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The general character of West Indian society has been described most convincingly through dependency theory, which developed independently in Latin America and in the Caribbean. It arose because of "a common need to devise an appropriate theoretical framework for the interpretation and analysis of the economic processes in both regions" (Girvan 1973:1) due "to the perceived failure of national development . . . and to a growing disillusionment with existing development theory" (O'Brien 1975:10).

### the dependency of West Indian economies

In the West Indian context, dependency theory varied according to the methodology used and the particular case study investigated. With regard to methodology, a distinction has been drawn between "institutional" as opposed to "historical" analysis (Girvan 1973:9–19). In the former, West Indian economies were described in terms of their "external structural dependence" (Girvan 1973:11). In the latter, political economy was used to uncover the historical roots of dependency and the constraints of the past on the present. With regard to case studies, there has been a concentration on mineral-export enclaves and agriculture. For the former, it has been shown that the presence of multinational products "dependent growth without development" (Girvan 1973:20). In the case of the agricultural sector, the political economy approach gave rise to the notion of "plantation economy," that is, a type of economy that characterizes "those countries . . . where the internal and external dimensions of the plantation system dominate the country's economic, social and political structure and its relations with the rest of the world" (Beckford 1972:12).

Both economic dependency theory and anthropological/sociological analyses in the West Indies are premised on a duality in the agricultural sector based on a distinction between plantation and peasant modes of production. As a result, in local-level analyses, dependency theory incorrectly assumes a homogenous, undifferentiated peasantry whereas social analyses are unable to comprehend empirical complexity. This also means that macro- and microanalyses remain independent endeavors. It therefore is necessary to eliminate the concept of duality and to concentrate instead on historical analysis of economic differentiation and class formation—both products of the interaction between national and local levels and between so-called peasant and plantation modes. To do this, the concept of mediation is used to refer to the process that articulates diverse interests and different structural levels within a broader frame of dependency and that thereby produces a cumulative process of differentiation on the local level. From this perspective, patronage, factionalism, and occupational multiplicity are explained as part of the process of local-level class formation.

Briefly, historical developments in agriculture, always based on plantation organization, are said to have led to the incorporation of West Indian economies as the bottom level in vertically integrated multinational corporations. The effect is "a dynamic equilibrium of underdevelopment" due to the misallocation of resources within the society, because vertical integration prevents lateral linkages between the productive potential of plantation agriculture and the local economy (Beckford 1972, Best 1966). Implied in this view is an emphasis on extreme duality in the West Indian agricultural sector:

on the one hand, there is the estate or plantation producing crops usually geared to the export market and using relatively large amounts of capital per man and relatively advanced techniques. On the other hand, there is the peasant who produces either staples or food for the home market, or, as is common, both at the same time (Dennis 1965:105-107).

So-called peasant production is either stagnant (Beckford 1972) or unimportant in that the contemporary plantation economy "may have a greater internal dynamic as a result of the peasantry, but . . . [the economy's] . . . capacity to transform continues to be systematically frustrated" (Girvan 1973:17). Also related to the concept of the plantation economy are simplistic sociological assumptions. For example, the suppression of so-called peasant agriculture as well as dependence in general has produced an "unmotivated population" and a competitive society that is "conflict-ridden" and "unstable" (Beckford 1972:204-205).

This paper begins with the premise that West Indian economies are dependent, but it suggests that the macroprocesses presented primarily by the economists have obscured important micro-processes that inhere within the dependent economy and that are critical for understanding the dynamic, or lack thereof, in these societies.

### plantations and peasants in the Caribbean

The duality of the agriculture sector presented by economists is not untrue, it is simply not sufficient. At a general level, it is true that the agricultural export (plantation) sector has been linked to multinationals while the peasant sector has been constantly struggling throughout its history for self-sufficiency and for control of those factors of production (land, labor, and technology) so that its own reproduction was ensured. To the economist, the peasant never succeeded, as evidenced in the continuing control by corporate interests and in the lack of input into economic growth that such a sector has made and can make. On the other hand, one can take the view that the peasant struggle has had important effects on socioeconomic structure both locally and nationally. It is this dynamic process and its effects that must be understood in order to understand dependency.

At this microlevel, the issue is not the success or failure of the so-called peasantry, but the interaction between the forces promoting dependency and the peasant struggle. At this level it is clear that

a peasant-like adaptation outside the plantation system . . . usually involved either a total escape from the system itself—by self-imposed isolation . . . or else a permanently unbalanced oscillation between plantation or other outside labor and subsistence-producing cultivation, as in the case of many or most non-plantation rural settlements (Mintz 1973:100).

This complexity in the West Indian empirical situation, with its interplay between plantation and peasant production, has influenced analyses. For when individuals oscillate between standard sociological types (as between peasant and plantation worker) structural studies, which generally are premised on discrete units, are made extremely difficult.<sup>1</sup> This is further complicated by the general theoretical problem as to "what is a peasant." If

economists have refuted the concept, sociologists and anthropologists, in dealing with it, have produced a very unsatisfactory picture of local dynamics in West Indian societies. This picture, however, has emerged only in an indirect way because of the foci and categories that social analysts have adopted. One such focus, family organization, studies so-called lower- and middle-class variations in different ecological niches: plantations, villages, and cities (Blake 1961; Clarke 1966; Rodman 1971; M. G. Smith 1962; R. T. Smith 1956). However, by emphasizing discrete niches and stratification categories, these studies ignore the interaction both between the plantation and peasant spheres and between so-called classes.

Similarly, the plural-stratification debate, a second major focus, has contributed little to our understanding of local dynamics. The plural model assumes that society is the sum of its institutions; that cultural and institutional variation defines the units that comprise the society; that because ethnic groups seem to exhibit variation, the society is composed of ethnic segments (M. G. Smith 1960); that such ethnic segments are reflected in or reinforced by spatial (rural-urban) divisions (Despres 1970); that history, therefore, is the study of the interaction of these ethnic segments; and thus, that conflict and competition within the society is based on ethnic loyalties and the mobilization of ethnic groups (Despres 1967 and 1975; Hoetink 1975). This perspective has distorted the local level. First, there is the simplistic use of discrete ecological niches. Second, the tautological method of positing ethnic groups as the fundamental societal units precludes the existence of class alignments that cross-cut national and local levels and thereby ignores the implication these alignments have for conflict and competition (M. Silverman 1976).

Unfortunately, the stratificationists' response is simply to argue that a common opportunity structure and common values cut across ethnic segments as a product of a shared stratification system (Braithwaite 1953; Skinner 1971). This means that locale-level analyses take the individual as the basic analytical category and show that individuals, despite ethnicity, interact (Skinner 1960).

