex and more contradictory than ever before. The economic environment within which the Jamaican state operates is increasingly transnational so that national policies can no longer remain immune from the imposition of global capital (Bina and Yaghmaian 1991). The new role for the state becomes one of managing the national economy's insertion into the global economy in the hope of securing some net benefit (Jessop 1993). The state is thus a key actor in this paradigm, intimately involved in the process of organizing global capital through pursuing national economic policies which respond to the pressures of the world market and international financial institutions.

Within this process, the Jamaican state has a role of facilitating various domestic actors for the accumulation of capital. One avenue has been through the negotiation of a Social Partnership between the government, the private sector, and the trade unions. This partnership is viewed as key to creating a stable social and economic environment for Jamaica to compete effectively in the global economy.

During 1994, work stoppages increased by 50 per cent⁷ while man (*sic*) days lost increased by 86.7 per cent. This level of unrest is particularly damaging in the newly liberalized economic environment, given its discouraging effect on investment. Sporadic stoppages contribute to delays in delivery dates and deadlines, putting the country at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* competitors. In the global competitive environment, this trend cannot continue without severe loss in national wealth (Government of Jamaica 1996b: 4).

Furthermore, as one interview participant stated,

(t)he government recognizes that if there is not social and political stability, then the economic plans will be threatened because investors will not come and those that are investing here will leave. And foreign investment is key, is central (Wedderburn, interview).

⁷ In 1994 two-thirds of all work stoppages emanated from issues involving wages and conditions of employment (PIOJ 1995: 19.1).

The desired stability of this tripartite consensus is meant to benefit all: for the private sector, a friendlier environment for local and foreign investment; for workers, employment generation and improved living standards; and for the Government, a benchmark by which to create and implement sound macroeconomic policies (Government of Jamaica 1996b).

Union coverage has shrunk considerably over the last 15 years. Currently, union officials estimate that less than 20 per cent of all employed workers are currently under a collective bargaining agreement (Handa and King 1996). The vast majority of Jamaica's labour force thus was not initially represented in any formal way in this tripartite arrangement. Section 3.2.2 elaborates further on the role of NGOs in this Social Partnership.

3.1.4 Social Policy

The third key indicator of neoliberalism is that of a significant reorientation of social policy away from the concept of social development to one of social compensation. Neoliberalism considers the growth of poverty to be a pathology, not a consequence of the economic system. Hence it isolates poverty from the process of capital accumulation and economic development, and reduces the solution to designing specific social policies (Vilas 1996). Under pressures from the external managers of the domestic economy, Jamaican governments have systematically dismantled policy instruments which eroding the capacity of the state to protect essential public services such as education, health and transportation (Levitt 1991).

Government expenditure on social and community services between 1988 and 1993, for example, fell from 28 percent to 22 percent as a share of total government expenditure.

User fees in the health sector have slowly increased. The state introduced a cost-sharing scheme for public primary and secondary schools which took full effect in September 1994. The principle of cost-sharing specifies that Government retains responsibility for the payment of teachers' salaries and related expenses, while operating expenses are met at the school level from fees collected (PIOJ 1995: 20.1).

Within the context of the NIP, social policy

"is pursued so as to ensure participation by all social groups, equality of opportunity and access, and equity in sharing the fruits of our efforts. This will provide a solid basis for social stability, which is a necessary condition for the success of economic policy (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 2).

Poverty alleviation is a priority goal of the NIP and is addressed in the context of the policy in a number of ways. First, by "creat(ing) expansion of employment in high productivity sectors as well as to raise productivity all round in the economy" (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 102). This has significant gendered implications as gender is a major variable in determining the nature of labour market placement. The "high productivity sectors" are primarily found in the private sector, the country's largest employer which employs more men than women (PIOJ 1995)⁸.

Second, poverty alleviation is addressed through measures known as 'social safety nets', which are mechanisms implemented in conjunction with structural adjustment measures designed to address either structural or transitional poverty and unemployment, to

⁸ Over the period 1993-94, public sector employment was downsized by 4.8 per cent overall. In contrast, the private sector grew by 10.1 per cent over the year, remaining the largest employer of labour. Disaggregation of employment by gender indicates that more men than women are employed in the private sector compared with the public sector (PIOJ 1995: 18.3-18.4).

reduce the impact of adjustment measures on certain groups⁹, or to create or improve both social and physical infrastructure (Vivian 1995: 5). Social safety nets are closely linked to the mechanism of targeting social resources. Targeting social resources is a basic characteristic of social policy under a neoliberal regime. The NIP states that growth and diversification of production "must be matched with a targeted social policy to provide a social safety net for the poor and disadvantaged..."(Government of Jamaica 1996a: iv). Targeting is a way to guarantee that resources effectively reach those to whom they are directed (Vilas 1996; Vivian 1995).¹⁰

Third, the government "seeks to intensify the attack on poverty" (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 102) through the creation of social infrastructure, namely a National Poverty Eradication Program and a Social Investment Fund akin to those in Mexico, Peru and Bolivia. Both initiatives involve decentralization and increased participation of recipients.¹¹ Such a 'participatory' process through which social funds and programs are implemented is seen as promoting equity and democratic development processes, and as strengthening civil

⁹ One example of a targeted social safety net in Jamaica is the Food Stamp Programme, created to cushion the negative effects of devaluation and the removal of government subsidies from basic food items. In December 1994, the Programme targeted the provision of benefits to 320,000 persons (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 1996: 39). The categories of "Children Aged Less than Six, and the "Elderly/Poor/Disabled" comprised 90.3 per cent of the total number of individuals receiving food stamps in 1994. 69.3 per cent of food stamps went to individuals in Rural Areas (ibid: 40).

¹⁰ A Keynesian social security model, in contrast, is based on the principle of universal free social services. Social policy was seen as an element of investment, not as an expense (Vilas 1996).

¹¹ The National Poverty Eradication Program, for example, is formed around an integrated approach involving partnership, targeting, and community-based participation (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 102).

society, restructuring power relations, and giving previously excluded groups a means to participate (Vivian 1995). Vivian (1995) notes that Social Investment Funds are problematic on a number of accounts, particularly in terms of their male bias, lack of sustainability and autonomy as social fund schemes are heavily externally funded and/or funding comes from one-time sources of revenue generation. This is reflected in the observation of one interview participant who stated:

This Social Investment Fund is in a way quite scandalous because the World Bank and the other funders have provided X amount of money. Now that X amount of money is to be spent in X period of time. It is a loan to the government, not a grant...they must take that lump sum they have been given and they must spend that lump sum within four years. Now when you tell people that they have to spend how ever many millions of dollars in four years time, what you have is a pilot project. You don't have something that is sustainable....so the people who it is designed to help, their children and their grandchildren will have to pay for that and what they will have gotten out of it at the end of the day will not be sufficient to take their family out of poverty (Narcisse, interview).

The shifts in discourse with respect to 'development' that have occurred in the past two decades are an important correlate of the processes of global and national restructuring. As Jessop (1993: 19) remarks, changes in economic discourse are an important aspect of the restructuring of the national state in this current historical period. Discursive shifts, such as the demotion of concern over development and the emphasis now on international competition, are an important mediating link between structural changes in the global economy and the transformation of the state. These shifts in discourse provide an interpretive framework within which to make sense of ongoing change and within which are found struggles over appropriate responses to such change. Indeed, there exists in Jamaica, and within the wider Caribbean, processes of constructing alternative meanings of development to this neoliberal model. This transformative discourse challenges the premise that

neoliberalism can ever be compatible with any notion of development. The salient themes of this transformative paradigm are explored in the following discussion.

3.2 Contours of a Transformative Paradigm

There are voices opposing the ascendancy and tenets of neoliberalism in Jamaica and throughout the English-speaking Caribbean. This discussion provides an overview of the central actors involved and the central themes they articulate and advocate. To contextualize contemporary meanings of a transformative paradigm, the chapter first provides a brief historical overview, tracing the intellectual history of this paradigm.

3.2.1 Brief Historical Overview

Resistance to oppressive conditions, challenges to dominant systems and elaboration of political ideas concerning social change resonate throughout Jamaica's social, economic and political history: resistance to slavery and the plantation system through flight from plantations, insubordination, sabotage and insurrection¹² (Sherlock and Bennett 1998; Dadzie 1990; Campbell 1988; Mathurin 1975); through the maintenance of Afrocentric cultural and religious traditions despite the Christian missionary imperative (Lawson 1996); through the systematic elaboration of racial pride and black consciousness by Robert Love and Marcus

¹² In its turbulent history of slave rebellion, no single decade passed without some major incident of slave unrest. Dadzie (1990) notes that Jamaica experienced as many slave rebellions as all the other British West Indies colonies put together.

Garvey,¹³ a doctrine later infused with a class dimension by Walter Rodney (Benn 1987); through Rastafari consciousness, a significant example of a counter-cultural response in Jamaican society (Benn 1987; Nettleford 1970). The following discussion, however, is concerned primarily with contemporary actors and themes challenging the increasingly hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism and global capitalism in the region.

The beginnings of the debate on Caribbean radical development thinking may be viewed as a reaction to W. A. Lewis' arguments for Caribbean industrialization. Lewis posited a two-sector model in which surplus labour in the subsistence agriculture sector would find employment in the urban modern sector, identified as the engine of economic growth. Key to restructuring of the economy was the establishment of large-scale industry, particularly the manufacturing of textiles and garments, accomplished through a strategy of industrialization by invitation" (Mehmet 1995). This strategy would be based on labour-intensive manufactured goods geared for export to external markets given that the domestic market was too small to support a strategy of import substitution. This process of industrialization had to be initiated by foreign investors since domestic entrepreneurs lacked both capital and the necessary market connections. These ideas were implemented by several governments of the region during the 1950s and 1960s (Ramphall 1997).

By the mid 1960s, visible poverty and growing inequalities put in doubt Lewis' industrialization by invitation strategy. A growing number of radical economists based on

¹³ Garveyism represented a comprehensive attempt to deal with the problem of economic dispossession, social and political deprivation, and cultural distinction within the black community. It was the first clear articulation of a philosophy of black consciousness specifically relevant to the black experiences in the New World (Benn 1987).

the UWI campuses of Jamaican and Trinidad, calling themselves the New World Group, raised serious questions about the ability of Lewis' model to foster self-sustaining growth and to reduce the levels of unemployment. Their ideas constituted a devastating critique of this model of Caribbean industrialization and led to the emergence of a specific Caribbean school of political economy devoted to description of the dependent characteristic of Caribbean economies (Gray 1991).

The New World Group came to view "dependence" as the dominant feature of Caribbean economics and argued that this condition derived from the small size and plantation background of these economies. Best and Levitt (1968) developed the theory of plantation economy arguing that the root causes of dependent underdevelopment in the English-speaking Caribbean derived from the institutional and structural legacies of the plantation system. Girvan (1971) investigated the operation of the plantation form of economic organization in mineral export-enclave economies. Beckford (1972) elaborated on the theory by investigating the concrete mechanisms through which plantation agriculture generated what he termed "underdevelopment biases" in Third World economies¹⁴. Concerned about the alleged adverse impacts that the operations of subsidiaries of multinational corporations were having on national economic development, the New World Group proposed a range of measures aimed at changing internal production structures and institutions, including greater state intervention.

¹⁴ Apart from these mentioned works, a collection of nineteen articles drawn from *New World Quarterly* entitled Readings in the Political Economy of the Caribbean, compiled by Norman Girvan and Owen Jefferson (no date) represents broadly the thinking of the New World Group.

A second stage of Caribbean radical development thinking was the neo-Marxist approach, best represented by Clive Thomas (1974). Thomas argued that underdevelopment in the Third World was generated by the internationalization of the capitalist system. The region functioned merely as a provider of raw materials to its colonial metropole. Productive forces therefore no longer responded to the needs of the local people, a condition which led to the creation of essentially dysfunctional domestic economies which exist today. Thomas focused explicitly on the role of class and politics. In his view, the small size of the domestic markets in the region had led to the failure of a domestic capitalist class to establish itself and to a situation where dominant social classes within the region continued to benefit from the region's underdevelopment. For Thomas, the solution to the region's development problems and eradication of poverty lay in "a comprehensive socialist strategy for transforming the productive forces and liberating the political and social order" (Thomas 1974: 116-117).

Both structuralist and neo-Marxist thinking contributed greatly to an intellectual understanding of the persistence of widespread poverty in the English-speaking Caribbean. By focusing on the control and ownership of the means of production in the world economy of commodity production and exchange, the above radical development theorists located the origin of poverty in social relations of production which determine who controls the economic surplus and how the surplus is utilized. As such, this thinking ascribed a central role to economics and economic production. Based on an ethos of 'productivism', poverty could be eradicated, or at least ameliorated, by transforming the social relations of production and by increasing economic production in the region (Ramphall 1997).

3.2.2 Contemporary Transformative Meanings

The above discussion elaborated upon the intellectual history of the transformative paradigm. The conceptualization of a transformative paradigm for development in Jamaica and the Caribbean has also arisen out of the regional economic crisis of the past three decades. To the degree that the economic deterioration of the 1970s and early 1980s began to make inroads into attained standards of living, so too did it affect the dominant perspective that political parties and governments were the main avenues for presenting solutions to these problems (Lewis 1994). The inability of political parties and other groups such as trade unions to provide resources to counter exacerbating trends of poverty, social dislocation and growing inequalities between social classes left the door open for community-based groups such as farmer and peasant organizations, human rights groups, and women's organizations to foster new paradigms of development (Deere *et al* 1990; McAfee 1991). Thus much of the alternative economic thought and praxis being developed in the Caribbean is taking place somewhat independently of traditional political organizations (Lewis 1994).

The central actors in this paradigm are development oriented NGOs such as the Association of Development Agencies (ADA) in Jamaica, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) in Barbados, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD), both based in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean People's Development Agency (CARIPEDA) based in St. Vincent. These groups have "formulated a consistent critique of the model and of structural adjustment to show the ways that it is affecting the country and the people" (Vassell, interview).

...so many people have said so loudly and repeatedly that this approach is flawed and so many people have presented incontrovertible evidence that it is harming the majority of people and benefiting only a small number and that is not a sustainable arrangement. So I think the critique of the model has been very effective regionally, locally, internationally (Narcisse, interview).

Currently, NGOs are moving away from critiques to processes of articulating alternatives to the model of structural adjustment.

We realize that we are at a point now that we have critiqued the thing to death. We now have to address the "so what", "so what is going to be different". And not only so what is going to be different but to assist in the process of working out how to get there. How concretely it can happen without the necessary death of any sector. So how can the private sector continue to flourish and function while you still have an equitable society? Is that possible? That is the big question (Narcisse, interview).

Jamaican NGOs have been taking a long-term, pragmatic and multi-layered approach to promoting alternatives to the current neoliberal model. They have been working at the international level to push for reform of international financial institutions; at the regional level by articulating policy positions on macro-economic issues such as debt, structural adjustment, privatization, tourism, etc.; at the national level to pressure national governments to live up to their responsibilities to their citizens; and at the community level to encourage alternative ideas and community consciousness (Johnston 1995). The Association of Development Agencies (ADA), a national level Jamaican NGO, is an umbrella group of member agencies. Its 1994-1998 strategic plan outlines six goals: to increase civic consciousness and problem solving capacities of social organizations at local and national levels; to build member NGO capacity in the areas of governance, programming and financial management; to provide long term systematic analysis of global and macro issues and lobby with others for mechanisms for sustainable development; to promote policy advocacy and representational work on certain social, cultural and economic policies; to

diversify ADA's funding possibilities; and to support regional and international efforts to build a sustainable development paradigm and apply the learning from these efforts in ADA's own work in Jamaica (Johnston 1995).

The NGO sector in Jamaica has been active in providing support to the social sectors at the community level as the state retreats from its engagement in meeting basic necessities (Baker 1993). This has cast development-oriented NGOs into the position of being social partners, although not always recognized by the government as such (Walker 1996). NGOs, for example, were not initially included as part of the Social Partnership consultations. The unions recognized, however,

that they stood much to gain by making...some kind of collaboration with NGOs whom have made a fair impact in the country on social development programs and in a way have more contact with the community than trade unions and more contact with that 70 percent that the unions don't represent. So the unions offered a space on their side (Wedderburn, interview).

The NIP document recognizes non-governmental organizations as active participants in the Social Partnership (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 50).

The actors in this paradigm also include a grassroots constituency of social movements to which NGOs are linked. NGOs, such as ADA, support the articulation of "popular" development movements based on political and economic self-empowerment (Lewis 1994). Thus the transformative paradigm in Jamaica and the Caribbean also contains elements of what is known as 'post-development' thinking and practice. This concept has emerged in the past decade to give primacy to grassroots social movements, local knowledge and culture, popular power, and intellectual and political diversity (Rahnema 1997; Escobar 1995; Watts 1993). The economic concerns of these grassroots initiatives "are socially

embedded and expressed in cultural terms which often rest upon local 'subaltern' knowledges (Watts 1993: 268). The make-up of the transformative paradigm, hence, is heterogenous, from radical economic thought to NGOs engaging with the state on macro-economic issues to local grassroots initiatives as protagonists of their own development.

The following table outlines four salient themes central to a transformative development paradigm in the Caribbean.

Table 2: Themes of a Caribbean Transformative Paradigm

Self-determination and self-reliance	the shaping of Caribbean development strategies inside, rather than outside the region.
Participation	the broad-based involvement of Caribbean people in the definition and implementation of alternative strategies.
Equity	equitable distribution of assets, resources, etc. among classes and genders.
Sustainability	the grounding of alternative development strategies in a sound and secure environment and in local human capacity.

(Sources: Duncan 1995; Baker 1993; Deere et al 1990; Girvan 1986).

The theme of self-determination is premised on the need to reverse the particular historical formulation of development in the region with its resultant pattern of producing what is not consumed locally and consuming what is not produced locally (Thomas 1993). Self-reliant strategies are "anchored to the goal of meeting the needs and aspirations of the region's people, and not merely of increasing profit for a small minority in the North" (Andaiye and Antrobus 1995: 30). They would transform the economy from one that is

highly dependent on the variations of national and international capital to one that is increasingly self-reliant and sustainable for larger sectors of the marginalized population (Lewis 1994). Self-reliance, then, prioritizes production of goods useful to the population as a whole, instead of relying on international trade to import consumer goods that are of profit only to a minority. What is being suggested is not a "de-linking" from the global economy but rather redirecting national priorities to the production of those goods and services most needed by the populations of the region (Deere *et al* 1990). Self-determination goes hand in hand with mechanisms of global redistribution.