A far better approach is one that locates the pattern described by both the above perspectives as possible adaptations within a broader model of West Indian society. This more general model takes as a premise the fundamental cleavage in plantation society, the cleavage between owners and workers (Wolff 1971). Not only, then, are the stratification and plural perspectives two possible adaptations within a class-structured society, but the peasant-plantation oscillation is another. However, despite the potential of this analysis, with its emphasis on adaptation and, most importantly, on class, there has been little follow-up work. Instead, microstudies have analyzed (1) the social structure of the plantation as a physical unit (Sawardena 1963); (2) peasant communities (Horowitz 1967; Cohen 1955; Klass 1961); or (3) Caribbean "social-rural types" (Padilla 1957) as a typological problem, either theoretically or through case studies. The first two, with their focus on the issue of community integration, ignore the articulation of the village or plantation settlement with the wider context, that is, with other local-level or higher-level units. The third kind of study, although premised on the oscillation between plantation and peasant modes of production, is limited by a typological emphasis: such studies simply provide description and structural explanations, that is, oscillation is a product of limited opportunity (Comiss 1972; Frucht 1967) or it is a complementary method of subsistence (M. G. Smith 1973; Handler 1965).

In general terms, West Indian social studies classify local structures rather than analyzing local dynamics as these relate to wider social structures and processes. For this reason, our understanding both of locale-level complexity and of dependency has been inadequate. Following Mintz, "we face the problem of peasant societies with different 'mixes' . . . in terms of the internal structure of the peasant sector . . . the relationship of these inside sec-

ctors to each other... [and] the relationship of such sectors to other, non-peasant rural groupings" (Mintz 1973:95). Most important, "the point... is to see such groups as arising out of prior social and economic arrangements, and fitting with the rise (and decline) of other rural sectors" (Mintz 1973:101).

What we require, therefore, are case studies that have a historical perspective along with a clear understanding of the complexity of economic differentiation that characterizes West Indian rural social structure, both peasant and nonpeasant.

This still leaves the question as to what is a peasant, both in general and in the West Indian context. We could begin simply with a basic attitude of peasantry on which there is agreement, namely, the fact of its structural subordination within a stratified social order (Wolf 1966; Shanin 1966). However, the peasantry itself is stratified internally (Alavi 1965; Wolf 1966) and hence, segments of the peasantry themselves "are commonly among the predators" (Mintz 1973:94). Furthermore, the basic feature of peasantry suggested above implies a notion of "encapsulation" (Alavi 1973; Bailey 1969). This concept, however, implies that a bounded unit is located within a wider structure such that change in the inside structure is a product of forces penetrating from the outside. There are several problems with this formulation. First, it ignores the interplay between the two structures: the local level may affect the encapsulating structure. Second, the local structure has its own dynamic that is not simply a result of exogenous inputs. Third, and most important, the local unit is part of a wider stratified order. If there are predators among the peasantry, that is, if the local unit itself is stratified, how does this stratification mesh with the class structure of the national society? In brief, there is a national class structure and the differentiated rural sector(s) articulates with it, but not necessarily as a uniformly exploited class. When this latter view of articulation is the object of analysis, the concept of encapsulation or structural subordination cannot be used.

In short, there are serious problems in any definitional exercise. When this difficulty is combined with the complexity of the West Indian empirical situation, there is the danger that we will continue to generate overly simplistic macromodels, or conversely, isolated microstudies, such as community analyses and family studies. Therefore, let us move from definitional issues to the attempt to understand the internal structure of dependent societies. Phrased another way, dependency and its concerns must be linked to local-level complexity.

### the concept of mediation

In linking the local dynamic to the macrolevel through the historical analysis of local differentiation, account has to be taken of middlemen, a phenomenon that has been identified as the major means through which societal levels are linked (Swartz 1968). I am not suggesting that the study of middlemen, however, is the only way the articulation of levels can be perceived. Rather, as an anthropologist with a "woman's eye view of society," it is this approach—from the bottom up, so to speak—with which I feel most able to deal.<sup>2</sup> Let me relate, therefore, the middleman concept to a methodology for the analysis of local-level dynamics.

It is clear that all anthropological analyses of middlemen have the basic premise that the middleman is a role manipulated by individuals. Beyond this point, however, particular paradigms (Van Velzen 1973) have affected, in specific ways, the definitions of middlemen, the kinds of data collected, and the way the functions of middlemen and their

structural relationship to society are conceived. There is, in short, great variability as to which aspects of the role and its context should be the focus of attention. This variability is largely because, within anthropology, the varying paradigms define differently the way the individual is a social actor, the way this actor is located in society, and the way society itself is conceived.

Early analyses of middleman roles developed out of structural-functional anthropology with its concern for understanding normative statuses and roles within the context of the political sphere. In the efforts to deal with African political systems specifically, it became necessary to take into account the relationship between traditional systems and colonial administrative hierarchies. Focus centered either on the roles that linked these two hierarchies together (Fallers 1956) or on the roles that provided the link through which the traditional and colonial system were united into a single system (Cluckman 1968). With the postcolonial era, the early specifications of middlemen roles remained intact; middlemen continued to be viewed from the perspective that any complex society, whether colonial or "modernizing," has problems of structural integration. It followed that a crucial aspect of any political analysis was that

the local level... is variously emmeshed or encapsulated in larger and more comprehensive systems... The immediate result is the increased... prominence of a certain kind of political specialist: the man who... articulates... his local village or tribe to the... demands... and rural order of the province and nation (Swartz 1968:199-200).

Whether phrased in structural-functional terms or defined as a variation that attempted to deal with political process (Swartz, Turner, and Uden 1966), the general approach of political anthropology emphasized the formalistic parts of society, such as local and national level or arena, and concentrated on the means by which integration could be achieved. The aim became one of searching out the "gaps" in society that provide the potential for "breakdown" (Tinker 1968:217) or the inevitability of integration (Bailey 1969). With society defined as a formal structure that, although undergoing change, faced the perennial problem of how to integrate itself, middlemen became critical for understanding modes of integration. They operated as individuals who seized the opportunities inherent in the disjunctions created by systems in the process of integrating (or disintegrating). In brief, they were products of temporary social conditions and had to be studied to assess their effects on the integrative potential of the system.

Whereas political anthropology viewed the middleman as a historical accident of social complexity, the transactional approach took the opposite perspective: society was a product of individual actions. With social behavior defined as exchange, the middleman became an obvious focus for analysis for virtue of the fact that his *raison d'être* was the manipulation of exchange relationships.

In this view, the middleman is an entrepreneur who exploits a particular environment, "who takes the initiative in administering resources, and pursues an expansive economic policy" (Barth 1963:1). Further, "the entrepreneurial career [is] a process... a chain of transactions between the entrepreneur and his environment" (Barth 1963:7). The basic premise is that social behavior always is based upon choice; actors always have specific goals. Further, the social process that results from such actions is innovative (Feldman 1968) in that individual actions create social structure and values (Paine 1971). The one factor that limits independent individual choice is the environment. "Social activity may be analyzed as the result of constrained choice" (Barth 1963:7).