In the larger picture of United States foreign policy, regional geopolitics, and national security concerns, transformative strategies of self-determination must realistically contend with the general trend of politico-ideological containment that permeates the region (Lewis 1994). U.S. intervention has been a constant factor affecting the nature of Caribbean regional and national development practices. This is echoed passionately by one interview participant:

I think what is happening in our hemisphere is the demonstration of the danger of this unipolar world with one dominant power, and we just happen to be in the hemisphere with that one dominant power, who then determines that he is going to police you and decide, for example by the Helms Burton Law, how you operate as a country. That is raw power...So how do you formulate development alternatives? I think you need to look at it another way. How do you formulate development alternatives in the context of a hegemonic power in the hemisphere? How do countries like ours do it? How? (Wedderburn, interview).

This is a poignant question. One response is to begin at a community level, reducing alienation stemming from lack of control over macro economic processes. ADA, for example, is involved in promoting economic alternatives at a local level. It sponsors research, public education fora and mobilization efforts to increase awareness among Jamaican consumers of such alternatives to foreign borrowing and debt as domestic savings

and investment and community revolving loan funds (Johnston 1995).

A second related theme of a transformative paradigm is that of participation. This would include the democratization of decision-making structures in society from the level of the workplace and community to a participatory political process, right through to the implementation of policies and programs.

Participation is a very important part of development, and what I see is that very often things are planned for people. You know, we have a lot of meetings and workshops and so on but very often, those meetings and workshops are where you hear what the policy is and you don't have the opportunity to make your own input into the policy (McKenzie, interview).

Participation would entail processes in place in which to learn from the poor about their own needs, aspirations and knowledge (Andaiye and Antrobus 1995). How this might play out in reality was offered by one interviewee:

To find a way to talk with and learn from a broad cross section of society who are just as articulate and clear because of experience about alternative approaches and better way of doing things. In fact they are clearer than most of us. People who work in our factories, who watch management bring in machinery that they know is inappropriate, nobody stops to ask them. So it is to push for a bottom-up approach to decision making, whether it is decision making at the level of enterprises or businesses or communities, that has to become part of our political "agenda" as activists (Narcisse, interview).

NGOs focus on engaging grassroots organizations in the formulation of policies and alternative models of economic development, and in the decision making processes that affect their lives (Baker 1993; Lewis 1994). Participation therefore includes the valorization of local knowledge.

The overarching tenet of participation is that of a human-centred approach to development. In the Caribbean, human-centred development has been articulated as a process of "continuous enhancement of the capabilities and welfare of all individuals...and of the

society as a whole", asserting that "all people and groups in society should be both beneficiaries and active participants in the (development) process" (Girvan 1986: 13-14). The

NGO submission to the Social Partnership consultation states:

that immediate investments in the PEOPLE, our education, health, access to resources with which to make use of our abundant talents, our entrepreneurial spirit and intelligence; that such investments are what will revive the engine of economic growth and sustainable development (Interim NGO Council 1996: 7).

Identification with civil society is a strong current running through the theme of participation (Lewis 1994). As such, ADA prioritizes the involvement of civil society in governments as key to Jamaican development; it works to build parish wide associations of community organizations to participate in local governments. NGOs have served to re-conceptualize the issue of power within the region, that of the collective organization representing the interests of the community. They work at changing therefore not only the political dimension but work at changing attitudes and emphasizing values of cooperation as opposed to competition (Johnston 1995).

A third significant theme within the transformative model is that of equity, that is, gender equity in all spheres of society as well as the equitable distribution of and access to resources (Interim NGO Council 1996; Andaiye and Antrobus 1995). "The asymmetry of gender relations is detrimental not only to women, but to men and children and therefore to social, cultural, economic and political development in the wider society" (Andaiye and Antrobus 1995: 21). The negative effect of this asymmetry is reflected in the pervasive violence against women (Haniff 1995), women's political disempowerment (Jamaica Women's Political Caucus 1994), and the invisibility of much of women's work in public accounting systems (Andaiye and Antrobus 1995). These consequences limit women's

contributions to the realisation of a vision of Jamaica and the Caribbean which is humane, equitable, and sustainable.

Feminist NGOs have advanced the most comprehensive analysis in linking macro-economic analysis to experiences at the micro level of the poorest household (Lewis 1994). Gender analysis goes beyond statistical indicators of growth and development and seeks to centre on human and holistic measures of gauging the quality of Caribbean life. It has made visible the true value of women's work which contributes to national and regional production.

The theme of gender equity asserts that

women will not be able to make their full contribution to development unless they have control over their fertility, legal justice, equal access to skills and resources, and most importantly, real opportunities to participate in decision-making process-at all levels-on the basis of their experience as women (Andaiye and Antrobus 1995: 27).

A final theme is that of sustainability which includes sustaining ecological and technological resources. Modern production geared towards profit maximization has impacted disastrously on the ecology of the region, having led to increasing levels of pollution, rising rates of deforestation, soil erosion and chemical contamination of fragile ecosystems. It has also led to the destruction of a range of technological resources, represented by local technologies and associated knowledge systems (Ramphall 1997: 15). Preserving the stability of the environment, supporting subsistence economies to permit ecological balance, and promoting the development and use of local technology all play a role in creating self-sustaining societies (Rist 1997; Ramphall 1997; Lewis 1994).

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the tenets of dominant and transformative paradigms of

development in the Caribbean and Jamaica. Identifying the key actors, salient themes and prevalent discourses of these paradigms sheds light on the macro context within which feminist efforts to address women's subordination and asymmetrical gender relations operate. Paradigms wax and wane over time. The independence era in Jamaica was a historical conjuncture where an active role for the state in economic affairs was accepted within the international development paradigm, which encouraged the move towards redistributive politics. The opportunity was taken to improve education, expand infrastructure, dispense jobs and to present the state as the agent of modernization and development. The PNP government in the early 1970s was one in which state credence was given to principles of the transformative paradigm.

Restructured global capitalism and the ideological ascendancy of neoliberalism have together shaped a new international development paradigm, based on neoliberal strictures that seek to ensure the unfettered circulation of goods and services globally. This paradigm shift marks a significant challenge for Jamaican national development as shifts in the ideological sphere influence and shape the backdrop of development planning and allocation of resources. Analysis of the *National Industrial Policy* demonstrates the extent to which the Jamaican state embraces neoliberal philosophy through its emphasis on international competition, reduced role for the state, and advocacy of social policy based on the principle of targeting, not social investment. While the state cannot completely abandon its role as allocator of social goods and development resources, neoliberal forces displace the capacity and leverage of governments to manage, augment and control developmentalist agendas. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, neoliberalism poses significant constraints to,

and operates as a conservatizing influence on, feminist efforts to engender meanings of development.

Alongside this dominant paradigm exist articulations of alternatives to a neoliberal view of economy and society. Actors, especially development-oriented NGOs, seek both to dislodge the privileged hegemony of structural adjustment and international competition as viable development processes for the Caribbean, *and* to formulate alternative social and economic proposals based on principles of self-determination and self-reliance, participation, equity and sustainability. While this transformative paradigm encompasses the whole English-speaking Caribbean, specific reference was made where possible to how such principles are operationalized in Jamaica.

The transformative paradigm is not an abstract model but a historical, multi-dimensional process of struggle. Globalization, however, places enormous constraints on popular struggles and social change within a country or region. As such, actors are taking a pragmatic and multi-layered approach to advancing visions of transformation, from engaging the government in its Social Partnership consultations to working directly with local communities. While much of the NGO work is centred on economic issues, the transformative paradigm is not monolithic in prioritizing economics as the lens for problematizing social reality. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven, grassroots organizations seek to contribute non-economic meanings of transformative development.

This chapter has provided a framework through which feminist engagements with development in Jamaica will be analyzed in Chapters Six and Seven. The thesis now turns to a theoretical overview of feminism and development. This is an important step in this

study as feminist theories have provided critical insights into the gender biases of development paradigms. Furthermore, the tenets of such theories are present in feminist strategies to engender the paradigms discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Feminist Engagements with Development: Theoretical Contributions

From the interplay of North-South and South-South feminist encounters over the past three decades has emerged an array of theoretical frameworks explicating the role and experiences of women in development processes. The approaches, goals and strategies employed by Jamaican feminists in engendering meanings of development have both informed and been informed by this global body of feminist theorizing of development. This chapter draws out the salient themes in the debate between the two most influential feminist theories of development in Jamaica, namely Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD).

The first section of the chapter briefly traces the historical background of WID and GAD in order to contextualize their emergence in the field of international development. The second section provides a summary overview of WID theory, focusing on its liberal feminist roots interpreted within the international arena. How WID theory played itself out in the Caribbean context as a means of understanding women's experiences with development efforts is also elaborated upon. The third section delineates the main tenets of GAD theory which combines a critique of global political economy by Southern feminists with social feminist thought by Northern feminists. The application of GAD theory to understanding women and development processes in Jamaica highlights the critical linkage between women's productive and reproductive work, and the relation between these labour patterns and other aspects of gender inequality and class inequality. The theoretical positions of WID and GAD underpin feminist practice in Jamaica with respect to development. Critically examining them contributes to an understanding of the various forms and strategies of

engendering development.

4.1 Theories of Women, Gender and Development: An Historical Background

International development as an area of intellectual inquiry can be traced to the post-World War II era. The birth of the 'development project' in the 1950s was a global phenomenon that swept across political and ideological differences (Escobar 1995). As with the United States' Marshall Plan for Europe, western and western-trained economic planners were convinced that monetary and technical aid channelled to Third World countries would foster industrialization and economic growth. The benefits accruing to the modern industrialized sector would eventually "trickle down" to the benefit of everyone, through improved living conditions, wages, education and health services. Economists and planners argued that this trickle down strategy would ultimately benefit the poor and transform the economies of developing countries.

By the late 1960s, concern over the failure of this strategy to reduce the increasing economic disparities between North and South, and dissatisfaction with 'growth-dominated' definitions of development led to a reformulation of development goals to take greater account of poverty and the meeting of basic needs. Moreover, former colonial nations were calling for a New International Economic Order which would bring about greater equity in the distribution of the world's resources. Third World liberation struggles combined with feminist, civil-rights and black power movements in the North to heighten awareness of continuing global inequities and injustices. It is against this backdrop of ferment and a context of changed priorities within international development agencies that women emerged

as an object of concern for policy-makers and planners (Kabeer 1994).

Ester Boserup's landmark study, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), is often cited as the watershed which opened the doors to (Northern) feminist investigations of women's socio-economic and political status in the Third World. Since this time, the multi-disciplinary nature of the women and development field has generated an array of theoretical perspectives that have guided development researchers, practitioners and advocates. The two key approaches particularly relevant in the Jamaican context are Women and Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD).¹⁵ These two theories propose contrasting explanations of women's disadvantaged status and the marginalization of women in development processes. WID espouses a theory of roles, in which sex-role socialization is key to women's disadvantage. GAD espouses a theory of power relations, identifying broad interconnecting relationships through which women are positioned as a subordinate group in the division of resources and responsibilities, power and privilege (Kabeer 1994; Rathgeber 1990). Table 3 succinctly delineates salient dimensions of each theory. These are elaborated upon further in sections 5.2 and 5.3, with reference to the Caribbean and Jamaican context.

¹⁵ Two other theoretical paths, Women and Development (WAD) and Women, Environment and Development (WED), are not included in this chapter as they have not reverberated in Jamaica and the Caribbean to the same extent as WID and GAD. There is little, if any, reference in the literature on WAD and WED pertaining to the Caribbean context.

Table 3: Comparison of Women in Development (WID) & Gender and Development (GAD) Theoretical Frameworks

Dimensions	Women in Development	Gender and Development
Approach	Liberal feminist theory; theory of roles.	Socialist feminist theory; theory of power relations.
Focus	Women, as individuals and as an isolated category; women's productive roles emphasized.	Gender relations; link between productive & reproductive spheres; holistic view of women's lives.
Problem	Women insufficiently integrated into the processes of economic modernization; male bias	Imbalance of power-relations including gender, class and race.
Goals	Equal opportunity; to achieve more efficient economic development.	Development from a gender perspective; gender-aware policy and planning.
Solutions	Integrate women into existing development processes; overcoming male bias.	Reverse hierarchy of knowledge production; reverse allocational priorities in planning process.
Strategies	Income-generating projects; legal reform; access to education, land and credit; women as community managers.	Access to and control over resources and benefits; participation of the state in promoting women's emancipation; women's collective power.

(Sources: Young 1997; Kabeer 1994; de los Rios 1993; Rathgeber 1990; Sen and Grown 1987).

4.2 Overview of Women in Development Theory

WID subscribes to various assumptions of modernization theory which depicts development as an evolutionary, unilinear process of change propelling societies from their pre-modern status through a series of stages towards the final destination of modernity (Escobar 1995; Parpart 1993). Modernization theory targets individuals as the catalysts for social change, emphasizing changes in individual values and attitudes as a critical

prerequisite for the transformation of pre-modern institutions and cultures into modern society. It is premised upon an androcentric, liberal definition of individuals. Thus 'modern man' is defined as an individual characterized by rational behaviour consisting of innovativeness, dynamism, competitiveness and risk-taking, specializing in full-time production for the market. Modernization theory reflects liberal political ideology of individualism, independence and division between public and private realms, a division that understands the realm of the family as women's sphere and the realm of the public as men's. Thus early development policy makers and planners brought 'modern' woman into development on very sex-specific terms, as mothers and housewives (Kabeer 1994).

Originally developed and articulated by American feminists in the early 1970s, WID theory emerged as a powerful critique of development policy from a liberal feminist perspective of modernization theory and practices. Liberal feminism developed as a reaction to the patriarchal bias of liberal philosophy (Eisenstein 1981). Liberal feminist philosophy maintains that the subordination of women is a deviation from the norms of equality and justice for all individuals. It contends that sexual inequality can largely be corrected if women are integrated into the public sphere as the equals of men (Bandarage 1984). Liberal feminism is based on the ideas of freedom of choice, individualism and equality of rights and opportunity. Women are conceptualized as an undifferentiated category making individual choices in the face of prejudice and constraints. They are disconnected from the economic, sexual and racial relations that structure life (Eisenstein 1981).

Transported into the international arena, liberal feminism postulated that women in the Third World were insufficiently integrated into the processes of economic modernization,

that is, the public sphere. Traditional attitudes and values, limited education, and lack of legal rights are viewed as constraints to this integration. Since the benefits of development were generated in the modern sector and the cash economy, the solution to improving women's status lay in integrating women into the Western development model (Kabeer 1994). Furthermore, if western policy-makers and planners could discard preconceived stereotypes of women and be made aware of the importance of women's contribution to development, women would be ensured equal access to the benefits and resources accruing to development endeavours (Antrobus 1997; Moser 1993; Jaquette 1990).

Two early influential texts from the WID literature illuminate these arguments. Tinker (1976) focused on the detrimental effects on women of development projects based on Western ethnocentric views. She suggested that "Western stereotypes of appropriate roles and occupations for women tend to be exported with aid" (Tinker 1976: 33), so that modernization widened the gap between men and women's earning power. For Tinker, one significant consequence of these stereotypes was the invisibility of women's productive roles in the planning process. Middle-class Western bias blinds planners to the important role women play in subsistence economies. Thus Tinker laid the blame for the adverse impact of development on women on misinformed and misguided male planners, on prejudice and misinformation.

Rogers (1980) investigated the discrimination practised within major international development agencies and the biases in their data collection procedures. Her study arrived at a similar conclusion as Tinker: that development policy is discriminatory, based on the imposition of a Western male model of women's roles onto Third World women. For Rogers,

women were rational economic agents whose potential is constrained by a discriminatory and distorted planning process. Instead of perpetuating women's marginal status, planners needed to find ways of improving women's productivity.

Rogers' work represented a significant shift within WID theory. Early WID theory focused on the adverse impact of development on women. Rogers' work reversed the equation, stressing the adverse impact of women's exclusion on development. In other words, it was not so much that women needed development, but that *development needed women*. Indeed, women's economic contribution as a means of achieving more efficient economic development is the predominant and current WID approach framing bilateral and multilateral policies towards women (Moser 1993).

4.2.1 Application of WID Theory in the Caribbean Context

The 1970s witnessed a reactivation of the women's movement throughout the Caribbean region (Nain 1997; Ford-Smith 1997). The consciousness among women about the discrimination they faced in political and economic arenas propelled women to organize politically and generated a new body of feminist scholarship. This section turns to an examination of some of this WID scholarship as it has emerged in the Caribbean.

The argument that development was having an adverse impact on women precipitated an explosion of research documenting women's lives. A major effort of WID scholars across the globe has been to generate and analyze sex-disaggregated data on basic indicators such as employment in agriculture, industry and the informal sector, health, education, the law, and participation in politics (Goetz 1994). The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP,

1979-1982) best exemplifies this type of documentary project in the Caribbean within a WID theoretical framework. Conducted under the auspices of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of West Indies, with funding from a variety of international donor agencies, the WICP was the first comprehensive, in depth study of Afro-Caribbean women in the Caribbean (Barriteau 1995; Massiah 1991)¹⁶. Prior to 1975, very little research had been done on the lives of Caribbean women; that which had been carried out was conducted in the context of research on the family and kinship patterns (Barriteau 1995).

The five major objectives of the multi-disciplinary study were to identify gaps in knowledge about women's roles; to devise a theoretical framework which would integrate analysis of women's roles; to establish a regional data base for teaching, research and for relevant policy guidelines for integrating women into development; to identify appropriate mechanisms for the dissemination of research results; and to produce a cadre of feminist researchers (Massiah 1986). Ultimately,

the WICP's programme of activities sought to ensure the acceptance by policy-makers, of potentially useful knowledge for promoting and safeguarding women's interests and for organising their participation in the socio-economic development of their territories (Massiah 1986: 164).

The WICP study includes the collection of statistical information on women's position in the labour market; it analyzes the multiplicity of activities that constitute work in women's lives; and it describes women's resourcefulness in developing survival strategies under adverse economic conditions. It represents a major effort to characterize women's roles and responsibilities in the workplace and the home. Bound to liberal tradition, it exposes the

¹⁶ It is comprised of a two volume collection of fourteen research papers found in Social and Economic Studies. vols. 2&3, 1986.

exclusion of Afro-Caribbean women from post-independence economic and political developments and addresses change within existing structures of power. Its findings conclude that women's exclusion from development is a function of insufficiently informed decisions; hence development planners and policy makers will take up women's interests if provided with adequate and relevant information (Barriteau 1995).

4.3 Overview of Gender and Development Theory

A second major theoretical track, Gender and Development (GAD), emerged in the 1980s representing the confluence of diverse feminist perspectives. GAD emerged in large part as a critique of WID and its liberal feminist assumptions by Third World feminist activists and academics. WID was criticized for accepting an agenda which lacks structural analysis of the nature of the development model into which women were being integrated (Rathgeber 1990; Beneria and Sen 1981). Dissatisfied with the predominant WID focus on equity and efficiency, feminist writings and experiences in grassroots organizations of Third World women pointed to the disadvantaged position of women in the world economy, and to the destructive legacy of colonialism, racism and capitalism.

The much-acclaimed monograph *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions* (Sen and Grown 1987) represents an important contribution from a Southern perspective to the evolution of GAD theory. Sen and Grown examine the development model assumed by the major agencies and argue that the strategies for overall economic growth and increased agricultural and industrial productivity have proved inimical to women. A set of interlinked crises in the areas of food and fuel, financial and monetary disarray, environmental

degradation, and demographic pressure has worsened the situation for poor people. Sen and Grown (1987: 9-10) argue that development programs and strategies should begin from the vantage point of poor women because

it is the experiences lived by poor women throughout the Third World in their struggles to ensure the basic survival of their families and themselves that provide the clearest lens for an understanding of development processes.

They examine the ways in which women's experiences with economic growth, commercialization and market expansion are determined by both gender and class, which liberal integrationist approaches fail to account for. Sen and Grown (1987: 18) privilege women's contributions as workers and as managers of households to tackle the crises of survival.

The focus of Southern feminist academics on the global political economy and on the interlocking of gender and class resonated with and influenced feminist scholars in the North working within a socialist feminist framework. Socialist feminist theory explains women's oppression as arising from two systems: a system of male domination, patriarchy, producing the specific gender-oppression of women, and a system of class domination, capitalism, producing class oppression (Barriteau 1995; Barrett 1980). Women's oppression is not solely located in the class relations of capitalism but is expanded to other sites such as the household and women's reproductive labour. Juliet Mitchel (1971: 296), for example, posits that women's subordinate status arises from their position in the four social structures of production, reproduction, sexuality and the reproduction of children. She rejects the idea that women's condition results solely from the economy; instead women's oppression occurs in these four structures.

Similarly, Zillah Eisenstein (1979) delineates a system of power deriving from what she calls 'capitalist patriarchy', a term referring to the dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring. Eisenstein (1979: 6) criticizes radical feminists and some socialist women for viewing women's oppression as dichotomous:

One *either* sees the social relations of production *or* the social relations of reproduction, domestic *or* wage labor, the private *or* public realms, the family *or* the economy, ideology *or* material conditions, the sexual division of labor *or* capitalist class relations as oppressive. Even though most women are implicated on both sides of these dichotomies, *woman* is dealt with as though she were not. Such a conceptual picture of woman hampers the understanding of the complexity of her oppression.

Eisenstein attempts to replace this dichotomous thinking with a dialectical approach. She provides a comprehensive account of women's exploitation and oppression. Power and oppression derive "from sex, race, and class" and are manifested "through both the material and ideological dimensions of patriarchy, racism and capitalism" (Eisenstein 1979: 23).

Iris Young (1981) advances the argument of gender relations within the structures of capitalist patriarchy as the site of women's oppression. In her essay, she critiques the core Marxist concept of class as gender blind, providing no place for analysis of gender differentiation and gender hierarchy. She proposes instead to elevate the category of 'division of labour' "to a position as fundamental as, if not more fundamental than, that of class" (Young 1981: 50). Young contends that this category provides feminists with a tool to analyze social relations of labour activity along the axis of gender. A gender division of labour analysis of capitalism enables a view of gender relations as fundamental to the structure of relations of production, not merely a central aspect.

Feminist theorists at the Institute for Development Studies, Sussex, were instrumental in advancing socialist feminist thought in the field of international development. Dissatisfied

with the promotion of 'women' as the key category of analysis in WID theory, the Subordination of Women group (SOW, 1979) at IDS argued that the consequent treatment in liberal theory of men and women in isolation from each other worked to render invisible men's roles in the continuing subordination of women in the development process. The SOW group worked to theorize a deeper understanding of the ways in which asymmetrical gender relations may have contributed to the extent and forms of exclusion that women faced in the development process (Kabeer 1994). Kate Young and Naila Kabeer have identified some of the key aspects of a GAD theoretical framework. These are now discussed.

Kate Young (1997) maintains that GAD shifts attention away from looking at women and men as isolated categories, to looking at the social relationships through which they are mutually constituted as unequal social categories. The GAD model starts from a holistic perspective, looking at "the totality of social organization, economic and political life in order to understand the shaping of particular aspects of society" (Young 1997: 52). The outcome is an analytical framework that emphasizes and connects gender relations in both the labour force and the reproductive sphere. In this sense, "the structure of the working day in the sphere of production is only intelligible if the existence of the domestic sphere is taken as a given" (Young 1997: 52). In this sense, a key analytical concept of GAD theory is that of re/production. Re/production refers to the combined activities of goods-production (that is, the production and servicing of consumer and producer goods) and human-reproduction (both biological and social).

Gender-aware policy and planning involves asking: who benefits, who loses, what trade-offs have been made, and what is the resultant balance of rights and obligations, power

and privilege between men and women, and between given social groups. GAD is much less optimistic than WID about the role of the market as distributor of benefits. Instead, it places greater emphasis on the participation of the state in promoting women's emancipation. It underlines the duty of the state to provide social capital, that is, expenditure on health and education, so as to create the conditions for future economic growth. While WID emphasizes the need for women to be organized into collective groupings to increase their bargaining power in the economic system, GAD also stresses the need for women to organize themselves for a more effective political voice.

Naila Kabeer (1994) also delineates a GAD theoretical model, which she calls 'capital accumulation and the social relations of gender'. A social-relations approach is concerned with exploring how the relations of class and gender mediate social realities, translating broader processes of change into concrete gains and losses for different groups of women and men (Kabeer 1994: 62). Gender operates as a pervasive allocational principle, linking production and reproduction, domestic with public domains, and the macro-economy with the micro-level institutions within which the development processes are played out. Thus a focus on gender relations extends the Marxist concept of social relations beyond the production of objects and commodities to the production and care of human life and existence.

For Kabeer, the GAD model envisages a "project of reversals" in knowledge production and allocational priorities. The 'ways of knowing' that have dominated the production of knowledge in development studies have legitimated particular viewpoints and methods at the expense of others. Development from a gender perspective, in theory and in

practice, "offers the viewpoint from below, a viewpoint that can help realign development paradigms more closely to the 'real order of things'" (Kabeer 1994: 81). Such a perspective would validate indigenous forms of knowledge and the perceptions and priorities of the poor.¹⁷ A reversal of allocational priorities in the planning process entails measuring development by the extent to which human well-being is assured rather than solely by the volume of marketed goods and services. This reversal would recognize activities which contribute to the health and well-being as productive regardless of where they are carried out.

Like Young, Kabeer maintains that "women's collective strength and creativity remains the main hope of a transformative politics" (Kabeer 1994: 92). The patchwork of informal grassroots associations and nation wide movements which seek to improve women's condition and status represent a diverse and rich conduit for changing women's lives well beyond what is envisaged by official agencies of development.

4.3.1 Application of GAD Theory in Jamaica

A Gender and Development framework has been employed by various feminist scholars to challenge the gender neutrality implicit in macro-economic policies (such as structural adjustment policies) in Jamaica. Specifically, this empirical literature highlights the critical linkage between women's productive and reproductive work, and the relation between these labour patterns and other aspects of gender inequality and class inequality.

Bolles (1986) provides insights into how Jamaican female-headed households "cope

¹⁷ In this vein, Marianne Marchand (1995) argues that the use of testimonies provides one venue for marginalized women to impart their views, practices and expertise and thereby participate in the production of knowledge about GAD.

with dependence in an insecure and inadequate wage economy based on international monopoly capital" (Bolles 1986: 65). This empirical study links household-based activities to a larger economic structure shaped by external forces such as the IMF and Caribbean Basin Initiative. Unequal class relations alongside a lower status of women are reproduced and maintained by the type of work women do and the level of dependency they face as economic supporters for their households.

Similarly, Safa and Antrobus (1992) document the impact of structural adjustment on Jamaican women in terms of wages and employment, the cost of living, and reductions in public expenditure. They argue that Jamaica's economic crisis reproduces unequal gender relations as women are a more vulnerable segment of the labour force, earning less than men and experiencing higher levels of unemployment. Reductions in public expenditures in areas such as health and education coupled with the elimination or reduction of subsidies on food, transportation and utilities further exacerbate unequal gender relations. These elements of structural adjustment policies shift costs to the household. Since it is women who undertake most of the work in the household this shift of costs is equivalent to assuming that there is an unlimited supply of unpaid female labour able to compensate for any adverse changes resulting from macro-economic policy. Existing asymmetrical class relations are maintained because of the increase cost of living.

By emphasizing the interdependence between productive and reproductive economies, Safa and Antrobus highlight the ways in which macro-policy often takes the reproductive economy for granted, assuming that it can accommodate itself to whatever changes macro-policy introduces. They focus on the asymmetrical gender and class relations

that are reproduced and maintained in a pattern of dependent development and increasing integration into a global economy, via structural adjustment. Safa and Antrobus conclude that while women have organized themselves collectively and drawn upon traditional networks of support, the state and international agencies take implicit advantage of this through economic policies. For development priorities to be reversed and for the Caribbean as a whole to engage in any sort of structural change, the authors contend that women's demands must be recognized and development must begin from a gender perspective.

Another angle of application of a GAD framework to investigate development processes in Jamaica is the literature focusing on an analysis of conditions affecting women as waged workers in multi-national corporations. Specifically, it urges consideration of how the global division of labour functions to confine most women to a narrow range of low-paying, gender-typed positions in their economies. Dunn (1995, 1991) examines the phenomenon of Free Trade Zones in Jamaica and the predominance of cheap female unorganized labour as key to them. In both texts, she traces working conditions, wages, labour codes as well as organizing strategies by women to ameliorate their situation.

Similarly, Pearson (1993) highlights issues pertaining to women engaged in data-processing work. GAD explanations of women's predominance in export-manufacturing rests on gender relations which construct women as 'cheap' labour by requiring of them skills, speed and accuracy over a variety of labour processes that command no premiums within the labour market because employers offer no formal training. Thus the value of their labour is pre-determined. With respect to workers in the data entry sector, Pearson concludes that similar processes are at work that construct women as a preferred low-wage labour force.

4.4 Conclusion

Feminist interest in women and development processes has been motivated by evidence of their declining status worldwide. Feminist research has been concerned to illuminate structures of exclusion embedded in standard development practices which serve to marginalize women's interests and relegate them to the periphery of planned intervention (Goetz 1991). Theories explicating the locus of women's subordination in development processes vary. This chapter has explored two principal theories, namely Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD). WID seeks reform to women's discrimination and disadvantaged status within the prevailing mainstream development paradigm. GAD is situated within an alternative paradigm which seeks to transform current social, political, economic and gender relationships. As such, WID and GAD diverge significantly in terms of approach, focus, goals, solutions and strategies.

Essentially, WID and GAD are two feminist theories of development which conceptualize the dynamics of power differently. The WID focus on women as individuals and advocacy to counter distortions of sex-role stereotypes leads to a failure to consider the question of male power, economic, political and inter-personal. GAD espouses a theory of power relations; it focuses on the broader interconnecting relationships through which women are positioned as a subordinate group - individually and institutionally - in the division of resources and responsibilities, power and privilege.

As elsewhere around the world, WID and GAD are employed by feminists in Jamaica as tools for constructing analysis around women's experiences with various development strategies. This is not an unproblematic issue, on two accounts. Both WID and GAD have

been criticized for their tendency to represent Third World women as the impoverished, vulnerable "other" (Parpart 1995). Second, as with the bulk of development literature, WID theory is completely silent on the issue of race as a social relation of power. GAD acknowledges race as a property of power relations but it is lost in discussion of gender and class. Yet, the aspect of representation and the presence of race are key issues inherent in strategies to engender development paradigms in Jamaica. Although the theoretical frameworks of WID and GAD exert a powerful influence over feminist knowledge of development, the practices and goals emanating from them must be responsive to the historical and specific conditions which shape women's encounters with each other.

The following chapter scrutinizes Jamaica's heterogeneous economic environment through the lens of women's re/productive activities. Their specific location and position within multiple economic circuits result in a set of complex inter-relations among women, contributing to the shape feminist of mobilization in both paradigms.

Chapter Five: A Web of Complexity: Social Relations Among Women

Chapter Five is concerned with illuminating the ways in which women are differentiated from each other on the basis of race and class. This task is important to this study because these two social relations are a persevering characteristic of feminist activism in Jamaica. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the correlation between class and race in Jamaica. It then examines the heterogeneity of the Jamaican economy, permitting investigation into the nature of women's economic activities. Cecilia Green (1995) has characterized the economies of the English-speaking Caribbean as consisting of three converging yet relatively distinct economic circuits: the household-domestic; the domestic-national; and the transnational enclave. This framework is employed here with reference to Jamaica to more fully situate women as economic actors. I do not wish to reduce women's lives to a question of economics but rather establish that women's location and status in the three circuits create a complex set of inter-relationships between women. The purpose of this chapter is to understand both race as a key social relationship among women as well as the various modes of economic re/production that women participate in, as these bear upon the character of feminist participation to engender development paradigms.

5.1 Correlations of Race and Class

Jamaican society is characterized by numerous contexts that structure the daily life of its people. One of the most apparent is the close correlation between race and class. Stuart Hall (1977: 154) remarks that the patterns of race/colour stratification, cultural stratification and class-occupational stratification overlap; this is the absolutely distinctive feature of

Caribbean society. While race and class closely intersect in Jamaica, each needs to be understood as its own organizing principle of social relations. Racial dynamics are a determinant of class relationships and identities, not mere consequences of these relationships (Omi and Winant 1986). Similarly, class relations as a feature of contemporary societies are practical activities accomplished by people in everyday life (Ng 1988).

While race and class are separate social processes, I want to remark here on the common tendency of Jamaican feminists to subsume racial differences among women under those of class. For example,

I would say we have a colour-class division in this society. But in fact you can understand differences between women largely by class and education (McKenzie, interview).

As well,

Race sometimes comes in but...it boils down to a class thing because a woman who is light skinned and half white, she coming from a plantocracy, went to certain schools. It's really a class thing because even some women who are from the lower class when they rise up they treat you down there bad (Afolashade, interview).

Collapsing of race into class is in part reflective of the larger social context of Jamaica where "colour differences aren't articulated, aren't verbalized a lot" (Vassell, interview). The race/class correlation makes for a complex set of interactions between women. This is further discussed in the following section on women's position in Jamaica's various economic circuits.

5.2 Household-Domestic Circuit

The primary purpose of activities in this circuit is to directly reproduce and sustain human beings and labour power. Activities include reproductive labour (biological,

childrearing, physical and emotional nurturance) and production for subsistence purposes. These activities are also closely associated with petty commodity production or circulation, for example, domestic food crops produced for the most part in the peasant household sector. Reproductive labour may be carried out by women or men even though it tends overwhelmingly to be socially ascribed as "women's work". Unpaid and hence undervalued reproductive activities of the household domestic circuit "feeds" invisible value into the domestic and transnational economies. Thus the hyphenated term "household-domestic" conveys the contribution of this circuit to a wider "domestic economy".

This economic circuit is differentiated along lines of gender where an average of 44 per cent of households are headed by women (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 1996: 3). There is a positive correlation between this and urbanism, where 50.7 per cent of female-headed households are located in the Kingston Metropolitan Area compared to 38.7 per cent in rural areas. There is a further positive correlation between household head and poverty as female-headed households constitute 55 per cent of all households in the poorest quintile followed by 48.4 per cent in the second poorest quintile (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 1996: 5). Female-headed households have lower consumption levels than male-headed households. The mean per capita consumption of a household with a male head was JA\$35,516 in 1994 compared with JA\$29,436 for a household with a female head (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 1996: 12).

The household-domestic economic circuit is also differentiated on the basis of class and race. Peasant and working class household circuits rely more on informal networks than middle and upper class households for their reproduction. The latter rely primarily on formal

sector incomes and revenues and purchase of formal sector goods and services, and only secondarily on informal sector exchanges. Furthermore, middle and upper class families benefit from and exploit informal economic circuits, on the basis of class and gender divisions of labour, for example, through domestic service. The household domestic circuits of the working classes "are the prime repositories and reservoirs of black/afrocentric material and symbolic concentrations" within the wider culture. Upper class households tend to be the site of European/North American cultural concentrations (Green 1995).

5.3 Domestic-National Circuit

The domestic-national circuit is the site of the particular articulation of production, distribution and consumption on whose basis a sense of national community is reproduced, and combines both formal and informal spheres. The hyphenation of "domestic" and "national" captures the articulation between activities which are more internally oriented and tend to reproduce domestic autonomy and those which are officially "national" in stature and tend to reproduce national dependency within the international economy. In some ways this circuit has been formed by the intersection and crisscrossing of disparate circuits, local and transnational (Green 1995: 87).

To understand women's multiple positions in this particular circuit it is beneficial to first explore the incorporation of Jamaica into the global economy. This process began in the sixteenth century with the colonization of Jamaica by the Spanish and British, the genocide of its indigenous peoples, and the establishment of plantation agriculture as the dominant economic activity. The dominance of large-scale sugar production required a steady supply

of labour which led to the forced importation of labour from West Africa (Sherlock and Bennett 1998).

The overwhelming occupational and life experience of slave women was that of field labour. The proportion of the male slave workforce tied to field work was smaller as they had a monopoly on the most skilled and highest-status slave occupations - as technicians in the factory, plantation artisans or craftsmen (Green 1994). In addition, women were involved in domestic labour and petty trading. Slave women frequently farmed subsistence plots in addition to their required plantation work and sold the goods they produced at Sunday markets. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the internal marketing system was a well-entrenched part of the Jamaican economy, dominated by rural slave provision producers and urban slave hucksters who were predominantly female (Simmonds 1987).

With emancipation in 1838, ex-slaves established independent farming communities primarily through buying land, squatting on abandoned plantations and Crown lands or via missionary organizations such as the Baptist Church which sold or leased small lots to establish church communities (Besson 1992). Favoured jobs for women into the mid-twentieth century tended to be forms of self-employment such as higglers, cultivators and seamstresses. When these could not be had, women sought out domestic service, task work as casual labour on estates or, toward the end of the nineteenth century, employment in the small light-industrial sector making straw goods or cigarettes (Green 1994; Lobdell 1988).

Census data indicates that during the period 1881-1921 the number of working age women increased at a greater rate than did the number of working age men (59 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively) reflecting the migrations of men to work on sugar and banana

estates in Cuba and Central America. After 1921, levels of female employment declined drastically. According to the 1943 census, between 1921 and 1943 the entire female labour force declined from 59.6 per cent to 34 per cent (Green 1994). While the causes for the decline originate in the post-World War I economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, a period that included pressures on the labour market to accommodate returning male migrants and war veterans, there is also an ideological aspect. The 1943 and 1946 census figures eliminated the categories of female provision farmers, unpaid family workers and informally subcontracted labourers, redefining them as housewives and dependents. Furthermore, the 1943 census redefined farms according to their integration into the export (cash) crop economy. Therefore not only were women statistically removed from official figures but their main farming base - land use for subsistence and local food production - also disappeared. French (1988) argues that the revolutionary potential of male unemployment made it expedient to promote a male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology which would justify the ejection of women from the wage market and thereby ease unemployment.