The transactional approach, which necessarily led to an analysis of entrepreneurial roles and role behavior, developed great concern with distinguishing between the various types of middleman roles, notably, the patron, the broker, and the go-between. This issue, however, became not simply the prerogative of the transactionalists; it also became role-

vant for those who shared the premises of transactionalism but who defined the relationship between the individual and society in a less precise way. Those who adopted the "big man" paradigm (Sahins 1963; Van Velzen 1973) essentially accepted social behavior as constrained choice in both the economic (Salisbury 1966; Strathern 1971) and political spheres (Bailey 1969), but they forewent the next logical step of viewing social structures as generative. Instead, in their efforts to link economic and political processes through the analysis of entrepreneurial careers, their studies interlinked with network analysis, particularly the concept of the ego-centered network (Mitchell 1969) in which the ego was the entrepreneur who pursued a middleman career (Littewood 1974; Michaelson 1976). The aim became one of describing careers, the strategies by which goals were attained and, more conceptually, of distinguishing the various middleman roles. (Bodisvahn 1974:000-000) that the entrepreneurs could manipulate.

There also emerged a cultural dimension to the entrepreneurial middleman. Those anthropologists concerned with the problems of cultural integration in complex societies viewed the middleman as an innovator who attempts to integrate differences between groups in a culturally plural society. The middleman was not simply an entrepreneur, but a marginal man (Press 1969) who could straddle two cultural systems (Geertz 1960).

The basic feature of the transactionalist approach and its variations, which necessarily affected the analysis of middlemen, was the view that the individual was to be the object of attention and the hinge upon which social structure depended. Although social structure could limit choice, efforts to define this environment (Nicholas 1968) remained undeveloped and did not affect basic assumptions.

When the transactional paradigm and the political anthropology paradigm are looked at together, it is clear that each provided the tools for analyzing middlemen from only one end of an individual-society dichotomy. The implicit assumption as to the validity of this dichotomy by both approaches (Alavi 1973), necessarily delimited our understanding of middlemen.

There has been, however, a third approach that has received far less attention and that has been applied to far fewer case studies. This paradigm ignores the traditional polarity between the individual and society by postulating an entirely different model of society.

In this view, society is not a normative system, but a product of competing segments. Discontinuities, therefore, cannot be temporary, historical accidents or by-products of modernizing societies. Instead, discontinuities are found, by definition, in any society as inevitable results of socioeconomic and political conditions. Analysis, therefore, tries to understand the variations in discontinuities as the nature of society changes due to altering socioeconomic conditions that affect the allocation of power among the competing segments composing the society. It is on this basis that middlemen can be analyzed. It is they who mediate "intersegment" relations (Wolf 1956). By definition, therefore, the nature of mediators alters as the nature of competition changes among the competing segments or as the composition of the competing segments changes (S. Silverman 1965; Blok 1969; Schneider, Schneider, and Hansen 1972). Conversely, mediators, who may be individuals or groups, affect the articulation of competing segments that make up the society. In brief, it is the process of mediation that must be studied; that is, the interaction between competing segments through individual/group actions. Let me now explore these themes through a case study of Rajgahr Village, Guyana.<sup>5</sup>

### Rajgahr village in the context of political economy

To orient the reader, I begin with some general ethnographic facts. The village is comprised of 3,100 persons of East Indian descent. The major occupation is rice cultivation for

both subsistence and cash. Although every household plants rice, the amount of acreage per household varies greatly (from two acres to three hundred acres) as does the extent of mechanization among families and the use of family as opposed to hired labor. Related to this differentiation are two additional features. First, so-called "occupational multiplicity" is very much in evidence; a rice farmer also may be a wage laborer, a smith, a shopkeeper, a cattle herder, a "hire-car" owner or driver, a mill owner, a huckster, a commercial vegetable grower, and so forth. Although almost every household is unique in that it has a different "mix," general patterns are discernible.<sup>6</sup> Second, the village is highly stratified according to annual income, which varies from between U.S. \$250 to over \$10,000.

All these seemingly variable forms of differentiation are not discrete, however; neither are they interrelated in a simple way. Rather, all are different structural and typological representations of the consequences of a historical process of class formation in a dependent economy. It is to this historical process that the case study is addressed.

The basis of the Guyanese economy was established through the "old-style plantation" (Wolf 1971:166); a class of individual planters owned the means of production with labor provided by an African-descended slave class. Emancipation in 1834 generated a "village movement" among Africans (Young 1958: 9-23)<sup>7</sup> despite restrictive legislation such as apprenticeship laws. The resulting diminution of the labor supply and a concomitant depression in the sugar industry<sup>8</sup> combined to favor the introduction of indentured labor. Portuguese, Chinese, and East Indians were imported, and by 1851 the sugar industry entered another period of prosperity (Nath 1970:86), a prosperity that probably was related as well to the changing pattern of ownership: from individual planters to corporate control.<sup>9</sup> In the 1880s, however, competition from the beet sugar industry cut into the cane market and the planter class entered a further period of decline. The pressures of the contracting market and depressed prices forced government and planters to adopt policies to ensure low wage rates and to ensure a cheap and steady supply of casual labor for peak work periods on the estates (Mandle 1973:62; Nath 1970:87). Meanwhile, the government was incurring a large liability in relation to the return passages owed to the indentured laborers (Young 1958:152). Therefore, to prevent outmigration and to maintain simultaneously a stable labor market, the colonial government began to establish East Indian Land Settlement Schemes.<sup>10</sup> These were founded on abandoned estates but located near functioning ones. The aim was to provide a "peasantry" with land for its own subsistence and to provide the estates with a casual labor supply. Geographical proximity between village and estate, therefore, was crucial; also important was the necessity of inducing villagers to work on estates.<sup>11</sup> The dynamic that resulted, however, was far more complex than a simple "peasant-plantation oscillation."<sup>12</sup>

Rajgahr Village was founded in 1902 as a product of this policy. The economic sphere from the beginning was one in which settlers were caught in the interaction between the plantation and "peasant" sectors of production. This was because the Guyanese coastland "is not only uniformly flat, [but] lies some feet below sea-level at high tide" (Young 1958:2); major sea defenses, irrigation works, and drainage facilities are required for any sustained and systematic production. The colonial government refused to provide these.<sup>13</sup> The result was that the settlers were constantly subject to uncertain returns. The situation also precluded the generation of sufficient capital to permit the settlers to provide the necessary infrastructure for themselves.<sup>14</sup> Villagers remained dependent on casual estate labor.