Transitions in the global economy and in the international division of labour began to expand women's occupational choices in the late twentieth century. In the post-World War II period, a strategy of "industrialization by invitation" was undertaken by English-speaking Caribbean countries including Jamaica. Programmes of incentives and protection to encourage foreign investment in the main pillars of the economy (mining, tourism, manufacturing) were implemented with the aim to diversify the economy, earn foreign exchange, and provide employment for a growing labour force (Anderson and Witter 1994).

Social class differentiations occurred in the middle and lower classes as a result of this new economic order. A significant professional black middle class emerged, facilitated in part by the rapid growth of the public sector and expanded educational opportunities. The educated middle-class (black and coloured) profited from the growing numbers of professional managerial positions in the private and public sectors, and in professions such as law, medicine, and engineering. Middle-class women took advantage of emerging clerical, commercial and social service employment opportunities that opened up, first on a racially selective basis, but increasingly on considerations of educational qualifications (Green 1994). Low and unskilled workers had access to jobs in factories, hotels, and transportation. Working-class women were drawn into industrial production as it came to involve labour-intensive, light manufacturing of textiles and garments. The number of women in manufacturing increased from 23 percent of the total in the early 1950s to nearly 35 per cent in 1973 (Green 1994).

This economic model sustained two decades of growth, averaging 6 per cent GDP per annum between the 1950s and 1973 (Levitt 1991). It did not significantly alleviate unemployment which stood at 23.2 per cent in 1972. Moreover, the nature of economic development aggravated the already extremely unequal distribution of income thereby exacerbating a discordant class system intricately linked with race. It was almost exclusively blacks who were poor, unemployed and suffered the most from the negative effects of growth (Stephens and Stephens 1986).

The election of a democratic socialist PNP government in 1972 sought to increase the level of state involvement in the economy to better control economic development.

Beyond this, the PNP government implemented a number of reformist and redistributive policies designed to stimulate forms of economic development capable of producing widespread prosperity and political stability. Measures were introduced to assist and encourage small businesses, free education was extended to secondary and university levels, work opportunities expanded through job-creation programs and increases in real wages were achieved (Hyett 1993; Levitt 1991; Stephens and Stephens 1986).

Since 1973 the Jamaican economy has declined almost continuously until the end of the 1980s. The oil crisis in 1974 dealt a major blow to industrial strategy by reducing the country's capacity to purchase imported goods through the second half of the decade. To expand its own revenue base in response to the oil crisis, the PNP imposed a levy on the bauxite industry. Growth rates in all key sectors of the economy were affected by the massive flight of capital of foreign private capital which followed such an imposition. Bauxite exports plummeted, sugar output dropped and tourism receipts fell sharply. Annual growth rates of between -15 and -35 per cent were not uncommon during the second half of the decade. Unemployment began to rise and real incomes fell (Hyett 1993: 133). External pressure, chiefly from the US government, the IMF and multinational capital, escalated to restructure the economy in ways acceptable to these transnational interests. Jamaica has been subject to IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs since 1977, comprised of a series of policy implementations including currency devaluations, the removal of some price controls, deregulation of import controls, public sector retrenchment, reduction and removal of subsidies, tighter monetary and fiscal policy, deregulation of the financial sector, and privatization of publicly-owned enterprises (Levitt 1991).

The export-led development strategy of the JLP government throughout the 1980s, which was at the heart of structural adjustment, and a current PNP government committed to neoliberal free market philosophy have resulted in substantial structural change in this economic circuit. The service sector now exceeds the goods-producing sector as percentage contribution to GDP, with goods contributing 44.6 per cent and services 72.4 per cent (PIOJ 1995: 1.5). Furthermore, the goods-producing sector has also witnessed a decline in employment by 6.2 per cent between 1990 and 1994, indicating a shift of labour resources to the services-producing sectors (PIOJ 1995: 18.4).

The productive base of the domestic-national economy today comprises the following major components: the production of primary products for export such as bananas, sugar and bauxite; small-scale production of food crops and crafts for subsistence and for the domestic market; related small scale marketing; import/wholesale/retail trade; commercial, government, financial, professional and skilled-trades services; construction, real estate, transportation; and limited domestic manufacturing often through joint venture arrangements (Green 1995). The financial, insurance, real estate sectors were the fastest growing sector of Jamaica's economy in 1994 (PIOJ 1995: 18.5).

The labour force participation rate in 1994 was 53 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women. The following table highlights the employed labour force by industry group and gender for 1994.

Table 4 : Employed Labour Force by Industry Group and Gender, 1994

INDUSTRY GROUP	MALE %	FEMALE %
Agriculture/Forestry	77.54	22.46
Mining/Quarrying	92.06	7.94
Manufacturing	55.04	44.96
Utility	76.27	23.73
Construction	96.68	3.32
Wholesale & Retail, Restaurants & Hotels	36.38	63.62
Transport, Storage & Communication	80.40	19.60
Financing, Business Services	46.33	53.67
Community, Social Services	39.05	60.95

(Adapted from Vassell, Hamilton and Narcisse 1996).

Men are predominantly employed in industries such as agriculture, forestry, mining, utilities, transport and construction. Women are predominantly situated in wholesale and retail, community and social services, business services, and the public sector. As noted in Chapter Three, the private sector was the largest employer of labour in 1994, while public sector employment was downsized by 4.8 per cent. This has a direct impact on women as more women are employed here than are men (PIOJ 1995: 18.3).

Green (1995) discerns distinct patterns in women's position with regard to formal labour force participation in this circuit which are mediated by class. Middle-class occupations for women are concentrated in a narrow range of white collar administrative and

service positions and sex-typed and/or lower-ranked professional and entrepreneurial livelihoods. Working class women find themselves disproportionately engaged in sex-typed unskilled production, service and clerical jobs and various unpaid family labour and informal sector activities.

With economic recession gripping the national economy and structural adjustment programs placing greater pressures on the ability to secure basic provisions, the urban informal sector ballooned dramatically in the 1980s. It is estimated that employment in the informal sector increased from 17 per cent of the labour force in 1980 to 28 per cent of the labour force in 1989 (Handa and King 1996). The informal sector caters to many of the requirements of the domestic market, becoming a major source of many goods and services including staple foodstuffs. The principal focus of informal sector activity in the Kingston Metropolitan Area tends to be commodity circulation of household consumer goods and marketing of domestic services (Harrison 1991).

Working-class women are disproportionately involved in this sphere of the domestic-national circuit as strategies for survival outside of the formal market. The informal sector meets reproductive needs with cheap goods and services, provided through intensive labour efforts, often as an extension of domestic tasks. Domestic service, for example, remains a significant area of employment for women in this sphere as middle class women who enter formal-sector jobs employ domestics for housework and childcare.

Higglering is another important source of income for women in the informal sphere, harking back to the internal marketing system of the days of slavery. Higglering is engaged in mainly by poor women, either full-time or part-time as a complement to low-paying jobs

(French 1994). With the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, some women became informal commercial importers (ICIs) of manufactured goods. Unlike their counterparts in produce vending, ICIs are involved in highly profitable enterprises. They responded to the shortage of consumer goods in the late 1970s by earning their own foreign exchange through fruit and vegetable exports and in turn translating this into imports of scarce manufactured goods. The main destinations for shopping by ICIs are Panama, Haiti, Cayman Islands and the United States. Informal commercial importers transformed the internal marketing function of the traditional higgler into complex activities crossing international boundaries. Among the different categories of higglers, ICIs have the largest scale of activity, re-investment and income, which at the upper levels, compares favourably with some professional and white collar jobs (Anderson and Witter 1994).

Tourism represents a third important source of income for women. Such work is closely confined to the domestic sphere; it utilizes skills a woman will already have acquired and so she is not hindered by any lack of formal training. McKay's study (1993) of tourism in Negril reveals that women's participation and earnings in the tourist industry are not an unproblematic means of social mobility. For example, in the market place women's trade based on food and clothing is often less lucrative than men's activities selling more expensive items such as jewelry and wood-carvings. Landladies are dependent on their extended families for the land on which to build their guest rooms and have less opportunity to earn money of their own, for so much of what they earn from their guests gets swallowed up in household expenses (McKay 1993: 284).

There is a highly uneven division of labour between the formal and informal sectors

reflecting in part a separation between the domestic-national economy and the transnational-enclave circuit; a division within the household-domestic circuits by class as working class households are found and reproduced within the informal sector in greater proportions than middle class; and a division of labour between the two sectors also reflects a division within the household-domestic circuit by gender as more women participate in the informal sector than do men.

5.4 Transnational-Enclave Circuit

This particular economic circuit is hosted by the domestic-national economy and as such, contributes to the transnationalization of the domestic-national circuit. Transnational-enclave niches are found in foreign-owned and/or controlled mineral export sectors, foreign-based/hotel-chain/"packaged" tourism, and offshore banking and manufacturing concerns (Green 1995). One relatively recent manifestation of the transnational-enclave economy in Jamaica is the Free Trade Zone, which is the focus of discussion here.

Free Trade Zones (FTZs) are special export production enclaves that facilitate the operation of transnational companies in a developing country. Host governments introduce incentive legislation to enhance their country's attractiveness as an investment haven for foreign companies. The most common incentives offered include exemption from customs and other duties, unrestricted repatriation of profits, good communications systems, subsidized infrastructure, and cheap non-unionised female labour (Dunn 1991). Women tend to be concentrated in manufacturing production in FTZs because capital has defined such production as women's work. As Elson and Pearson (1981: 94) note,

(w)omen do not do unskilled jobs because they are the bearers of inferior labour; rather, the jobs they do are unskilled because women enter them already determined as inferior bearers of labour.

The development of FTZs in Jamaica can be divided into two distinct periods. The first phase began with the establishment of the Kingston Free Zone in 1976, and the second in the 1982/83 period as part of the government's strategy to pursue export-oriented industrialization. There are 53 companies currently operating within the Kingston, Garmex and Montego Bay Free Zones, employing 16,444 people in 1994 (PIOJ 1995: 10.5). The garment industry accounts for most export processing, comprising two-thirds of the firms and nearly 90 per cent of the employment, the majority of whom are young women (Nurse 1995). The major source of investment in terms of volume and value comes from the United States. The second largest source of investment comes from Hong Kong, followed by Canada, India and Norway (Dunn 1991). The export-manufacturing sector has also seen the establishment of data-entry, food products, and pharmaceutical products as areas of investment (Joekes 1995; Nurse 1995; Dunn 1991).¹⁸

With the dramatic decline in living standards as a consequence of structural adjustment policies, women's employment in free trade zones is also a survival strategy for dealing with the economic crisis (French 1994; Safa and Antrobus 1992). Such employment, however, has not significantly altered the socioeconomic status of Jamaican women precisely because of the low wages and poor working conditions of this employment (French 1994; Dunn 1991). Research from FTZs in Jamaica (French 1994; Dunn 1991) indicate that the

¹⁸ The Kingston and the Garmex Free Zones main activity is apparel manufacturing. The Montego Free Zone has some apparel manufacturing and also facilitates information processing (Nurse 1995: 196).

major health problems women encounter include back pains, respiratory problems, kidney and bladder infections, sinus problems and allergies. Wages are a problematic issue as the basic minimum wage for Jamaica was .34 US cents per hour in 1993 (Willmore 1994). Workers also complain of low overtime rates and dismissals for refusing to work over-time at short notice. Moreover, employment in this enclave circuit is unstable as it fluctuates in relation to the state of the world economy, particularly the US economy. Efforts to establish unions within the Kingston Free Zone have been firmly resisted by companies who view unions as a major obstacle to investment (Safa and Antrobus 1992).

The transnational enclave and one of its predominant features, the Free Trade Zone, draws Jamaica into the low end of a highly skewed international division of labour. There is a critical element of gender segmentation within this. This segmentation is typified by a small, relatively well-paid, highly unionized, largely male workforce in the bauxite and certain import-substitution industries on the one hand, and the low-wage, non-unionized, "free zone" garment and electronics female workers on the other. This dualistic pattern continues to be exacerbated by the increasing incorporation of Jamaica and the Caribbean region into the United States-dominated hemispheric re-configuration of "the Americas" (Marshall 1996; Green 1995).

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present a sense of the complexity of inter-relations among women. As such it briefly outlined the correlation between race and class and argued that these are distinct social processes. This chapter also analyzed three relatively distinct yet

converging economic circuits to elucidate the complexity of economic re/production in Jamaica: the household-domestic, the domestic-national, and the transnational enclave. Each is differentiated within and from each other on the basis of gender, class/race, and modes of economic activities. A discussion of economic circuits and women's location within them provides another element to the context within which women articulate meanings of development. This is an important step in this study because these relations impinge upon feminist efforts to engender development paradigms, the subject of the two following chapters.

Chapter Six: Engendering the Dominant Paradigm: The Consultative Group on Gender and the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation

Since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the demand for policy attention to women's needs in development has often been framed in terms of access and "integration" into a range of development policy-making and project implementing institutions. Advocates of gender equality have undertaken concerted efforts to demonstrate why agencies and governments should be concerned about gender issues and how they can be 'fitted' into institutional processes, procedures and operations. At another level, these advocates have urged institutions to move towards more inclusive and participatory processes, greater transparency and increased accountability (Jahan 1995).

This chapter examines two distinct examples of such activism in Jamaica to integrate women's concerns into mainstream development endeavours and hence into the prevailing dominant paradigm: the Consultative Group on Gender which focuses primarily on mainstreaming gender into economic policy, and the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation which focuses on social development within a neo-liberal paradigm.

The chapter begins by briefly tracing the historical relationship between feminism and the Jamaican state, which has been a central arena for the distribution of development resources towards women. This discussion contextualizes the existence of feminist agency within this paradigm. The chapter then outlines the activities of the Consultative Group on Gender, critically analyzing both the gains and limitations involved in mainstreaming gender. Following this, the chapter focuses on the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation. It maps out the Centre's main programmes, and analyzes its gains as well as limitations in integrating a feminist perspective to social issues within the dominant paradigm.

The final section of the chapter addresses the underpinnings of feminist mobilization in this paradigm. Here I argue that the neoliberal paradigm within which economic and social policy is developed affects and delimits the types of feminist strategies employed to achieve social and gender justice. A WID initiative of mainstreaming gender, for example, is viewed by activists to be politically the most feasible strategy for advancing women's economic interests given the philosophical hegemony of market-led economic growth. Similarly, efforts to empower young women through education and acquisition of skills are undertaken within a paradigm that reproduces Jamaica's position within a highly skewed international division of labour. Second, I argue that this neoliberal environment heightens existing unequal social relations among women based on race and class as it impacts on the ability of different women to participate. Furthermore, these relations of power are themselves reproduced by the forms of feminist strategies employed in a neoliberal paradigm.

6.1 Mainstreaming Gender: The Historical Antecedents

Mainstreaming gender issues into development agencies and policies is a major WID policy initiative of the past decade, reflecting the desire for gender issues to be part of the mainstream.

...all policies and programs that emanate from government should look at the differential impact of these policies and programs on women and on men...When we are talking about mainstreaming we are meaning that it would be automatic after a while that this would be considered (Vassell, interview).

It signifies a push towards systematic procedures and mechanisms within organizations for explicitly taking into account the gender dimensions of policy making and programme design and implementation (Baden and Goetz 1997; Kabeer and Subrahmanian 1996). Jahan (1995)

identifies two broad approaches to mainstreaming gender. The first, the 'integrationist' approach, builds gender issues within existing development paradigms. In other words, women are 'fitted' into as many sectors and programmes as possible, but sector and programme priorities do not change because of gender considerations. The second approach, 'agenda-setting' implies the transformation of the existing development agenda with a gender perspective. It is not simply women as individuals but women's 'agenda' which gets recognition from the mainstream.

An integrationist approach to mainstreaming gender into Jamaica's *National Industrial Policy* (NIP) is a significant example of feminist strategies to engender the dominant paradigm. The Consultative Group on Gender (CGG), an initiative of an informal group of women from various professions, came together in 1995 and sought "to influence the adoption of a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of the National Industrial Policy of Jamaica" (Vassell, Hamilton and Narcisse 1996: 1).

After all these years of gender agitation and so on, the Industrial Policy had no mention of gender in it. So a group of women got together and said, "But look...how would gender fit into the Industrial Policy? In fact with such a large female labour force...how come you could write an Industrial Policy and not mention gender?" (McKenzie, interview)

The reference in the above quote to "all these years of gender agitation" is significant as the emergence of the CGG and its specific goal of integrating women into a national economic policy are part of a historical continuum of Jamaican women pressing their concerns and interests on the state.

6.1.1 Antecedents: The role of women's pressure groups

Three main patterns of women's formal political mobilization can be discerned from history. The first is the connection with anti-colonial struggles and nationalist movements. An organized movement of women for economic, social and political justice emerged and developed against the background of nationalist organizations and anti-colonial struggles that shook the Caribbean region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many women involved with the Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey, linked the struggle for women's emancipation to the struggle for racial equality and anti-colonialism. They saw themselves as establishing a place for women within the developing national identity of their country. Participation of women in the leadership of UNIA is one of its most striking features, active at the local level and at the level of the executive. Garveyite women both participated in and led a movement which immersed them in public life. From the ranks of the UNIA emerged a significant group of black middle class women who lobbied against discrimination against black women in the civil service, for the right to education, and for political participation, as well as women of the working class who helped to organize the early labour movement of the 1930s (Reddock 1990; Ford-Smith 1988).

A second antecedent occurred in the political mobilization of middle class women around traditional feminine identities. This occurred under the auspices of the Jamaica Federation of Women (JFW), established in 1944 by the Colonial Development and Welfare Office. The objectives of the JFW were to improve the economic conditions of women of the rural peasantry by encouragement of cottage industry and craft; to stress the value of family life; and to encourage voluntary social services. It consciously promoted an ideology of

'woman' as housewife primarily committed to the welfare of her family, to the institution of marriage, and to doing voluntary social work (French 1988). The JFW spread the domestic ideal so far and so deep "that even today, many women throughout Jamaica still identify women organizing with the activities of making jams and jellies and the crocheting of doilies" (Ford-Smith 1997: 245).

Finally, the third antecedent is that of emancipatory women's organizations. When the PNP came to power in 1972, there was no governmental policy on women and no specific procedures or mechanisms for addressing issues related to the roles and status of women (Blake 1984). Moreover, women's organizations were mainly linked to the political parties as women's auxiliaries. The PNP's Election Manifesto did not identify women as a separate and distinct interest group (Henry 1986). Nonetheless, its search for new models of development based on principles of equity, social justice and political participation stimulated analysis of women's disadvantaged position through a political economic and systemic framework (Henry 1986). Indeed, this second wave feminist movement intersected with key issues of post-independence discourse in Jamaica, namely race and class inequalities, their alleviation by state intervention, and the continuing existence of colonial economic and political forces (Baksh-Soodeen 1998).

Thus the 1960s and 1970s witnessed attempts to define women as active participants in creating a new social and political agenda for Jamaica. In this vein, the PNP Women's Movement (PNPWM), under the leadership of Beverly Anderson-Manley, served as a strong pressure group advocating leadership roles for women within the party and lobbying for reformist legislation to improve women's status. It sought fundamental structural changes,

linking the struggle for ending the oppression of women with the struggle for bringing into existence a democratic socialist Jamaica. The Committee of Women for Progress, a Marxist-feminist movement, promoted radical economic structural transformation as the prerequisite for the genuine liberation of women. It collaborated with the PNPWM on legislative and reformist issues. Between 1976 and 1979, vocal groups of women emerged opposing PNP policies. Groups such as the Women's Freedom Movement, an affiliate of the JLP, housewives' associations, and the Jamaican Association of Higglers found legitimacy among the populace due to the deteriorating material and social conditions of Jamaican society (Henry 1986; Kaufman 1985).

By the mid-1970s, then, female collective action as a social and political force was an established component of the Jamaican landscape. Commenting on the impact of this agitation and organizing, Ford-Smith remarks

I wouldn't say that the impact was the state primarily although the state did listen in some cases...I think the impact was on women and on men. The impact had to do with how the work, the critical work reconstituted people's vision of what was going on and I think there was an impact there. I think it also helped to raise to the level of public debate some of the questions that people were asking. So in that sense I think it had an impact (Ford-Smith, interview).

The period 1975-1985 witnessed a tremendous growth in women's groups and associations dedicated to improving the status of women in society (Narcisse 1996).

6.1.2 Institutional Antecedents

The institutional antecedents to the current endeavours of mainstreaming gender interests in the state emerged during this period as well in response to coherent internal pressure from the women's movement and to the burgeoning international feminist

movement. Jamaica established a Bureau of Women's Affairs (BWA) in 1973, enabling the WID agenda to establish an institutional foothold in the country's public administration. Its original functions included research, program implementation, advice on legislative matters, representation on public bodies, and identification of women's concerns in government programs (Blake 1984: 35). Today, the primary focus of the BWA is to develop policy statements and instruments for the purpose of influencing the national planning process (Goetz 1995). For example, it has produced a *National Policy Statement on Women*¹⁹ (Jamaica Bureau of Women's Affairs 1990), and devised a detailed *Gender Monitoring Checklist*²⁰ (Anderson-Manley 1994; Jamaica Bureau of Women's Affairs 1992). These two mechanisms were intended to provoke gender sensitive institutional, policy and operational changes across the public sector in order to make responsiveness to women's interests a routine part of each sector's activities. The Checklist was to have been piloted in two ministries but no results of this experiment have been circulated (Goetz 1995).

Implementing these measures has encountered serious obstacles within the public

¹⁹ Adopted by Cabinet in 1987 this document is a brief but direct articulation of a set of gender-egalitarian principles intended as a guide to government policy. Specifically, it informs Jamaica's Five Year Development Plan 1990-1995.

²⁰ The *Gender Monitoring Checklist* was developed in response to the challenges of implementing the *National Policy Statement*. It was proposed as an instrument to establish the foundation on which specific action and work plans for translating general policy commitments could be translated into real measures for change. It specifies five benchmarks against which development actions are assessed: whether sex disaggregated data is used or collected; whether the project coheres with national policy commitment; whether mechanisms exist to consult with women and men on gender issues; whether the project takes action on equity issues; and whether the context for the project is gender-sensitive, in the sense of incorporating women's specific needs (Goetz 1995; Jamaica Bureau of Women's Affairs 1992).

administration. Commenting on the effectiveness of the *Checklist*, one interviewee noted:

(i)t was the Bureau's way of trying to access the information they otherwise do not know. They had tremendous difficulty getting public servants to come to the meetings because they are almost all men and traditional, old civil servants who think it is a lot of rubbish anyway (Wedderburn, interview).

The *Checklist* has failed in practice owing to a lack of commitment and conviction on the part of the state, and to what Mahon calls the 'unequal structure of representation'. Mahon (1977) advances the notion of 'unequal structure of representation' to explicate the forces through which certain organs and branches of the state achieve hegemony over others. While its organs and branches 'represent' various social forces, all representatives of the state are not equal. This inequality is expressed in the quality (or functions) of their representatives so that the representatives of subordinate forces (such as women) are likely to have a more limited mandate and impact. The low-status quality of representation accorded to the Bureau of Women's Affairs translates practically into the lack of an operational budget, lack of staff or inadequately trained staff, no national advisory council and dependency on international funding (Blake 1984: 40). Moreover, it has been shunted back and forth between the Ministry of Youth and Community Development and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Only once, in response to heightened awareness due to the United Nations Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, was it located in the office of the Prime Minister, from 1975-1978. Since 1989, it has been located in the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Sport.²¹ This fractured experience within Jamaica's public administration has persisted under both PNP and JLP

²¹ This is significant, given women's very high participation in the country's formal labour force. However, its placement here may also be due to the fact that the ministry is headed by a female cabinet minister, prompting a sex-typed association between her person and her appropriate functions (Goetz 1995; Blake 1984).

regimes.

At a fundamental level, the functional and institutional linkage problems faced by the Bureau emerge from the challenges and threat female empowerment poses to male interests and male privilege. That the prospect of female empowerment *is* a threat is manifested in resistance to Bureau initiatives such as the *Checklist*, in decisions about the Bureau's budgets and staff; in short, in the Bureau's unequal position as a representative of women within Jamaica's public administration.

6.2 Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policy: The Consultative Group on Gender

The Consultative Group on Gender (CGG) took shape as women participated in a Government of Jamaica/United Nations Development Program Conference on the *National Industrial Policy* (NIP) held at the end of May 1995.

We were pro-active in deciding...how we could mainstream gender into policy, both in design and implementation. And so the group did some work on the issue itself and had workshops and came up with an understanding of how it could be done and there was obvious justification for it. And when the government was designing its Industrial Policy last year, after four years of going, it came to some sort of first draft statement, the group made a presentation to government and said we would like a chance to show you how you can mainstream gender into industrial policy....So they challenged the government, "Give us an opportunity", and the government took them up on it (Wedderburn, interview).

Meetings with government officials and members of the government's NIP working group throughout the course of the ensuing year resulted in the production of a 33 page report by the CGG for the Ministry of Industry (Vassell, Hamilton and Narcisse 1996). This report provides a gender analysis of the NIP's overall policy matrix and of its strategic sectors as they relate to women, namely tourism, agro-processing, information technology, and apparel

and light manufacturing. It also proposes specific mechanisms for institutionalization of state commitment to gender equity within the NIP framework.

6.2.1 Gains Achieved in Mainstreaming

The Consultative Group on Gender has had some impact in the sense that it effectively lobbied and worked to incorporate a gender analysis into the *National Industrial Policy*. It received top-level government endorsement of its arguments so that the overall policy matrix of the NIP now includes a 'Gender Perspective' as one of its pillars of social policy. Moreover, one of the CGG's specific recommendations for the creation of a Commission on Gender and Social Equity is included in the NIP. Such a Commission is viewed as a measure to strengthen the organizational framework for gender to be mainstreamed and to increase accountability of institutions in government on issues of gender (Dunn, interview). It is "a way of having a permanent public structure that continually draws attention to gender in national policy" (McKenzie, interview).

The Commission will be able to advocate certain things, for example discrimination or a case on sexual harassment on the job. The government will have committed itself to certain sets of policies and have a watchdog to say, 'Hey guys, what is happening? We have a commitment to this, where are you on this?' So it has a kind of watchdog role. It can advise on the change of laws and can advise on different policies that are initiated (Vassell, interview).

At the time of these interviews, the Commission was still in an embryonic stage and the terms of reference still being determined. The interview participants expressed lack of clarity and confusion on how this Commission would differ from the Bureau of Women's Affairs. There was a sense that this latter has not been effective in its role because it has been consistently underfunded and understaffed.

Three significant elements lay behind the gains achieved by the CGG in mainstreaming gender into economic policy. First, the work, tenacity and efforts of the CGG involved in demonstrating *why* government should be concerned about gender equity, and how these concerns can be "fitted" into policy should not be underplayed. Challenging deeply embedded gendered convictions and attitudes in public bureaucracies - where women's needs are often and largely seen as a matter for private provision, not public administration - is not an easy task. As one interviewee noted,

Learning how to mainstream gender is new, apart from the making and dynamics of sitting down with these male technocrats, and some women too, who don't see gender as an issue. So that is the first kind of dynamic, and then being comfortable enough to insist and demonstrate how you do it and it is in fact possible (Wedderburn, interview).

The political groundwork undertaken by these gender-policy advocates was pivotal; their efforts resulted in explicit reference to, and acknowledgement of, gender issues within the national economic policy framework.

Second, the CGG strategically employed efficiency arguments to justify and recommend a gender-sensitive economic policy framework. For example, the CGG's report states:

Understanding the condition and position of women and of men is essential for those who work to change that condition and position. If this is not the case, efforts will be misdirected and resources ineffectively used...The detriment to the nation's development of women's marginalisation from power and decision-making is inconsistent with the thrust of the NIP (Vassell, Hamilton and Narcisse 1996: 5,6).

Failure to recognize the role women play in development thwarts the realization of the government's stated objective of renewed growth via international competition. Framing the appeal to move from a gender-blind to gender-aware macroeconomic policy in terms of

social and economic efficiency gains integrates gender into the dominant paradigm. Hence a feminist project of change is articulated within the parameters of the dominant paradigm.

A third element behind the gains of the CGG is a certain level of openness on the part of the Jamaican state to gender-related policy activism (Goetz 1995). This is due in part to the high visibility of women as household heads and economic actors. It is also due to the visible presence of Jamaican women in the international feminist arena as well as to the aforementioned history of visible agitation for women's rights in civil society and institutionalization of WID policy.

It's like stirrings and rumblings and the way in which when something happens there is always a group of women who are ready to protest and to come out with a grievance. And a lot of this probably takes place at the level of talk shows. Even if people are doing it at an organized level, it comes out in other ways...there is a huge consciousness, whether it is situated at the grassroots level or at the woman who is educated and articulate, that makes itself felt (Mohammed, interview).

One effect has been that

looking at Jamaican society, I think women's voices are listened to. Women are regarded as a protest group who have something to protest about. In other words, their cause is regarded as legitimate (McKenzie, interview).

This raises an interesting subtext with respect to government openness to feminist agency and mobilization in Jamaica. In the Caribbean, "the power invested in women is very mythologized, the idea that somehow women are always at the backbone of everything" (Mohammed, interview). The image of the warrior woman, the 'rebel woman' (Mathurin 1975), as typified by Nanny, the Maroon leader of the eighteenth century exists in the psyche of the Jamaican people (Campbell 1988; Sistren 1987). In reality, though,

"there is another level at which women do not have the final decision making and authority to do a lot of things. But that is where power is really concretized. I call it power with a capital P. It becomes very concretized; the decision to actually adopt

an actual policy, the decision whether you change the course of a program or a project. All of that is really power. Now that, I think still does not rest in the hands of women" (Mohammed, interview).

What has arisen out of this mythologizing of women's power is the notion of 'men at risk' or 'marginalization of men' (Miller 1991, 1988) whereby feminist or women's attempts to achieve parity with men in various spheres is viewed as an antagonistic measure to gain control over men (Mohammed 1998); that attempts to correct women's political and economic marginalization is designed to punish men (Barriteau 1998). So while women are a vocal protest group, there is the perception that feminist activism is occurring within a climate of a backlash²² (McNeil, interview).

6.2.2 Limitations of Mainstreaming

There are limitations inherent in integrationist strategies of mainstreaming gender. Primarily, such strategies can, but do not necessarily, lead to a feminist outcome in terms of expanding the power and autonomy of women (Goetz 1995). This argument can be elaborated upon by analyzing the following comment by one of the key members of the CGG on the establishment of the Commission on Gender and Social Equity:

There is a tending more towards gender equity within this Commission, in the terms of reference of this Commission than towards the social equity part. *You can very easily achieve gender equity without a broad social equity because you can introduce things like equal opportunity legislation* which, in practice, probably leads to an improvement in employment and wages and so on, and so will eventually have an

²² An editorial in *The Sunday Gleaner* (August 18, 1996: A8) about 2 boys winning first and second place in a spelling bee, with a girl coming in third, states: "It is well that we note the performance of the boys in this year's competition. The fact is since the early 1960s the boys have been humiliated in the education system by the girls. That is unhealthy in the sense that male marginalization this early signals social problems ahead".

effect socially. But if you have a social equity policy you are going to have to look at all the disadvantaged groups in the society and make all policies such that there is fairness and justice to all groups in the society. It means fundamentally you are changing your ideological perspective because equity across all social groups is not a capitalist approach, is not a free-market approach. You would have to fundamentally change the way the game is played if right across the board you are trying to establish a society that fairly treats all its members. There is, I think, after having agreed to set up this Commission, there is a realization that the social part might be a little too broad so the discussion is more around gender equity. *Those of us who made the recommendation have the view that gender equity is great but we really want to transform this whole society. But if we gain on gender equity, we will take it a step at a time* (Narcisse, interview, emphasis added).

That gender equity can be "very easily achieved" is indicative of a liberal feminist philosophy underpinning integrationist projects of mainstreaming gender. Such a notion obscures the function of male power as a property of the mainstreaming process. Examples abound of gendered bureaucratic resistance to women's programs (Kabeer 1994; Goetz 1995; Staudt 1997). While the structure of institutions themselves and linkage problems are significant, these authors also suggest that attitudes and values play a highly critical role in shaping bureaucratic resistance. Thus

"unlike any other form of advocacy...advocacy for gender equity impinges directly on the personal beliefs and values, relationships and identities of those who will have to formulate and implement change" (Kabeer 1994: 36-37).

The failure of the Bureau of Women's Affairs, for example, to successfully promote, implement and sustain its gender equity mechanisms suggests more than solely persistent gender-blindness within the public administration. It also suggests the persistence of historical foundations of institutionalized preference embedded in the substance of what bureaucracies produce, provide or control in the way of projects, programs and policies (Staudt 1997). Thus equating gender equity with equal opportunity, as the quote implies, suggests a technical solution to what is essentially a political problem. An integrationist

approach to mainstreaming gender is thus limited in its capacity to achieve substantive objectives such as women's empowerment and gender equality (Jahan 1995).

The limitation of integrationist strategies to expand the power and autonomy of women also appears in their instrumental objectives. As noted earlier, the feminist objective of gender equity has greater potential for gaining political legitimacy in neo-liberal economic policies if it is framed in terms of facilitating greater economic efficiency and contributing to the overall NIP policy matrix. What is problematic in such a strategy, however, is that gender equity is taken on board insofar as it is seen as a means to these ends. The risk of this is that gender issues and gender equity become removed from the processes of social change as the last two sentences of the quote by Narcisse seem to imply. Transforming gender relations is an integral part of social change as gender relations are embedded within relations of race and class. An instrumental interest in gender equity limits its transformative potential.

6.3 Engendering Social Welfare: The Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation

A second example of feminist activity to engender the dominant paradigm is that of the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF), which runs a family planning program geared primarily to adolescent women. Its programming activities and philosophy focus on social development within a neo-liberal paradigm.

The WCJF was initially established as the Programme for Adolescent Mothers in 1978²³ under the auspices of the Bureau of Women's Affairs. The need for a program for

²³ In 1991, the status of the Programme for Adolescent Mothers was changed to that of a private company responsible to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Sport. Its name

adolescent mothers was specifically identified, as in 1977 over 30 per cent of total births in Jamaica were to teen mothers (WCJF 1995). Adolescent pregnancy presents a serious social and health problem in Jamaica. Jamaica's adolescent pregnancy rate, 108 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, is among the highest in the Caribbean. By age 19, 40 per cent of Jamaican women have been pregnant at least once. Most pregnancies among Jamaican teenagers are unintended, and pregnancy interrupts schooling for many young women (Jackson *et al* 1997).

Since its inception, the Government of Jamaica has expanded its subsidy to the WCJF. Continued funding of the WCJF²⁴ by the government reflects a key tenet of neo-liberal social policy, namely targeting social programs to the poor. Targeting is promoted as a way to guarantee that resources effectively and efficiently reach those to whom they are directed (Vilas 1996). In addressing strategies to alleviate poverty, the NIP, for example, states:

Outside of the Government, a variety of agencies, including multilateral and bilateral, non-governmental organisations, private voluntary organisations, and community-based organisations, have been directing their efforts to reduce poverty. These efforts are supported and encouraged by Government. *Efforts are being made to develop closer relationships between agencies involved so as to eliminate duplication and optimise the use of resources* (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 102-103, emphasis added).

It is further stated that poverty alleviation is a priority goal to be reinforced in the context of

changed to the Women Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF 1995).

²⁴ Local Jamaican donors include the Jamaican Government, the National Commercial Bank, Kiwanis Clubs and the Rotary. International donors include the UNFPA, UNICEF, Christian Children's Fund of Canada, USAID, World Food Programme, the British High Commission (WCJF pamphlet, no date).

the NIP and the targeting of social resources is one of the elements in achieving this goal (Government of Jamaica 1996a: 104).

The WCJF operates a Program for Adolescent Mothers (16 years and under), which addresses the problems associated with teenaged pregnancy, namely interrupted education and low-employment potential. The main recipients of the WCJF programs are low-income, unemployed and un-skilled women 15-29 years of age. Its primary objective is the continued academic education of these women and, ultimately, their increased independence and empowerment. To accomplish this, an integrated Day Programme is offered at one of the seven Centres²⁵, comprising academic instruction, counselling and skill training.

Education is key to the program as it is viewed as the stepping stone to independence and a means of delaying a second pregnancy (WCJF 1995). Accompanying academic instruction are a variety of counselling programs for children, the young women, and men. Skills training, the third program component, is geared towards women 17 to 25 years of age, and is comprised of training in sewing, chicken and fish farming, cosmetology, doll making and pillow making.