Within several years, however, the government began to encourage rice production and to introduce measures to ensure its expansion and certainty. These policies were related, first to the potential that emerging rice production had for making the colony self-sufficient in a basic foodstuff.<sup>15</sup> Second and somewhat later, World War I necessitated the

accelerated development of Guyanese rice production to supply the West Indian market (British Guiana 1916 and 1918). Finally, the termination of Indian indentured labor<sup>16</sup> in 1917 forced the formulation of policies to encourage the labor force to remain in Guyana because the sugar industry now was dependent entirely on the domestic labor supply (Kardie 1973:69).

As these pressures built up, gradual policy changes emanated that had specific effects in Raigahr. First, in 1910, the government handed over to an American firm (Abery Company), ten thousand acres of land for the large-scale production of rice.<sup>17</sup> Using a new technology, their cultivation was deemed a success.<sup>18</sup> Second, in 1914, the government altered the Polder Ordinances; villagers now were permitted to petition for improved sea defense works.<sup>19</sup> A scheme for Raigahr was begun in 1916 and completed in 1919.<sup>20</sup> Third, the government tried to rationalize credit facilities on the grounds that the exorbitant interest rates of money lenders were interfering with the expansion of rice production. They therefore established Co-operative banks.<sup>21</sup> Fourth, in 1919, the government introduced new ordinances to permit the leasing of crown land to small-scale cultivators (Ramachoye 1966:42).

The policies had important repercussions in Raigahr Village. The Abery Company introduced technological innovations (steel plows, harrows, and the broadcasting of seed padi) that permitted the cultivation of extensive acreage. The Polder Ordinances and the irrigation scheme opened over one thousand acres of village land for rice cultivation, while the Crown Land Ordinances made extensive tracts available in the Abery Creek area, a distance of seven miles from the village.<sup>22</sup> Ostensibly, with the credit facilities provided by the Co-operative banks, villagers could expand production.

However, the irrigation facilities never worked because of engineering difficulties. Cultivation remained dependent on gravitation and rainfall, and unpredictability in returns not only continued,<sup>23</sup> but the effects were heightened because villagers now cultivated more extensive acreage with a new technology. This acreage had required capital for land development. This was particularly the case with the Abery land, which was extremely low-lying and which therefore had required not only irrigation, but also drainage works. The indebtedness that resulted from the expansion, the need for capital for further development, and the necessity for credit during periods of crop failure could have given the Co-operative Banks a major role to play. However, the banks were underfinanced and subject to the same vagaries as was the cultivation. When returns were high, farmers repaid loans and the banks had cash to lend; when returns were low and borrowers defaulted, the banks had no cash.<sup>24</sup> Yet, it was during periods of poor returns that farmers needed the credit. The final source of cash, wage labor on estates, was also subject to a similar dynamic. When rice returns were good, villagers preferred to concentrate on their own cultivation. When, however, rice returns were low, the estates were unable to satisfy villagers' demands for jobs.<sup>25</sup>

The contradictions in the economic sphere, a product of the interaction of government policy, plantation interests, and the local dynamic, contained one further element, an aspect that was generated precisely because rice production had been expanded for the export market. The potential profits had produced a plethora of export agents who were "continually underselling each other in the West Indian market." This competition in the wider arena lowered the prices paid to the producer with "his hardships . . . increased by the uncertainty of the value of his produce from year to year" (The Rice Review 1959). Additionally, in 1922, with competition from Burmese rice, the price dropped to the 1913 level and did not reach previous levels again until 1950 (Nath 1970:112 and 256). Therefore, the producer received low prices either as a result of the internal organization of a marketing system oriented toward export or as a direct product of international market prices.

The situation of the rice producer was therefore one of extreme dependence. Dependence, however, must not be viewed as a structured situation in which the "peasant" balances economic options (Cornias 1973), adapts to uncertainties (Ortiz 1971), or is exploited because of structural subordination. Dependence is not a series of established, unchanging, singular traits. Rather, dependency must be seen as a changing condition generated by the inherent contradictions within and between structures. In the present case, it is clear that there were fundamental contradictions within sectors, both rice ("peasant") and sugar (wage labor). Further, there were contradictions between the articulation of these two sectors. It was the interaction of all these that constrained the villager and produced an "adaptation" of oscillation. However, out of these same structural conditions also emerged the impetus for change. As noted previously, societal complexity necessarily creates interstitial areas or structural discontinuities. In the context of the colonialism and dependence I am discussing, these discontinuities took particular forms: economic and administrative.

In the case of the former, the emergence of rice as an export commodity provided the potential for great profits for those who controlled the nexus between producer and export agent: the export market had produced a large number of these mediators (The Rice Review 1959). With the decline in rice prices in the early twenties, one such padi agent who worked on commission for a British export company settled in the village next to Raigahr and used the cash generated from his economic mediation to invest in a more secure economic base. He bought a local rice mill.

In the case of administrative discontinuities, a process occurred that was fairly typical in colonial societies. This process was created by administrators forming liaisons with those of the local population who were "traditional elites" or with those whom they perceived as culturally similar. Among East Indians, administrators selected those who were Christian and educated. Often, as a result of this process, incipient elites gradually were transformed into a capitalist or professional class. In Raigahr, a marriage was arranged between the daughter of an educated Christian settler and a rum-shop owner from another district. The resources of both father- and son-in-law then were used to establish an economic base; they bought a second rice mill in the village. The go-between for the marriage was the Head of the Canadian Mission Church (Presbyterian) and the Superintendent of East Indian Land Settlements. That is, the Reverend Cropper was the legal mediator between Raigahr and the colonial administration. Although this role soon was superseded because of changes in the administration of land settlements, the ties between the family and government persisted.

What occurred after the purchase of the rice mills was a logical product of the structural conditions at the time. The millers were the only individuals who had surplus cash, and although each had entered the interstitial areas and the local arena in different ways, both could continue to generate cash from milling fees, their commission as padi agents, and their own cultivation. On this basis, the millers were able to gain control of a critical element in the economic sphere, namely, credit facilities. Villagers, locked into the constraints and contradictions of the economy, became permanently indebted clients of one of the two millers.

The millers' position in the economic structure was reinforced by formal political control. Village council members were appointed by the Local Government Board on the basis of recommendations from the District Commissioner, who had replaced the Superintendent as the link between the settlements and the administration. Because both millers were Christians, literate, and successful businessmen, they controlled access to the District Commissioner. They therefore ensured that they, and those whom they designated, had exclusive access to the council.

In brief, the structure of Guyanese economy and society generated a rural capitalist class from among "outsiders"<sup>24</sup> who linked together the local and national levels via control over particular interstitial areas. Vis-à-vis the national level, they constituted an emerging class through which economic, political, and social linkages were maintained with the local level.

There was, however, a further dimension. This was the dynamic that was internal to the capitalist class. Both millers required clients in order to have access to padi, interest on credit, and political support. There was, however, only a finite number of villagers. Factionalism became the mode of intracapitalist competition (Silverman n.d.). Yet, insofar as patron-client ties linked the millers to the village and limited the development of class consciousness among villagers, factionalism was simultaneously the expression of capitalist solidarity. The process was one in which the capitalists mediated not only societal levels, but also class relations on the local level.

Gradually, certain economic and political aspects of mediation itself helped bring about the expansion of local capitalism and the capitalist class. There always had been a small number of villagers who had never been "clients" in the same way as had the majority. These individuals were, for the most part, second- or third-order kin of one of the millers.<sup>27</sup> They depended on the millers not for credit facilities, but for financing relatively large-scale production. The millers provided the cash, the partner provided the land and the labor, and the profits were split fifty-fifty. The economic position of this segment gradually improved, and by the late thirties, they were in no way dependent on miller financing; the partnerships were between equals.

A second segment also was generated by the mediation process. They had begun as clients. During the decade after 1919, however, they made a critical economic decision. The opening of the Abaray Crown Lands, noted previously, forced villagers to choose between two economic adaptations. They could limit their cultivation to the Rajgahr area and supplement their incomes with casual estate labor. This option was made attractive by the opening up of additional village land in 1919 and the end of indentured labor immigration, which appeared to herald an increase in wage rates. The vast majority of villagers chose to continue balancing the "peasant-plantation" adaptation. The remainder, a minority, chose to expand family cultivation into the Abaray area. This choice increased their indebtedness to the millers because of the capital needed for land development and limited their access to cash because Abaray cultivation precluded estate labor, given the distance to the area and the need for dual residence. The initial condition of those who chose this adaptation was difficult. However, monopolization occurred in the sugar industry during the 1920s and 1930s. This was associated with a declining export market and the introduction of new production techniques that displaced labor needs (Mandle 1973:75). The relative position of the large-scale farming adaptation improved. This was aided by the rapid growth of rice as an export commodity to the West Indies; between 1920 and 1935 production and exports increased dramatically (Mandle 1973:76-77).

By the midthirties, there thus had emerged two segments of capitalist farmers committed to large-scale rice production and decreasingly dependent on the millers, whose financing had initially provided the means by which they had removed themselves from the peasant-plantation oscillation generated by the contradictions of dependency.

These two segments very quickly developed common interests against the miller hegemony. This was a result of international and national conditions that altered the nature of the interstitial areas and, therefore, the relationships that the millers had mediated within Guyanese society. These same conditions also created the potential for new relationships between this broadened capitalist class and villagers.

From a historical perspective, a major new condition derived from the colonial govern-

ment's attempt to alter local administrations;<sup>28</sup> the result was Ordinance No. 16 of 1935. All Village Districts were to elect their councillors and English literacy was no longer a requirement for holding a council seat. The following year, representatives of the partner segment petitioned the government to have Rajgahr's legal status altered to a Village District; the electoral laws became applicable and redefined the nature of the political community.

Meanwhile, the demand for Guyanese rice exports declined. "The 1936-1940 quinquennium was disastrous, with production and exports declining markedly and yields per acre remaining at very low levels" (Mandle 1973:76). A government investigating committee concluded in 1938 that among the various factors responsible "were poor drainage and irrigation facilities, inadequate and expensive credit, poor milling facilities, the disorganized state of export marketing" (Mandle 1973:78). Villagers responded to declining incomes by introducing new cash crops (greens and provisions) on their nearby freehold rice lands. Soil exhaustion in the freehold area was an additional incentive. In making this changeover, however, villagers needed improved drainage in the freehold areas and an expansion of rice land in alternate areas. Petitions organized by the new segments that demanded these services from the village council began circulating biannually after 1936. The millers, in control of the council, however, encountered a capital market affected by the world depression. Between 1936 and 1942, they appealed twice a year for government development loans; each time they were refused on the grounds that the village should have been able to raise the necessary cash from rates and rents. The miller-controlled council maintained, however, that villagers had no cash to pay these. Ironically, the millers' position vis-à-vis the government was analogous to that of the villager vis-à-vis the millers. The millers, therefore, were unable to accommodate local demands and their credibility as mediators came into question. At the same time, villagers had a more diversified economy less prone to total crop failure. Their need for credit facilities began to decline.

Concomitantly, there were governmental policy changes vis-à-vis the rice sector as a result of the war, which "virtually eliminated West Indian imports of Burmese and Indian rice. . . . The burden and economic opportunity of becoming the principal provider of this dietary staple to the. . . West Indian islands fell to Guyana" (Mandle 1973:174). There were two major effects. In 1939, the Rice Marketing Board was established as the sole exporter of rice and also was empowered to make contracts with importing countries. The millers' mediation role in the economic sphere, which linked the producer to the padi export companies, was eliminated. Second, a Grow More Food Campaign stimulated the previous trend toward crop diversification. Marketing depots were established and prices for agricultural produce were guaranteed. Between 1941 and 1945, there was, in Guyana, a 50 percent increase in the growth of ground provisions (Mandle 1973:115). Alternate cropping delimited dependence on the millers for credit by providing greater agricultural flexibility. Finally, with the war, there began an upward swing in rice prices; by 1943, the price was double the 1939 price (Nash 1970:257).

The combined effect of all these conditions was extensive. The Abaray segment linked with the partner segment to mobilize electoral support in the 1941 local council elections, thereby beginning a gradual replacement of the old mobilization pattern based on economic dependency and vertical patron-client ties; the majority of villagers had achieved a sufficient degree of economic independence to permit them to vote for the new segments' candidates instead of their miller-partners. By 1946, 60 percent of the villagers were voting for new segment candidates.

The cumulative growth of popular support for the new segments, as evidenced in council elections between 1941 and 1947, signaled the progressive engagement of the capitalist class and the gradual development of a "free" villager. More generally, it indicated that there had developed a new type of local differentiation. That the millers continued to

receive a portion of the vote shows that their position as patrons was maintained and that there remained a village segment that required, and still did in 1970, the credit facilities of the mills. By the midforties then, the village class structure consisted of an expanded, but differentiated capitalist class, a class of small, "free" farmers, and a class of indebted cultivators. The latter two, however, remained dependent on estate labor.

The previous conditions also had the effect of altering the nature of mediation; millers no longer could mediate local-national relationships and interclass relations within the village. These functions were to fall to the new capitalists as a result of additional economic and political changes within Guyanese society, which articulated with the new local structure.