6.3.1 Gains of the WCJF

The WCJF has achieved a number of tangible gains. It was instrumental in ensuring reforms to the Education Code allowing teenaged girls to return to school after pregnancy (McNeil, interview). Representatives of the Centre participate on various consultative

²⁵ There are seven main Centres and 15 Outreach stations, located in the inner city of Kingston and in rural parishes across the island.

committees of funding agencies and Government which formulate policies and programs related to population and young women's issues (Narcisse 1996). Its programs and approach are looked to as a model for family planning by other countries in the Caribbean and in Africa (McNeil, interview).

In 1994, the WCJF assisted a significant 48 per cent of mothers under 16 years (Meighoo, Crooks and Girvan 1995: 18). The National Director notes, "When we started, 33 per cent of the births were to teen mothers. Last year, it was 24.6 per cent" (McNeil, interview). In 1995, the WCJF undertook a tracer study to examine the effects of the Programme for Adolescent Mothers on the lives of the ex-participants and their families. This study revealed that out of 126 ex-participants of the Kingston Centre, 122 completed secondary education, with 34 of these completing tertiary education. 50 out of 54 ex-participants of the Mandeville Centre completed secondary education, with 7 of these completing tertiary education. Ex-participants in the Kingston and Mandeville Centres waited an average of 5.5 years and 3.3 years respectively before having a second child. The study also found a high level of education among the children of ex-participants, pointing to the ripple effect of the Programme (WCJF 1995).

The philosophy of the WCJF suggests potential for women's empowerment. First, the Centre addresses the social context of family planning through its counselling program for men. This occurs under the auspices of the "Baby Fathers Programme"²⁶, which aims to involve the fathers in the day to day care of their children and assist fathers to continue their

²⁶ *Baby-mother* and *baby-father* are terms unmarried partners use to refer to their child's other parent, that is, he is my baby('s) father.

education or find employment. Rendering men visible in family planning is to be commended as it is rare for men and the principle of fatherhood to be made an issue in such programs (Kabeer 1994). At the same time, addressing the social context of family planning potentially transforms the ideology of a patriarchal nuclear family that persists in Jamaican society today,

If you have a man, fine. But if you don't, it is fine. You know this social condition where a woman is supposed to have a man and if she doesn't there is something wrong with her. We are imbued with that from a young age, and that's what we have to get rid of....In relationships, we have the women believing that the man should be the power in the family. It is what the woman believes is where we have to work from (McNeil, interview).

In their study of family laws in Jamaica, LaFont and Pruitt argue that the internalization of the ideal of nuclear family by Jamaicans of all classes is nearly complete.

Current debates about the socioeconomic problems in Jamaica often come around to blaming the "lack" of family (read nuclear family)....This scapegoat method of analysis conveniently masks unequal distribution of wealth, unequal access to opportunity, and sexual and racial discrimination. Yet the belief in the importance of the nuclear family for social well-being is firmly rooted in the ideology of the establishment and continues to predominate (LaFont and Pruitt 1997: 219)²⁷.

Racism and economic inequality have meant that African Caribbean men of the lower classes, for the most part, have never earned a family income sufficient to enable women to stay at home and exclusively tend to child care and domestic responsibilities. Even if men were offering to provide such financial support, it is not clear that Jamaican women would relinquish their independence (LaFont and Pruitt 1997).

Second, a strong emphasis on independence in the Centre's philosophy carries the

²⁷ In its studies on the family and household the WICP, too, found that marriage is "regarded by all sectors as the 'ideal' status (Senior 1991: 87). Also see Brown (1995) for further evidence of this ideology in Jamaica.

potential for women to re-define their sense of self and to re-shape their worlds.

The counselling is towards independence, status, looking at themselves as a total woman...Our focus is on the young women and the fact that she can bring up her family with or without a man if she so chooses. It is all a matter of choice and decision and giving that woman the ammunition and the status to be able to make a choice (McNeil, interview).

Respondents to a 1995 tracer study remarked: "'It helped me to regain my self respect', 'It helped me to realize I was not a failure', 'It motivated me to reach my goal', 'Gave me a positive outlook', 'I was able to believe in myself, begin life over again and look to the future'" (WCJF 1995: 17). These comments are important as low self-esteem is a trait that may be related to early sexual activity and pregnancy (Jackson *et al* 1997).

6.3.2 Limitations

In Jamaica, women have to rely much more on formal education for individual mobility and for acquisition of higher valued and better remunerated jobs in the formal economy (Green 1995).

Education for women is particularly important in getting access to jobs. In other words, men tend to be able to climb the job ladder even if they don't have the formal qualifications. A woman would be knocking at the door forever if she didn't have formal qualifications (McKenzie, interview).

The education of teenaged girls through the WCJF programs thus has the potential to enhance their employment opportunities. The impact of education as a means to ensuring adequate employment is constrained, however, by the limited structure of employment opportunities in a gender-biased economy. Women have to contend with fewer job opportunities, obtaining adequate employment only within a narrow range of occupations, and accessing incomes which are substantially lower and less predictable than men's (Levitt

1991). Furthermore, with *more* formal schooling and certification than men, women still tend to have *less* status and income in their occupational and professional lives (Green 1995).

The skills training offered by the Centre (sewing, chicken and fish farming, cosmetology, doll making and pillow making) are traditional gender-typed "female" skills which are low-valued in terms of status and income. Furthermore, the most common types of employment by ex-participants of the program include the teaching profession, clerks, machine operators in Free Trade Zones, and self-employment (WCJF 1995). All of these are traditionally held female jobs. Clerks, for example, are predominantly females, with approximately four in every five clerks in Jamaica being women (Planning Institute of Jamaica 1995).

The persistent and pervasive disadvantages low skilled women encounter in the labour market pose somewhat of a paradox for the Centre's philosophy of independence. Green (1995: 90) notes that upward class accession for women in Jamaica (and the Caribbean generally) is mediated by gaining entry into *singularly* male-defined (as well as capitalistically and eurocentrically defined) social spaces. While this occurs to a far greater extent for upper and middle-class women access than for lower-class women, it is indicative that ruling class men control systems of power in Jamaican society, and control the terms under which women enter their world. The WCJF's primary objective, however, is the increased empowerment and independence from men of the young women who succeed in its programs.

The focus on increased individual choice and independence for women underscores the liberal feminist philosophical underpinnings of the WCJF. Concern lies with meeting

women's individual needs within the current economic and social system through access to education and skill training. In this sense, the philosophy and program seek to ameliorate the realities of individual women within the structures of the dominant paradigm. Similarly, improving the range of individual choices for women is advocated in terms of its larger social and economic impacts.

Because she really is the head of the household, she can do a lot to change the development path of this country. She can do a great deal...in terms of her choices made at the household level and bring this back out into the community and the nation as a whole. Which comes back to the work here. It comes out in a recent evaluation. They did a social cost benefit analysis. Every dollar spent in this program, society reaps at least seven dollars as a benefit from the program. That is what I am talking about to get it out into a national level. Women are terribly important and are important for the right reasons (McNeil, interview).

Notwithstanding the seemingly positive economic impact of the WCJF's programs, casting women and their empowerment as a resource in meeting other development goals contributes to the mythology of female power in Jamaica, discussed in section 6.2.1. While women may derive a certain gender-specific, community-specific authority from their roles as heads of households, these roles are extremely low-valued in the context of the total social hierarchy. Furthermore, their power is marked by other factors than gender relations. Chapter Five demonstrated the ways in which women are subordinate to men and positioned unequally to each other with respect to economic relations. Power analyzed solely in terms of individual decision-making fails to capture those aspects which lie outside observable decision-making processes.

6.4 Limited Room for Manoeuvre: Feminist Agency to Engender the Dominant Paradigm

Two different types of feminist mobilization have been offered as examples of the

heterogeneity of feminist activism within the dominant paradigm in Jamaica. Two specific interlocking factors emerged from the interviews to explicate the shaping of feminist agency in this paradigm: a neoliberal political economy which wields philosophical hegemony, and historical class divisions within the women's movement, compounded by race.

6.4.1 Neoliberal Hegemony

The philosophical hegemony of neoliberalism shapes feminist agency within the dominant paradigm. Neoliberalism is particularly hegemonic in expounding a view that there are no popular alternatives to global capitalism (Robinson 1996). Compounding this is the geopolitical sphere wherein Jamaica is located:

I think what is happening in our hemisphere is the demonstration of the danger of this unipolar world with one dominant power. And we just happen to be in the hemisphere with that one dominant power who then determines that he is going to police you and decide, for example by the Helms-Burton law, how you operate as a country. That is raw power...So how do you formulate development alternatives in the context of a hegemonic power in the hemisphere? (Wedderburn, interview).

This presents enormous challenges for local activism but as several interview participants noted, finding space for manoeuvre within this paradigm is imperative:

It is important that feminist development groups target organizations and try, for example, to have a consultative group on policy that feeds their ideas...Unless you do things like that you are not going to influence the kind of framework that will actually be developed (Byron, interview).

This requires critical scrutiny for the possibilities the paradigm might offer:

An all or nothing approach doesn't get you anywhere. And this model is not going anywhere for now. So you literally have to decide how much you can work with it, what parts of it you can change (Narcisse, interview).

Strategies to advance a feminist agenda thus require a grounded sense of what is possible in

a given context. It is recognized that feminist activists should not turn their backs on the state, which remains a mechanism for resource allocation.

Given that we are in this neoliberal model and it is not likely to go away...you have to find a way to push it to its outermost limits...since we cannot change the model, I mean let's be frank here, you have to find ways of getting into the policy design from the ground level so that you can have an impact on it and hopefully get something out of it. But you can't get anything out of it if you come in at the tail end when the policy is already signed, sealed and delivered (Wedderburn, interview).

Mainstreaming gender is taken up as the politically most feasible strategy for addressing issues of gender equity in a neoliberal paradigm. Neoliberalism, wielding apparent political and economic hegemony over the Jamaican state, shapes in large part that it is liberal feminist initiatives which enter into state policies. It is a conservatizing force undermining and weakening more radical feminist visions of transformation.

This conservatization is manifested in what appears to be a tension arising between engaging with the state over a concrete feminist agenda and the end goal desired. It is evident that the end goal sought by the group of feminists involved in the CGG is development based on principles of participation, social justice and equality. The CGG report states, for example, that the incorporation of a gender perspective in the NIP will, among other things,

facilitate the promotion of a just and equitable society where men and women have fair and equal access to the resources and opportunities available in the society; ensure a participatory approach of all key persons/contributors in the society's development process; (and) assist the creation of a productive, just and equitable social and economic environment in which children can be adequately nurtured (Vassell, Hamilton and Narcisse 1996: 7).

These are women who identify themselves as working for alternative development endeavours and who situate themselves on the "left" of the political spectrum. Participation by feminists within mainstreaming gender initiatives does not mean acquiescence to a

neoliberal paradigm:

The dominant model is a neoliberal one...Economic growth is the first aim and objective, and social concerns, concerns of people's welfare and social issues and women's issues and children's issues somehow get let until you have reached some magical figure for economic growth and then you say, "OK, now we have the figures right, we can think about other things, social issues". That to me cannot be the most appropriate model. It may be a model of development, but certainly it is not treating the major problems a society like ours faces...It is the dominant model, globally, regionally and as a poor indebted country. We cannot do otherwise but be part of this global thing that is happening, but it doesn't mean we have to agree with what the dominant model is (Wedderburn, interview).

Activists hope to take a concrete feminist agenda into the state bureaucracy and thereby broaden state accountability to women. In doing so, however, they find themselves caught in somewhat of a dilemma by their critical stance towards neoliberal economics yet actively engaging in a policy process which had as its final goal the formulation of a neoliberal economic platform which is to guide Jamaica into the 21st century. The aforementioned quotes all imply a conviction among activists that they could not afford *not* to engage the state in its glaring omission of women in the original NIP document. However, reifying the power of domination leads to a paralysing attitude: "nothing can be done except by changing the complete system". The end goal of justice among all social groups therefore requires a more complex strategy than one of militant disengagement with official development efforts. It requires transitional strategies, such as the incorporation of a gender perspective into the NIP, to bridge the present with the future. For efforts to engender this paradigm to have any impact, activists compromise more radical goals in exchange for moderate reform.

6.4.2 Social Relations of Power: Class and Race

While women as a whole, compared to men, are disadvantaged in Jamaican society,

women are socially constituted in different and unequal relations to one another, specifically through class, correlated with race.

Class is a major, major dividing line in Jamaica and because class and shade is so integrally wrapped up, poor black women don't feel an affinity or a trust of middle class or upper class, likely to be lighter, more educated, women (Narcisse, interview).

The social relations of class and race which structure women unequally in relation to one another shape feminist agency in engendering the dominant paradigm in two specific ways.

The first is in terms of participation. Much of the visible feminist activism within this paradigm

is very solidly middle class, but that is not accidental. We have the time for contemplative exercises and activities. We have more access to information. We have more access to travel and all of that so it really isn't accidental at all (Narcisse, interview).

The CGG, for example, was able to come together in a very short period of time to write a report to the government arguing for the inclusion of a gender perspective.

Because we [the CGG] said that there are a number of things that are not being considered in this policy, there is a level of analysis that has not taken place, he [the Minister of Industry] said, "Fine, you can do it". We had 10 days in which to do it (Narcisse, interview).

The ability to undertake such a task within this time frame depended on a fair amount of privilege in terms of time and resources.

Observers suggest that the women's movement in Jamaica has been decimated by the economic hardships wrought by austerity measures, detracting efforts from advocacy to economic survival (Ford-Smith 1997; Goetz 1995). Furthermore, a report conducted by the Association of Women's Organizations of Jamaica documenting the activities of a representative sample of women's organizations in Jamaica since 1985 found that women's

groups have not been able to count on very much voluntary support as women have had to put more time and effort into meeting personal and survival needs (Narcisse 1996: 6). The economic hardship neoliberal austerity measures imposed on women impacted on large-scale feminist mobilization in Jamaica, namely through impinging on ability to participate. It is middle-class feminists with time and resources who sustain and engage in lobbying and advocacy aimed at the institutional domain of policy making.

This ability to participate largely determines that it is the voices of middle class women who are heard by policy makers and their knowledge being employed. Working class women are "represented" by middle class women participating in the creation of this knowledge.

There is a tremendous consciousness in the Jamaican psyche of the poor and oppressed working woman. So although it would have been mainly middle class intellectual women that would have wrote the submission to the Industrial Policy, it would have been about them [working class women] (McKenzie, interview).

Class as a determinant of participation is more than an issue of time and access to other resources; it is also about representation. While middle-class women in one sense 'represent' working-class women to policy makers, for example, the opposite does not often occur. So, for example,

when the conferences are going on, it is still we [middle-class women] who are going. And it is very much about class. Although it may not be expressed, it is about "but you can't send so and so, they can't speak English properly. How can you send them to represent us?" (Narcisse, interview).

Thus social relations of class and race condition expectations about participation and the sense of what is possible for activism.

The historical mode of class interaction between women is one of middle-class

women acting as "social mothers" and "Lady Bountiful" towards working-class women. It is a narrative deeply rooted in the structure of colonial society; it is a model central to the culture of Jamaican women's organizations throughout the twentieth century (Ford-Smith 1997: 247). One consequence of this approach is that "you don't look at yourself, you are always acting on behalf of the other" (Ford-Smith, interview). For example,

A lot of people take the easy way out: a seminar at a posh hotel in a certain area...But the thing is, if you set out a certain thing as a goal, then if you are true to that, it means strategies. So if you want to help working class women it might mean spending time, more time with them. It is not every three months come down, with the nails all polished and Gucci leather and linen and everything...If you go in as Mary Bountiful, "oh, I am here to identify some women who are breast feeding", it is not going to work...There can't be this alienation where you are here and the very people you want to reach are there (Afolashade, interview).

This quote raises the second way social relations of race and class shape feminist activism within the dominant paradigm: these relations are also themselves reconstituted through feminist initiatives to engender development. This fact was commented upon by one member of the CGG:

I am not pushing for the emancipation of women with their briefcases and their corporate selves who join the board room with me. What we want, and that is my focus, is that we have different gates wide open. If we talk about political participation and women in parliament, that is good. But what about women at the local level? What about women in the PTA? What about the ordinary working class woman being able to say to her employer, "I am going to call the Ministry of Labour", or not saying it but doing it. So I think that this whole business of mainstreaming gender has to recognize that even among women there are issues to be resolved (Vassell, interview).

These issues to be resolved are unequal social relations of power. The last sentence points to the many ways women are implicated in one another's lives in Jamaica, as in the common relationship between women in the employment of domestic workers where

some of the worst offenders of domestic helpers are women, middle and upper class

women who don't see the helper as another woman who is struggling to survive. She is just another worker that you abuse (Wedderburn, interview).

A middle-class woman gains her respectability from the social status she gains from not cleaning her own house and not engaging in paid work to clean the house of others. Here, the material and ideological arrangements of patriarchy and class exploitation combine to structure unequal social relations between women. The "business of mainstreaming gender" thus contains a tension: while it works to subvert unequal gender relations, mainstreaming itself reproduces relations of privilege and power. It is a strategy dependent on class privilege in terms of time, access to the policy-making process, standard english, access to computer technology, and so on.

In a similar fashion, the privilege of feminist activists in this paradigm is recreated through a hierarchy of sites of activism.

Political work is a lot of sacrifice. And I think there is a realization that change will not come unless we do it ourselves. And we know it theoretically but we do not apply it practically. The work needs to be linked to what is happening on the ground (Vassell, interview).

Another interview participant stated,

The question of why it is that we have been more active at an international level than at a local level goes to the heart of how we have been exercising privilege and power. It is much easier to go to the UN. It is nicer too, much higher profile to go to the UN and make a grand speech that is full of human development ideas. It is much harder to go back to Jamaica and do the nitty gritty work. It is not glamorous. It is hard work. People can be abusive. It is slower moving. You have to be satisfied with tiny incremental change. It can be physically threatening. It is harder, much harder. Now I accept that there are different fields of action and that some people are better placed at different levels. I don't have a problem with that. But when as a whole group we are tending to be at one level and not at the other then it means that we are avoiding something (Narcisse, interview).

What is being avoided, it is suggested, is an examination and dialogue on

how power and privilege are exercised.

My observation is that amongst Caribbean feminists we are not dissecting this thing. We are not self-evaluating our relationship and use of power, our relationship to power and our use of power once we have it (Narcisse, interview).

Women are at the crossroads of many intersecting and at times contradictory relations of oppression. Through engendering the dominant paradigm, middle-class women are engaged in a process in which their identities, ability to participate and legitimacy of their arguments to policy makers are constituted by unequal social relations, while at the same time are being *reproduced* by such relations. The feminist project of engendering the dominant paradigm must itself proceed with an eye for complicity in interlocking systems of domination and oppression. As one interview participant noted,

That is why feminist discourse is so revolutionary. Because it is talking about change from within. From my perspective, it must talk about change from within. And therefore it has implications for altering all forms of subordination. So it is not only a question of women's emancipation but emancipation from all kinds of oppression: sexism, classism, racism. So it is a liberatory, emancipatory task (Vassell, interview).