In anticipation of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, the estates expanded production and in so doing, expanded casual wage labor opportunities (Reubens and Reubens 1962:16-19) for the "free" and indebted farmers. In the rice sector, the upward curve in rice prices on the international market, which had begun during the war, continued (Nath 1970:257). To take advantage of this favorable situation, the government encouraged mechanization and extended land development loans. This permitted the expansion of 1,350 acres of rice in the Crown land area leased by the council for rent to all village residents in three to eight acre parcels. Mechanization and development loans also enabled an expansion in the Abary area among large capitalist farmers; those who held leases to first-depth land were permitted to lease second- and third-depth lands of ten to fifteen acres each. This not only extended their production of rice, but provided more land than could be farmed. They therefore invested in a new resource, large cattle herds.<sup>37</sup> Simultaneously, the increasing rice prices provided all farmers, as well as government, with an incentive to expand. Also related to expansion was the fact that the introduction of mechanization for rice cultivation was accompanied by other production innovations. The Cooperative Department began encouraging producers' cooperatives while these developed, at the same time, an emphasis on extended family cooperation. These three changes encouraged the expansion of production by allowing cultivators to pool capital for land development and for machinery and to pool their labor. Finally, the government continued to emphasize crop diversification through the Grow More Food Campaign and thereby increased local economic flexibility.

On the one hand, it can be seen that the economic expansion stimulated by international and national conditions heightened differential access to resources among the various classes within the village. The large capitalist farmers with their Abary lands not only expanded their cultivation with increased acreage and mechanization, but also developed a major new resource, cattle herds. Not incidentally, the potential for further rice expansion lay in later depths of Abary land as yet unexploited. Meanwhile, although the "free" farmer class and the indebted villager also were given opportunities for expansion, this did not involve any change in their relationship to the estates or to the means of production, either land or machinery. On the other hand, it is clear from the data that the expansion, which had within it the seeds for increased local differentiation, created for the time being a perceived semblance of equality in access to basic resources; villagers, regardless of their relationship to the means of production, began a concerted effort to exploit the resources available to them.

In such a context, three complementary processes emerged on the local level. First, the capitalist class found that their economic ends could be achieved without the need for political supporters; conversely, the goals of the "free" farmer could be achieved without the support of a patron. Even the indebted cultivator could increase his income, and although his subordinate relationship continued, patron-client mobilization was no longer the dominant pattern. Second, economic interests crosscut class lines. For example, large

Abary cattle herders had economic interests in common with farmers who continued to use oxen for plowing; both required pasture on village lands. Third, the capitalist class continued to control the village council through the unanimous electoral support of all villagers. Councilors, however, also had crosscutting economic interests. As a result of these three structural conditions, political and economic coalitions cut across class lines and were simultaneously ephemeral and situationally specific. Succinctly, both factionalism and class conflict were absent. Rather, conflict was linked only to individual disputes, and the village council, as an elite body crosscut by different interests, functioned as mediator in these disputes (Bailey 1965). However, insofar as the council was consensually controlled by the capitalist class, class relations within the village were mediated by this class because of the economic conditions at the time and because the village capitalist class controlled the council. Further, because the council was the legally constituted village authority, the capitalist class mediated economic and administrative local-national relationships.

However, the emergence of Guyanese nationalism through the People's Progressive Party (PPP), led by Cheddi Jagan, had opened up a new interstitial area between the village and national level. Not surprisingly, some members of the Raigahar capitalist class became involved in the nationalist movement, ran for election in the national legislature, and created a small, but core group of supporters from among their extended families and villagers. However, this pattern of vertical mobilization by these individuals was oriented solely, for the time, to the national arena. There was, therefore, during the late forties and early fifties, a distinct separation of local and national politics. Thus, local-national relationships between government and village were mediated by the village capitalist class, whereas those between the nationalist movement and village were mediated by particular persons of this same class.

The links forged during this period were to become important in 1953 due to a series of conjunctures. In that year, the economic expansion came to an abrupt end. All available village rice land had been allotted and the council was refusing villagers' applications for more acreage. In the sugar industry, there was "a contraction of over twenty percent in the average weekly number employed" (Reubens and Reubens 1962:19); opportunities for casual estate labor declined dramatically. The emergence of a major conflict in the village signaled the end of the expansion and the fact that inter- and intraclass antagonisms were to become politically significant once again. Specifically, with all village land allocated to either rice or pasture, there emerged the possibility of converting the latter lands to rice. The mechanized capitalist farmers uniformly wanted the conversion, while the small "free" farmer and indebted cultivator were caught in a basic contradiction; although they needed more land for rice, they also needed pasture area for their plowing oxen.

What became critical at this point was a contraction in the national political sphere. In 1953, the British government suspended the constitution and imprisoned nationalist leaders. Among these were several of the Raigahar activists. Within a few months, British actions had altered the previous political link between the local and national levels. Specifically, after several months in jail, Raigahar activists returned to the village and with access to the national arena blocked, they began to mobilize votes and supporters for the 1953 village council election. The ideological premise was the extension of the nationalist movement (the PPP) to the local level given the constraints against mobilization in the national arena. The activists immediately came into competition with those capitalists who saw PPP politics as a "Georgetown story." Phrased another way, the PPP capitalist segment had to compete with the other capitalist segment, which preferred to use colonial ties and links with other political parties that were neither nationalist nor seeking to transform Guyanese society. More generally, village capitalists were competing over how the local-national



relationship should be defined and, therefore, over who would control the mediation process.

Both segments began to mobilize villagers for council elections. Because this coincided with the contraction in economic resources, their success depended on their credibility as mediators, that is, their ability to bring into the village either economic resources from the national arena or resources that at least would affect the distribution of already-allocated resources.

The effects of the vertical mobilization of villagers by the two segments of the capitalist class was reflected in oscillating control of the village council. In 1953, the PPP segment hardly won the local election; in 1955, the "traditional" segment in 1957, after the national PPP government opened a new land development scheme in an area adjacent to Rajgahr and allegedly distributed ten acres to all PPP supporters, the PPP segment swept the council election. The general pattern between 1953 and 1959 was one in which neither segment could mediate to the satisfaction of all villagers, and local politics simultaneously reflected both intracapitalist competition and the polarization of classes.

In 1959, a major policy decision was taken by the PPP capitalist segment. The action was a product of national politics and policies and the effect was to redefine the nature of dependency while reinforcing the economic cleavages that existed between the large capitalist farmers and the other classes. Almost simultaneously, changes in the national arena, a product of colonial political decisions, exacerbated the division within the capitalist class itself.