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has examined two distinct efforts by feminists to integrate gender issues into the prevailing dominant paradigm, namely the Consultative Group on Gender and the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation. Each has attained tangible results and gains. The CGG achieved explicit reference to and acknowledgement of gender and women's interests within the national economic policy framework, a task fraught with challenges not the least of which is confronting male bias, conservative attitudes and sexist stereotypes. For its part, the WCJF successfully addresses a specific, on-going need arising from teenaged pregnancy,

namely the interrupted education of young women. This is not a period in Jamaican history of radical efforts to transform the class, racial, and gender inequalities of Jamaican society. Indeed, there appears to be limited room for manoeuvre for feminists working in this paradigm. Visions of more radical change are replaced by liberal feminist strategies which focus on integration and women as individuals.

Both groups employ efficiency arguments to justify and rationalize support for their efforts. The CGG framed its arguments for a gender-sensitive economic policy in terms of facilitating greater economic efficiency and contributing to the overall success of the policy matrix. Similarly, providing continued education, thereby improving the range of individual choices for women and hence their empowerment, is advocated in terms of the social and economic impacts it has on the country's overall development. While such arguments prove to be politically the most feasible given the current political economic context, particularly for the CGG, they are also the least challenging to decision-makers and others in positions of influence and power.

Integrationist strategies to mainstream gender work for change within a given political context; they do not seek to overtly challenge the labour market structures into which women are integrated. The Jamaican state's belief in the free-market economy and international competition as the appropriate path for the country's future, as operationalized by the NIP, reproduces Jamaica's location within a highly skewed international division of labour. The skills training of the WCJF enable access to employment at the low-end of this division of labour in terms of status and income. This poses important limitations to the Centre's goals of empowerment, and independence from men given the patriarchal and class

bias of all three economic circuits.

The Jamaican state has waxed and waned in its support for formal feminist demands of equality. While it has endorsed national machinery and policy mechanisms, at the same time it has not provided tangible resources nor support to render these effective tools for change. The shifting role of the Jamaican state, from being a vehicle for social development to a promoter of international competition, will pose new challenges to feminist agency within the dominant paradigm.

This chapter pointed to the important costs of **not** inserting a feminist analysis into this paradigm. Not taking advantage of any openings to influence and redirect policy results in missed opportunities to challenge assumptions of gender neutrality in development policy and practice. By providing a gender analysis in the NIP which has ramifications for women in all economic circuits, the CGG insists that the state recognize women's labour as key to the NIP, and seeks to eke out some tangible benefits for women in it. As was stated by several interview participants, an "all or nothing" approach does not get one anywhere and is neither strategic nor pragmatic.

These research findings calls for a re-assessment of where exactly transformation is found. There is a dichotomy between integration and transformation; perhaps it is more pertinent to speak of a continuum between the two in which the act of transformation is more of a process than a fixed goal. Both groups engender the paradigm with a *view to transform*, building bridges between what is and what could be. Building these bridges with the view to transformation requires assessing the opportunities for action and pressing home one's gains where possible. Transformation also requires attentiveness to the ways in which

relations of privilege and power are reproduced by feminist engagements with development. Relations of privilege allow certain groups of women in Jamaica to intervene on behalf of other women to build bridges with the purpose of encouraging equality and empowerment. Yet, as these research findings suggest, problematizing the process of bridge building, that is, examining one's own complicity in relations of oppression, creates space for personal transformation and hence more grounded political practices.

Chapter Seven: Feminist Visions in a Transformative Paradigm: The Sistren Theatre Collective

Caribbean feminism has been central in shaping the constitution of transformative meanings of development throughout the region. It has been noted that some of the most important theoretical and practical contributions lie in gender analysis and feminist-oriented development work (Lewis 1994). They have disclosed the

geopolitical, Eurocentric, masculinist politics of development, and the specific ways economic development policies have produced differing outcomes for women (Barriteau 1995: 143).

This chapter analyzes one contemporary instance of feminist agency contributing to transformative meanings of development in Jamaica, the Sistren Theatre Collective.

As discussed in Chapter Three, a transformative paradigm of development in the Caribbean is heterogeneous in its make-up. Actors such as development-oriented NGOs work at national, regional and international levels to offer alternative positions on macro-economic issues facing the region. They are also connected with grassroots organizations and popular development efforts. The Sistren Theatre Collective is one such organization, operating primarily in the realm of culture. Sistren emphasizes the arts as a terrain of struggle whereby meaning is given to the economic and political processes of development.

Chapter Seven briefly discusses Sistren's history and current programming activities. With reference to Sistren's approach and work, the chapter then systematically analyzes how Sistren engenders three principle tenets of a Caribbean transformative paradigm as discussed in Chapter Three, namely self-determination through local knowledge, equity, and participation. By facilitating processes whereby meanings of "development" are worked through the level of popular culture, Sistren expands the parameters of transformation

beyond the realm of economics so that non-economic sites of transformation are also included within it. The chapter then examines some of the specific challenges posed by a neoliberal economy to Sistren's work, specifically the marginalization of culture as a source of knowledge and commodification of culture. Finally, the chapter argues that Sistren is a catalyst for subverting relations of domination within feminist activism in Jamaica.

7.1 Sistren Theatre Collective

The Sistren Theatre Collective was born in a moment of Jamaican history in which state facilities opened up to the broader base of Jamaican society, and various forms of support were made available to community organizations. The People's National Party under the leadership of Michael Manley problematized the issue of Jamaican culture, giving legitimacy to popular creative work as a means of developing national identity (Ford-Smith 1997). In May 1977, twelve working-class women employed in a government "Special Employment Program" came together to present a short play, *Downpression Get a Blow*, at a cultural festival in celebration of workers' struggles in Jamaica. The play dealt with the unionization of women working in the garment industry (Ferner 1986). Drawing upon a long tradition of story-telling which has always preserved the history of Caribbean women, the formation of Sistren out of the SEP provided an organizational space in which working class women gained the strength to question their experiences (Ford-Smith 1997).

In any development, people have to be aware of what it is that is causing non-development. In Sistren there was a lot of consciousness raising and helping women to analyze why it is that certain problems affect them certain ways and what they can do about it (Afolashade, interview).

The organized women's movement of the time provided the context out of which Sistren

grew because it legitimized women's examination of their own struggles.

We came together out of a particular moment. I think the moment has a lot to do with it. We came together around a national agenda. In other words, I think we were able to have our individual differences in the moment we were formed subsumed under a desire for greater equality within the nation (Ford-Smith, interview).

At the same time, "Sistren has been a very important part of the emergence of the feminist movement in Jamaica" (Mohammed, interview). Sistren was one of the first autonomous women's groups not linked officially to any party. Moreover, through its activities it has brought to light many of women's hidden experiences. It intimates the potential for "rebel consciousness" (Ford-Smith 1997: 219) from the purely personal to the political that is the usual consequence of processes of communal disclosure.

Sistren's members are primarily black working-class women. It supports various other women's groups.

Any work that other women's groups are doing we make sure we support it. So in terms of networking and collaborating, that is an active area in Sistren, to support other women's groups. When the government was passing the Bill against domestic violence, we would make sure that we would sign that petition (Afolashade, interview).

Today Sistren administers a professional theatre group, a popular education project using drama as its main tool, a textile project, a quarterly magazine, and a research project (Sistren 1995). It has begun an Adolescent Motivation Programme to train teenagers to facilitate workshops in schools on issues of adolescent sexuality, health and career choices (Afolashade, interview). Over the past two decades, Sistren has received international financial support as an organization addressing the concerns of women as a priority, and is the object of feminist research (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996; Di Cenzo and Bennett 1992; Cobham 1990; Ferner 1986).

7.2 Engendering the Transformative Paradigm

Sistren engenders three central principles of a transformative paradigm discussed in Chapter Three. First, the methodology of 'testimonies' employed by Sistren generates local knowledge concerning development. Foregrounding this knowledge contributes to the overall process and goal of self-determination in two ways. First, testimonies provide a venue for women, who are politically, educationally, socially and economically marginalized to participate in the creation of alternatives. Sistren's theatrical productions are based on the personal experiences and testimonies of women. Drawing from the lived experiences of its members, the organization creates knowledge and imparts it to a broader audience. It is "social knowledge integral to the ordinary people, the social knowledge of women that Sistren uses in their work (Wedderburn, interview).

The publication *Lionheart Gal: Life Stories of Jamaican Women* (Sistren 1987)

was written as a campaign book. It was written to say this is how women are oppressed. These are examples of working class women's oppression, this is how they deal with it and this is the result of trying to change it. It was written to convince Caribbean people that working class women have a gendered problem. Well, I did include middle-class women. It was a national lens then, that Jamaican women have a problem and that this problem is a gendered problem (Ford-Smith, interview).

The text, with three exceptions, is the product of a dialogue in Jamaican and English between each woman of Sistren and Honor Ford-Smith, the founding Artistic Director. She transcribed the testimonies, shaping women's responses to three leading questions: How did you first become aware of the fact that you were oppressed as a woman? How did that experience affect your life? How have you tried to change it? (Sistren 1987: 15). The voices in the book reverberate with the impact of development on women, charting the themes of economics, migration, sexuality, motherhood, and male violence. They also are testimonies

to the processes of personal transformation and collective political consciousness.

Second, Sistren highlights cultural production as a site of knowledge where alternatives and social change are envisioned. The meaning of self-determination is thus pushed beyond the economic realm to include cultural determinants. This aspect is particularly important because

Jamaica is a very open society, very open, with the impact of North American culture and images...What it does is create a great deal of confusion about who [youth] are, identity, issues of self-image (Wedderburn, interview).

Furthermore, "the social consciousness is anything that comes from America is alright. We are penetrated in terms of the culture so much by America" (Afolashade, interview). One interview participant noted that alternatives that are advanced must be part of and worked through the specific experiences of a community (Harris, interview). Hence part of the strategy and process of building alternatives

means being able to theorize what that moment of change would look like in terms of what people's desires are...So we saw it, for example, in Jamaica in the 1970s when we tried to instigate some kind of social change, where people's desires are very much based on the market. In other words, a family that eats Cornflakes for breakfast every morning and then suddenly "I can't get Cornflakes", well that is a big problem....If I want to change how the society functions I also have to be able to understand how people's desires are produced and what that means in terms of the kinds of change you are going to instigate (Ford-Smith, interview).

Sistren emphasizes culture as an instrument through which meanings of development evolve and are worked through. Facilitating the understanding of the experiences of Jamaican working-class women, Sistren brings "mother tongue, mother culture, mother wit - the feminised discourse of voice, identity and native knowledge" (Cooper 1993: 3) to the forefront of goals of self-determination.

Sistren has developed a participatory approach to working with Caribbean women.

We try to make our research benefit women so they can see, whatever theme we do it around, how it affects them and what they can do about it (Afolashade, interview).

It worked extensively, for example, with sugar workers in researching and producing the play *The Case of Iris Armstrong* which documents their working conditions and demonstrates the devaluation of women's labour in relation to men's because of women's reproductive roles (Ferner 1986). Sistren works with established groups and

gives support to institutions that do research. And we take the research content and break it down into how the grassroots women would understand, by using the drama and put it in their everyday language (Afolashade, interview).

Sistren performs almost exclusively in the Jamaican language. Its choice of linguistic medium is consistent with its mandate to produce theatre for and about the working classes. The language of narration in *Lionheart Gal* is Jamaican, employing proverbs, earthy metaphors and folk-tale structures, particularly repetition and apparent digression (Cooper 1993: 89). Its use of the Jamaican language is a reclamation of sorts, a political strategy designed to give back to Jamaican women the voice that slavery and colonialism denied them (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996).

...the language issue is a political issue because language is central to all power relations. It expresses the soul of a people. In our experience the development of Patwah expresses the refusal of a people to imitate a coloniser, their insistence on creation, their movement from obedience towards revolution (Sistren 1987: 17).

Along with the use of popular language, Sistren employs techniques such as popular myths, images and dramatic poetry, oral tradition, ritual, popular music, children's games, and mimed movement familiar to Jamaicans (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996; Cobham 1990). Its theatrical production *QPH*, for example, employs performance techniques of the Etu death ritual to recount the lives and histories of female inmates of a Kingston Almhouse who died

when it was destroyed by fire in 1980.

In addition to creating local knowledge and valuing the principle of participation, Sistren also seeks to place women's experiences of development at the forefront of the transformative paradigm. The collection of stories which constitute *Lionheart Gal*, and the production of plays on issues of sexuality, domestic violence, labour and history focus attention on the private areas of women's lives. They bring to light many of women's "hidden" experiences. When it first emerged, Sistren's work was nothing less than the ending of a silencing of a whole group of women whom the actresses represented (Fido 1992). Sistren challenges the split between the public and private domains, situating women's testimonies as a reminder that development is a highly personal process. For example, representations of fertility, pregnancy and motherhood take on political inflections in the play *Bellywoman Bangarang*. Near the end of the play, nurses claim the right to strike as an expression of their right to be recognized and paid well for their work, and teenaged girls claim the right to be sexually active and/or bear children on their own terms rather than through coercion and violence (Cobham 1990). This play raises questions about ways in which the social, biological or institutional processes of mothering may be undermined or put at risk by the economic realities of Jamaican society.

7.2.1 Contributions

The impact of Sistren's work can be analyzed at two levels. At an organizational level, Sistren has received countless requests to participate in a variety of workshops and seminars on women's issues, locally and abroad. It has toured internationally, performing to

audiences interested in women's theatre and Caribbean culture. One of its plays, *QPH*, won national awards for excellence, and another, *Bellywoman Bangarang*, was honoured for its experimental qualities (Ford-Smith 1997). Sistren has acted as a catalyst for further organizing on the part of women, supporting, for example, the development of the Association of Women's Organizations of Jamaica in 1988.²⁸ Sistren was involved with regional initiatives in the development of a gendered economic analysis of structural adjustment and debt that was very much located in a Caribbean cultural identity (McAfee 1991).

Sistren has tried to create spaces within which critical feminist consciousness and perspectives can be nurtured.

We train women to be leaders, to take on leadership role that they can manage their meetings, they can carry out certain projects and influence the community to help and not just wait on the politicians to come in. So development of the person, the community spirit, to make sure certain qualities that we have as a people have to be maintained (Afolashade, interview).

Sistren's material talks back to the dominant classes and to men so as "to intervene in the discourses that naturalize gender hierarchies" (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 212). "Money and maleness is where a lot of the power lies" (Afolashade, interview). Personal empowerment is a means of resistance to this

Empowerment is through all fields: trying to learn a skill, trying to be literate, trying to love yourself and develop a positive self-esteem and look out for other people and know in this world that we can't be alone (Afolashade, interview).

Empowerment has arisen out of the practical experiences of women working at the grassroots

²⁸ An umbrella organization, AWOJA's mission has been to act as a conduit for women's networking, collaboration and lobbying; to build women's capacity for organizing and bringing about changes in the condition of their lives (Narcisse 1996: 2).

level in many parts of the world. A feminist understanding of empowerment includes the 'power to' and 'power within'. In the field of gender and development, Kabeer (1994) posits that empowering strategies for women must build on the 'power within' as a necessary adjunct to improving their ability to control resources, to determine agendas and make decisions. Power from within entails "experiential recognition and analysis" (Kabeer 1994: 229) of issues to do with women's subordination and how it is maintained.

I feel that if twenty five women come to our workshop and at the same time three were able to say, "Well, when I came to this workshop it helped me to speak out, I realize that I am a person, that I should love myself more", I think of course that it does make a difference (Afolashade, interview).

Empowerment cannot be given; it has to be self-generated, which is a significant part of Sistren's impact on women.

7.3 **Marginalization and Commodification: Constraints of a Neo-liberal Context**

The constituency represented with Sistren, that is, working class women, is marginalized in the corridors of power within the Jamaican state and business classes. "They don't listen to us" (Afolashade, interview). The JLP banned Sistren from television in 1980 due to what was declared a "subversive" poem performed in its theatrical production *Nana Yah* (Ferner 1986). Working-class women tend not to be important stake-holders in a neo-liberal economy. Furthermore its overarching emphasis on economics and market relations "limits the extent to which insights produced by cultural work can even be heard" (Ford-Smith, interview). Robinson (1996: 15) notes:

Global capitalism is tearing down all non-market structures that, in the past, placed limits on the accumulation...of capital. Every corner of the globe, every nook and

cranny of social life, is becoming commodified. This involves breaking up and commodifying non-market spheres of human activity....

This includes the tendency for cultural space to be commoditized. With Sistren, for example, its textile project originated in pressures by international funders to be "productive" and income-generating.²⁹ Ironically, the textile project has never made a profit and has been unable to develop a profile sufficiently independent of the theatre. It has at times been supported by earnings from the theatre project which, contrary to predictions, earns more than any of the other areas of Sistren's work (Ford-Smith 1997).

Culture, then, is relevant and to development only if it produces a measurable result or a market commodity. In fact,

people's ways of making meaning in their own lives through language and through the arts are an obstacle for development because these create ambiguities which mess up the paradigms. So if you are going to deal with anything that has to do with the arts it must be functional...But nobody would tell a Torontonians that if they go to the theatre it must be useful to their understanding of plumbing (Ford-Smith, interview).

Sistren, however, places economic and political processes within the framework of culture, to evolve understandings of what it means to be "developed". The above quote speaks to the challenges of advancing such a project.

7.4 Social Relations of Power: Sistren as a Catalyst of Change

Located in the concrete experiences and culture of black working class women,

²⁹ Ford-Smith (1997) elaborates on how funding from international aid agencies served to pressure Sistren to re-orient its cultural work to more technical development-oriented projects like textiles. It served to produce Sistren as a "women and development" project when "in fact it was created to be a project that was producing meaning" (Ford-Smith, interview). How international funding plays out today within Sistren could be the subject of future research. Insufficient evidence hinders me from critically elaborating upon this.

Sistren serves as a catalyst for subverting relations of domination. When it first formed, Sistren was unique and innovative among Jamaican women's organizations in that it brought together middle class and working class women in a collective environment.

We didn't have the pyramid structure where it was top down...We felt we had power and control just the same as the middle class. Where it was the pyramid, I doubt if we could have much say because Honor or Joan could just say, "Well, do twelve shows" or, "I want a show on violence" and we don't have no say in it. Whereas a democratic atmosphere was there where we had equal say (Afolashade, interview).

Ford-Smith (1997) has remarked that the historical mode of cross-class and race interactions among women is one in which middle class women minister in the image of Lady Bountiful to women of the lower classes. With Sistren, middle class women were named as resource people who could bring formal educational skills while

working class members brought to the Collective popular cultural knowledge and language made invisible and inferiorized by centuries of colonization. They could teach the middle class about issues such as orality, the Jamaican language, and the lived reality of black working-class culture (Ford-Smith 1997: 238).

Formulating and negotiating new forms of class and race interactions

was very hard work, extremely hard work. And we didn't theorize difference enough to figure out what we would need to put in place in order to make the differences work together better...In Sistren I think a lot of conflict played itself out around class within the Collective. And then when we appeared together a lot of questions were asked around colour. For example, I came under a lot of attack for being white. So what do you do with that? How do you take that up within the relations of your group? (Ford-Smith, interview).

Having middle class and working class women in a collective environment raised issues of accounting for one's position and how privileges are implicated in other's lives. Ford-Smith (interview) reflects her perception that middle class women "didn't interrogate our own experience. We didn't even think it was proper for us, being good Lady Bountifuls to put ourselves into the picture". This was one of the unique educational experiments of Sistren,

to provide a space where historical relations of privilege and power based on race and class could be interrogated.

Today middle class women are no longer part of the Sistren Collective.

In the early days we used to work with certain middle class women who offered certain resource skills that we didn't have at the time. But through time, some of us just learned or we just employ from the outside people with certain skills because now the middle class women are not with us any more (Afolashade, interview).

The desires and demands of the constituency represented by Sistren continue to address relations of power and privilege, particularly around the hierarchy of sites of activism. For example, as Afolashade (interview) states,

And middle class women, like they got funding to do X things and X things. A middle class woman might have a helper to do her washing and her ironing. And they plan a workshop at a time that is not convenient for the working class women. They plan the time without consultation with these women. And the thing is, they don't speak to these women. They are doing things for these women but it might be over the radio. So you know there is no contact.

Sistren challenges that political practice be grounded in the communities and realities of women's lives.

Say for example I am a middle class woman and I want to target women in the inner cities. I would say, "O.K. I know that the violence in the inner city is really terrible and so on and I am afraid"....But you can't go in alone. You go in with someone who actually lives there...And it might be that I realize that I don't have to keep the session at the Windham Hotel, that there is a community centre that will do the organizing and so on...But if I went, "O.K. put it in the paper, our workshop on breast feeding, target group: women who have babies, 9 a.m. at the Windham Hotel" and I send home circulars, it might not happen because women would not take the bus here. They don't know who to leave their children with and all of that (Afolashade, interview).

Sistren challenges on how issues of class and race are worked through. Furthermore,

If you bring a working class woman into a room full of academic women, what then are the things which you need to put in place in order for that woman to be able to put into language her insights and her analysis and not to be silenced by these other

women? It is not just a question of representation. It is how it works out (Ford-Smith, interview).

"It is how it works out" voices a similar theme raised in Chapter Six around dialogue on the exercise of power and privilege. Sistren, and the constituency it represents, play a significant role in catalyzing feminist political practice to question its intentions and examine its role in reproducing relations of privilege.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the ways in which the Sistren Theatre Collective imbues transformative meanings of development with a gender perspective. Its use of testimonies, its participatory approach and methodologies, and the foregrounding of women's specific experiences attest to critical feminist agency with the transformative paradigm. By focusing on and highlighting black working class women's material realities, their re/productive roles and the status of relationships between women and men, Sistren confronts the androcentric and gendered biases inherent in development processes.

Culture as a site of generating knowledge for development processes is marginalized in a neo-liberal environment. The constituency represented by Sistren has limited ability to press its concerns and interests into macro-policy making processes; this despite the fact that these policies, such as those of structural adjustment, impact directly on the working class. It speaks directly to issues of the nature of political practice raised in the previous chapter. It speaks not simply to including the important perspectives of black working class women in such practices but *how* such inclusion can be worked out and operationalized.

Sistren's theatrical production *Nana Yah* dramatizes the legend of Nanny, a

transported African slave who escapes from a sugar plantation to join the Maroons in their guerilla war against the white plantocracy of eighteenth century Jamaica. An Ashanti chieftainess, Nanny is celebrated and remembered for her tactician abilities, courage, determination and magical religious powers, all which enabled her to out-manoeuvre the white military (Sistren 1987). The historical "truth" of Nanny's accomplishments is never in question and in the play her death does not reduce her historical agency. Instead, the memory of her resistance to a severely oppressive regime is employed as an inspiration in struggles for social change and transformation. Sistren's unique contribution to this paradigm lies in this cultural approach to social change. It creates space within which people can come to evolve understandings of what it means to be "developed" and what change might look like, individually and collectively. Providing popular education workshops to community groups as well as theatrical productions provide a means through which people come to understand their lives as a source of enlightenment and nexus for social change. This space for critical consciousness, where subjectivity is challenged and re-built, is the site where the principles articulated by various actors in the transformative paradigm can be worked out.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Early on in researching this thesis, I digressed from reading academic literature to explore Jamaican and Caribbean novels and poetry. A piece I came across by Jamaican writer Christine Craig, entitled *Elsa's Version*, resonated with me throughout this project. The following is an excerpt of it:

*Lawd God
I tired fe hear it
I tired fe hear it
so till.
All dem big talk:
'Women are our natural resources
Women are the backbone of this country'
Me no bone inna no body back
nor rib outa no body side...*

*You can confuse, abuse
an mess wid you own self
till you good an ready
to deal wid I as a real somebody.*

*Till dat day come
Lef me alone
an me modda
an me sista
an me gal-pickney.³⁰*

This poem speaks to one of the crucial facets of feminist politics: resistance. In an impassioned plea to be dealt with as a woman in her own right, the speaker interrogates and resists the male construction of Jamaican women as idealized signifiers of national identity. Feminists mobilize in various sites - locally, nationally and around the world - to resist

³⁰ "gal-pickney" means girl children; Poem excerpted from The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds. London: Routledge, 1996. page 301.

mainstream development processes, voices which persist in dislodging the patriarchal and androcentric biases of both dominant and transformative development paradigms.

To explore these feminist engagements with development, I focused on eliciting the salient themes and actors involved in engendering development in Jamaica. An original research preoccupation was to examine feminist contributions solely within an alternative development paradigm. The interviews I conducted, however, shifted this research focus. They revealed important and critical feminist work within mainstream development processes which could not be ignored. In fact, expanding my research question to include a framework of both dominant and transformative paradigms rendered the research and analytical process all that more relevant to the activities of feminists in Jamaica.

As Geraldine Heng (1997: 30) notes, feminist theory "must expect to be surprised by the strategies, appearance, and forms of feminism that emerge and are effective in Third-World contexts". While this rings true and served as a reminder not to homogenize appearances of feminism, I was nonetheless troubled by what I perceived to be a lack of radical feminist initiatives for change in Jamaica. An entry in my research journal states: "Not what I expected. What is happening? How do I make sense of the fact that there is no 'active' alternative?" One of the findings of this research is how limited the room for radical feminist mobilization is at this particular conjuncture. The Jamaican state has embraced a philosophy of neoliberalism, operationalized in its *National Industrial Policy*. This embrace is not surprising as we are witnessing the globalization and permeation of capitalism into every nook and cranny of the globe. "From a world in which capitalism was the dominant mode within a system of 'articulated modes of production', globalisation is bringing about

a world integrated into a single capitalist mode" (Robinson 1996: 15). An element of the hegemony neoliberalism wields is the absence of strongly supported popular alternatives to global capitalism. An unrepenting emphasis on the free market and international competition as means of ameliorating people's lives and as sites promising a better future serves to strengthen and perpetuate unequal social relations while concomitantly marginalizing alternative visions and knowledge systems. The cultural space created by Sistren as an instrument through which understandings, meanings and alternatives are created is completely marginalized and de-legitimized.

The strength of neo-liberalism is reshaping the terrain of social action. This research reveals that in Jamaica one impact has been to demarcate the terrain of social action along the lines of moderate reform, thereby conservatizing forms of feminist agency. To have any success, strategies to engender the dominant paradigm are liberal feminist in nature, with an emphasis on efficiency arguments and a focus on individual needs. One interesting future research initiative could be a comprehensive examination of the relationship between feminism and the state in Jamaica, particularly as the state is increasingly being divested of its responsibilities. Such a study could analyze the process of institutionalizing gender into the state, comparing the contemporary context with that of the era of democratic socialism in the 1970s. Have forms of bureaucratic resistance to gender-aware equity goals changed? Are they operating under new constraints?

With a sense of resignation, activists view moderate reform as a strategic move in the given context, as reflected in the attitude, "an all or nothing approach doesn't get you any where". Engaging with dominant neo-liberal policies does, however, point to the fact that

feminism is a long-term, multi-layered set of political practices. Struggles to transform society and gender relations require that feminists be actively present everywhere and at all levels and sectors of society. A related future research initiative could focus on a systematic analysis of the Caribbean regional feminist movement, with its continual flow of information, exchange of resources and sustained dialogue, to further explore conservatizing trends and identify openings, conditions and ideas for potential radical activism.

The experiences of activists in Jamaica raises the question of how to negotiate our way through this historical conjuncture. Social change can be abrupt, as in the case of revolutions like Cuba and Nicaragua or as with the breathtaking speed transnational capital has commodified human interaction over the last twenty years. History teaches us that nothing stays the same for long. This is where the significance of the actors and initiatives which constitute the transformative paradigm comes into play: alternative principles rooted in the history of Jamaica and the Caribbean provide signposts to envisioning a more just society and consistently renew a sense of the range of possibilities.

Involvement by scholars, practitioners and activists across the globe have been guided by issues of survival that women face at various historical moments. Feminist scholarship and politics that focus on women in developing societies have been historically based on a sense of common experience and on a unified category labelled "women". In the past decade, however, critical scholarship and dialogue have challenged scholars and activists alike to engage in a more nuanced understanding of the conditions that structure women's lives. The move away from traditional feminist debates around tensions of difference between men and women to politicizing issues of difference between women has entangled feminist academic,

ethical and political involvement in the area of 'women and development'.

A central concern of this study was with this entanglement and its implications for feminist activism. What the layers of activism in Jamaica reveal are the ways feminist engagements with development are embedded in, and reflective of, social relations of power and privilege. The strategy of mainstreaming gender, for example, is liberatory in its final intent yet it also reproduces unequal relations of power as it is dependent on privileged access to resources. Around the world, feminist concerns and desires to grapple with issues of difference have largely centred around strategies of "inclusivity". The ways in which relations of power seep into collective action and personal practice of feminists in Jamaica signify the necessity of much more complex acts than inclusivity as a way out of the existing entanglement.

The complexity and heterogeneity of feminist activism in Jamaica demonstrates that the process of inclusiveness itself must be problematized. Given the many ways women are implicated in one another's lives in Jamaica, this would entail examination of the ways one is complicitous in the subordination of other women. How do we explain to ourselves the social hierarchies that surround us? "What are my motives? Why do I want to see change? Where do I want to locate myself in the process and why do I want to locate myself there?" (Narcisse, interview). These questions ask us to examine the ways in which one can simultaneously inhabit both sites of domination and oppression. Thus the issues, questions and challenges that feminist activists are grappling with in Jamaica, from manoeuvring within a neo-liberal paradigm to reflecting upon the use of power and privilege, are ones to be brought forth into the wider feminist and development communities in their quest for

progressive social change and amelioration of impoverished material realities.

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APPENDIX A: Research Project Proposal Submission to the Carleton Ethics Committee

Project Title: The Struggle for Alternative Development Paradigms in the Anglophone Caribbean: The Feminist Contribution

Principal Investigator: Suzanne Lenon, M.A. Student
Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Carleton University

Contact Address: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Paterson Hall Level 2A,
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa ON K1S 5B6

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyze the salient themes of the feminist contribution to alternative development discourse and policies with a focus on Jamaica. This will reveal both its uniqueness as well as the points of convergence with the discourse of other social groups. More specifically, I am interested in examining how feminists are engaging with concepts of difference with respect to subjectivity, political action and power. These three concepts relate directly to the feminist process of articulating an alternative development paradigm as it is: (i) a women-centred process (subjectivity); (ii) an urgent political project based on increasing impoverishment and real material needs (political action); and (iii) a critique of the Western/Northern development paradigm (power). Due to the recency of much of this work it is clear that secondary data sources are not sufficient. In order to thoroughly investigate my chosen topic, it is thus imperative that I conduct interviews with key women actively involved in advancing alternative development thought and strategies.

Initial contact has been made by letter and/or fax (see attached copy) with seventeen women in Kingston, Jamaica and 1 in Toronto, Ontario as I plan to conduct 20 days of research in Kingston at the beginning of August, 1996. The women contacted were names referred to me by Canadians with extensive work and academic experience in the Caribbean as well as by the potential interview candidates themselves. The interview candidates are drawn from the academic community, international development consultants, local women's organizations, and possibly from current and former representatives of the government's Women's Bureau and Caricom Women's Desk. All people contacted are being given complete information as to the purpose of this project, and will be given a copy of the interview questions as well as consent forms (see attached copy).

I plan to follow a semi-structured interview format by asking a series of questions organized thematically (see attached copy). The purpose of this interview process is to gain an understanding of the salient themes of feminist development; uncover, within these themes,

whether (and if so, how) feminist development discourse engages with elements of difference with respect to subjectivity, political action and power; and to get a sense of the interview subject's views of the Caribbean's future directions and the role of a feminist contribution in influencing the directions taken. As the interviewee may be aware of gaps in the interview plan, other questions may arise during the interview\research process.

The information gained through this qualitative research process will be complemented with secondary data sources from both Carleton and Ottawa University Libraries as well as the IDRC and CIDA libraries. MATCH International Centre has a number of documents and publications directly related to feminism in the Caribbean. In Kingston, Jamaica, I have contacted the Resource Centre of the Consortium School of Graduate Studies, Mona Campus, University of West Indies.

All those who choose to participate in the interview process will have the option of full confidentiality and/or anonymity, if desired, as well as the choice to withdraw at any time. Participants also will have the option of not responding to a particular question or of not having their response recorded. Upon completion, all participants will have access to the results of the research project which will be written in a manner which ensures respect of requests for confidentiality and anonymity.

APPENDIX B: Announcement used for Recruiting Interview
 Participants

Address

Date

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student in International Affairs at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. I am currently working on my M.A. thesis entitled "The Struggle for Alternative Development Paradigms in the Anglophone Caribbean: The Feminist Contribution", under the supervision of Professor Daiva Stasiulis, department of Sociology/Anthropology. My research centres on exploring the salient themes of the feminist contribution to Jamaican development, particularly with respect to alternative development paths. I am particularly interested in investigating the process of building alternatives, with respect to women's subjectivity, political action and power.

I plan to come to Jamaica in August for the purpose of conducting interviews. Your name was recommended to me by _____. I am thus writing to see if you would be available to meet with me. I will be in Jamaica between August 6-26, 1996. Is this a convenient period for you? If so, is it possible to specify a date? I also wonder if you would be able to suggest names and addresses of other women you think would be able to contribute to my research?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you, if possible by July. If you require further information on my research or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address, phone numbers (home and work) and fax number (work) given below.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Lenon

Address

Phone/Fax Numbers

APPENDIX C: List of Interview Participants and Location of Interviews

Afolashade
Sistren Theatre Collective
Kingston, Jamaica

Jessica Byron
Lecturer, International Relations, UWI Mona Campus
Kingston, Jamaica

Leith Dunn
International Development Consultant
Kingston, Jamaica

Honor Ford-Smith
Co-founder of Sistren Theatre Collective
Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Nesha Hanif
Professor, University of Michigan
Kingston, Jamaica

Sonja Harris
Social Planner
Kingston, Jamaica

Hermione McKenzie
Senior Lecturer, Dept of Sociology and Social Work,
UWI Mona Campus
Kingston, Jamaica

Pamela McNeil
National Director, Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation
Kingston, Jamaica

Patricia Mohammed Director, Centre for Gender
and Development Studies, UWI Mona Campus
Kingston Jamaica

Carol Narcisse
Former Coordinator of Association of Women's Organizations of Jamaica
Kingston, Jamaica

Linette Vassell
Social Development Consultant and Historian
Kingston, Jamaica

Judith Wedderburn
Executive Director,
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Jamaica Office
Kingston, Jamaica

APPENDIX D: Interview Questionnaire

Themes of feminist development discourse

- * What do you see as the current (dominant) development paradigm (model) in Jamaica?
- * Can you describe the central points of alternatives to the current model of development that are currently being put forth? Which groups are doing this work?
- * Can you describe the key themes of feminist contributions to the formulation of development alternatives? Can you give some examples of how these translate into practical alternatives?
- * Do you see feminist development discourse as having any impact or influence upon official development policies and goals?

Issues of difference

- * Does feminist development discourse account for differences among women?
- * What are differences based on?
- * Which are the most important? Are they fundamental? (ie, irreconcilable)
- * The knowledge of which women forms the basis for feminist development discourse?
- * How do women come together for the purposes of political action given their differences?
- * How do you understand the concept of power with respect to formulating development alternatives?

APPENDIX E: Consent Forms

CONSENT FORM #1

Project Title: The Struggle for Alternative Development Paradigms in the Anglophone Caribbean: The Feminist Contribution

Principal Investigator: Suzanne Lenon, M.A. Student
Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Carleton University

Contact Address: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Paterson Hall Level 2A, Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa ON K1S 5B6

The purpose of the interview is to gain a deeper understanding of the salient themes of the feminist contribution to alternative development discourse and policies in Jamaica. More specifically, I am interested in exploring how feminist development discourse accounts for differences among women, particularly in the areas of subjectivity, political action and power.

The interview may last anywhere from 60 to 120 minutes, and its location will be chosen by the interview subject.

The interviews are the source of primary data for research for my M.A. thesis. This thesis will be available to the general public via the Carleton University Library and the National Library of Canada, Ottawa.

Participants have the option of requesting that any or all information given remain fully confidential and/or anonymous as well as the choice to withdraw from the interview at any time. Participants also have the option of not responding to a particular question or of not having their response recorded. If the interviewee requests confidentiality at any point in the research process, the tape recorder will be shut off, no notes will be taken, and the words spoken will not appear in the M.A. thesis. If the interviewee requests anonymity, she will be assigned a letter of the alphabet (e.g. Interviewee "A") to be used consistently after any of her quotes used in the thesis.

Signing this form indicates consent to participate in an interview with the Principal Investigator.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Suzanne Lenon at the above address. You may also contact the supervisor of this project, Professor Daiva Stasiulis, Department of Sociology at Carleton University (Tel: (613) 520-2600, ext. 1098).

I, _____, have read the above, and give informed consent to my participation in this interview.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization: _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

CONSENT FORM #2

I, _____ give my consent that the interview be tape-recorded.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization: _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

CONSENT FORM #3

I, _____

____ consent to my name being used in the writing and publication of interview results

____ prefer to remain anonymous and understand that this anonymity will be fully ensured.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization: _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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Phone: 716/482-0300
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