In 1955, the Guyanese nationalist movement had split into two segments and within several years, each segment had its major support among one of the two predominant ethnic groups of the country. The People's National Congress (PNC) counterposed the PPP in the national arena and the latter, in keeping with its East Indian support base and its need to maintain itself in power, generated policies to expand rice production.<sup>30</sup> Given this policy, the local PPP capitalist segment, in control of the village council in 1959, decided that the village Crown land areas that were lying fallow or being used for pasturage were to be converted to rice, and that all local authority areas were to be redistributed on the basis of two acres per villager.<sup>31</sup>

With this decision, the village became committed to mechanized production in that pasturage for oxen was eliminated. The small, "free" farmers then exercised one of two options: some became dependent on hiring equipment for plowing and reaping while others bought machinery. The latter segment became indebted in order to finance this investment. Further, only some would be able to remove themselves from debt because they had invested in a productive resource that could not be efficiently used given their limited acreage. Mechanization thus produced differentiation and varying types of dependence among the small, "free" mechanized farmers. Meanwhile, the indebted cultivator became more dependent, not simply on the mills for credit, but on the large capitalist farmers and on certain small, "free" mechanized farmers for their machinery. Simultaneously, the capitalist farmer class now had the opportunity to use their machinery more efficiently by having a greater opportunity to do "hire-work."

At that point, national politics again became crucial. First, in 1960, the colonial government eliminated local elections for an indefinite period. The village council therefore retained (until 1971) a constant membership; it thus represented only the capitalist class while disenfranchising the villager. Second, in 1963, the PNC formed the government of Guyana. Because it was "the African party," Rajgahr residents lost their access to the national arena and resources, a separation exacerbated by the race riots in 1962 and 1964. In brief, resources were scarce and the capitalist class was given arbitrary control of the council almost at the same time that the links between the village and the national levels were

virtually eliminated. Hence, mediators did not need to mediate local class relations and could not mediate local-national relations. Given the economic scarcity, the factionalism of the two capitalist segments became increasingly polarized.

In 1966, Guyana became independent, with the PNC still forming the government. The need to "integrate the two major ethnic segments" became part of the "nation-building effort." Not incidentally, the support of East Indians, who formed the larger of the two ethnic segments, was also needed to ensure that the PNC retained its power. The PNC, therefore, established a Muslim wing of the party aimed at coopting East Indian support. As noted elsewhere,

the implementation of the incorporation policy was based on three main strategies. First attempts were made to control the workings of the local government organs within the village. Secondly, and related to this, was the creation of political middlemen or brokers who were historically tied to local factional competition. Lastly, the incorporation policy exploited existing political, economic, and religious schisms in the village (M. Silverman 1976:207).

These strategies reestablished the link between village and national arena but it did this by redefining the interstitial area and by permitting only one segment of the capitalist class to provide mediation. Because this class already controlled the council (strategy 1), those who were willing to join the PNC were given mediator roles, that is, access to resources from the national arena for their own use and for subverting and maintaining local-level supporters (strategy 2). Further, since the PNC wing was designated as Muslim, the Muslim capitalists were the first to step into the new interstitial area. They were quickly followed, however, by Christian and Hindu capitalists who very soon saw the benefits of the new resources (land, government jobs) being introduced as compared with the previous condition of scarcity (strategy 3).

This "incorporation policy" (M. Silverman 1976, 1978) thus reinforced the class structure of the village albeit with some changes in the pattern of factionalism. The PPP-"traditional" division within the capitalist class became a PPP-PNC division; ideology had altered. Also, specifically, the PNC was most concerned with controlling the capitalist class. The assumption was that it was only votes that were needed from the dependent classes (indebted villager, unmechanized and overmechanized small, "free" farmer) and that these could be obtained easily through the introduction of public, proxy voting and the voters' fears of negative sanctions. Meanwhile, because of the influx of patronage resources, the mechanized small, "free" farmer who was unindebted and solvent in his efforts to increase his upward mobility, became a PNC supporter as did the majority of the capitalist class. It was the latter class, however, that was given access to the interstitial area between the village and national levels; they were expected to control the local level using PNC-provided patronage resources. All this signified what can be labeled "diagonal mobilization" (Bujra 1973): the majority of both capitalist farmers and solvent, small "free" farmers became PNC while a small segment of the "traditional" capitalist class remained PPP, or anti-PNC, and mobilized most of their support from the more dependent classes. On a more general level, however, the structure of dependence remained; the capitalist class mediated the interstitial area and local class relations.

However, incorporation also signaled the beginnings of a new process; the systematic penetration of members of the PNC Rajgahr capitalist class into the economy of the wider society. They began to serve on government corporations and to make transvillage investments in economic enterprises. On the other hand, that capitalist segment that maintained either its distance from the PNC or its support of the PPP was precluded from this strategy and may very well have entered a period of downward economic mobility. It is this process that will affect the process of class formation being worked out in the village in the 1970s.

## conclusion

On the one hand, "major difficulties arise when... [dependency]... is extended in micro-studies to deal with specific types of interpersonal relationships" (Long 1975:263). On the other hand, "the distinction between types of relationships between capitalism and its subject peoples are rarely made clear from within the 'macro-perspective'" (Clammer 1975:226). It is obvious, therefore, that efforts to mesh the two levels are of great importance.

In the present paper I have provided a case study that tries to deal with this relationship. My premise has been that conflicting/converging interests in the international, national, and local arenas and the conflicting/converging interests between levels affect the constantly changing pattern of dependency. My focus has been the local level. This level, however, was not merely an encapsulated structure within a dependent national society. Instead, like any other analytical level, the local arena articulates and interacts with external conditions; it does not simply react.

It is precisely through this process of articulation that a certain kind of development took place in the Guyanese rice industry. Economic differentiation occurred, a local capitalist class emerged, and this process itself provided the basis for more complex differentiation. I suggested that this dynamic could be understood through the concept of mediation, defined here as the process that articulated diverse interests and different structural levels within the broader frame of dependence. In this view, mediation must not be seen as occurring simply because individuals pursue entrepreneurial careers and/or because there are cultural/structural gaps in a modernizing society; rather, mediation is an inevitable process given that society is composed of competing segments, interest groups, and classes.

From this perspective, what can be said about the nature of the local level within a dependent society? From the Raigahr material I would like to draw out certain suggestions that clearly require cross-cultural comparison.

**peasants, plantations, and occupational multiplicity** It could be argued that, in Raigahr, the dynamic element within the rice sector was a product of a relatively straightforward phenomenon. Namely, at the outset, all settlers had dual occupations (plantation wage labor and small-scale production); the segment that became the rural bourgeoisie escaped from the wage labor sector (the plantation) and concentrated on its own production (so-called peasant). However, such an interpretation, which seemingly supports the argument that the potential dynamic element within plantation societies lies in the so-called peasant sector, is far too simplistic. This is because what later became the rural bourgeoisie was comprised of families that were contending with a series of complex factors. These included the need for credit facilities, the emergence of and control by the millers, and critical indebtedness; and these are not explicable simply by reference to the interaction of the so-called plantation and peasant sectors. Instead, they were part of a process that characterized the dependent society in general; and this process was that of economic differentiation brought about by expanding capitalism. On the local level, the expansion is apparent from such features as the multiplicity of occupations that consistently increased over time, mechanization, expanding cultivation, and so forth. Phrased another way, the ongoing class differentiation that occurred in Raigahr was a continuous product of expanding opportunities for labor and capital.

There are several important points that derive from the above. First, the concept of plantation economy and society can be used to define generally the nature of dependence in

the West Indies. Caution, however, must be taken to ensure that the use of this term does not generate assumptions as to the nature of the so-called peasantry on the premise that peasantry is the derived corollary of plantation. "Plantation economy" is a type of dependence; the linkage between "peasants" and "plantations" exists at another level of abstraction, which refers to the agrarian structure located within the dependent (plantation) society.

Related to this conceptual confusion and to the assumption of certain economists that a dynamic for development inheres within the small-scale rural (peasant) sector is a second point: that is, that although in Raigahr there was a dynamic and growth, it was of a certain kind, namely, local capitalism. The reification of the so-called peasant sector obscures not only the complexity of dependence, but importantly, its antithesis, development.

Third, the above discussion on the dynamic of class formation in Raigahr pointed to the fact that the peasant-plantation distinction was too simplistic a notion for dealing with what was a complex process of change within the agrarian sector as a product of expanding capitalism. Phrased another way, occupational multiplicity is a complex phenomenon that crosscuts all classes rather than being simply an index, as is often assumed, of lower class/rural adaptation patterns caused by vaguely defined exploitation or limited opportunities. Rather, occupational multiplicity was a product of increasing differentiation caused by expanding capitalism and a concomitant product of individual households responding to various opportunities/constraints presented by a wider structure that, although dependent, was becoming increasingly complex.

In short, both the interaction of the so-called plantation and peasant sectors and occupational multiplicity are located within an ongoing dynamic of differentiation within Guyanese society. I am therefore suggesting that, in economic terms, the "peasant-plantation oscillation" and occupational multiplicity must be analyzed within a broader historical framework that addresses itself to the effects of expanding capitalism at the local level in terms of how this expansion affects class formation (for example, economic differentiation) by generating increased opportunities/constraints. In political terms, I suggest that this process can be analyzed by using those concepts that emphasize the interaction of competing interest groups and classes within a capitalist society. It is at this point that mediation becomes important.

**the nature of mediation** It is clear from the Raigahr data that mediators, as has been noted conventionally, link societal levels. It is also clear, however, that mediators are linked to changes that take place in the local class structure. More specifically, if the structure of society is seen as composed of competing groups and classes that crosscut levels, it is clear that mediation and mediators are needed to articulate class relationships both within levels and between levels. It is also clear that both these aspects are related.

More critical, however, but stemming from this view is the idea that mediation and the actions of mediators are crucial in the process of class formation itself. This is not simply the view that mediators, as patrons or faction leaders, prevent the development of horizontal class ties and consciousness because of their successful efforts at vertical mobilization (Alavi 1973; Buira 1973). Rather, the process of mediation and the activities of mediators, whether as patrons, leaders, or brokers affect the actual dynamic of economic differentiation. For example, the mediation process that was a product of the millers' actions generated new bourgeois elements within the village. Or, mediation by the PNC brokers affected the alignment of classes in more recent years.

What is critical in this view is the nature of the interstitial area, that is, the allocation of power in the wider society. This, however, is not a matter of changing encapsulation patterns. Instead, the issue is how class relationships at more macrolevels articulate with those

at more microlevels—that is, the class structure and the allocation of power in the national polity in general. For example, there was a linkage between the needs of colonial administration, the forces of the international market, and local entrepreneurial activity. From this emerged a rural capitalist class. As another example, at a later time, competition between two nationalist political parties through strategies of ethnic mobilization affected the allocation of power, the interstitial area, local class relations, and the mediation process.

I am suggesting, therefore, that there is an intimate relationship between the mediation process, class formation, and the interstitial areas. I suggest also that variations in the articulation of these three factors are responsible for other variations that have been noted in earlier analyses of middlemen, such as, whether and when middlemen are patrons and/or brokers or the different functions that middlemen have been described as performing. These secondary variations are a matter for further investigation.

Furthermore, I also suggest that the present concept of mediation can potentially link the view of patronage taken in political science to that taken in anthropology. In the former, patronage is regarded, rather simplistically, as an exchange that is replicated on most societal levels so that an integrative mechanism for the society as a whole or a type of politics, such as patronal or clientelist politics, is produced (Hulizer 1969; Powell 1970). Such a view seems distant from the anthropological notion of patron as only one of many roles manipulated by individual entrepreneurs. However, on the premise that the individual is indeed an actor, but a social actor (Alavi 1973:34), it is clear that mediators as individuals and mediation as a process can be linked commonly to patterns of class and class formation. The argument here is that approaches to so-called middlemen must deal with both ends of the individual-society continuum. This must be done, however, not simply in terms of emphasizing one end with the other viewed either as a context providing the opportunities for individual manipulation or as an assumption that individuals within society manipulate. Rather, both must be located within a different definition of society.

**factionalism and class formation** Often it is suggested that because middlemen are entrepreneurs, they therefore are faction leaders; that is, they often take on another entrepreneurial role to advance their careers. In Rajgahr, mediators always have been faction leaders and conversely, faction leaders always have mediated local class relations. However, they have not always mediated local-national relations. It is probably fruitless to attempt to isolate which role generates the other. Clearly, both are entrepreneurial and, as the Rajgahr data indicate, each role provides resources for the other. I suggest, however, that the combination of these two roles is not a product of entrepreneurial actions; the two are not linked simply because individuals are entrepreneurs. Rather, in the same way that the mediation process links competing segments and classes and is related to class formation, so is factionalism.

For example, the solidarity of the capitalist class during the miller hegemony gave rise to factionalism, that is, competition within the capitalist class that involved the concomitant mobilization of the dependent classes. Subsequently, the economic and political aspects of the mediation process, of which factionalism was a part, generated new forms of economic differentiation, new economic segments, and the enlargement of the capitalist class. That factionalism is related to class does not mean that the relationship is one in which class conflict and factionalism "depict different modes of political alignments, in different conditions" (Alavi 1973:59), that is, different patterns of mobilization (vertical as opposed to horizontal) (Bujra 1973). Rather, I am suggesting that so-called "primordial loyalties . . . are moulded by class relationships" (Alavi 1973). Therefore, factionalism, based as it is on the mobilization of such loyalties, is also moulded by class relationships.

Factionalism may coopt class conflict (Schryer 1978), but factionalism is related to class in a far more direct way by affecting class formation in general. More specifically, it is a mode of intraclass competition and/or competition between established and emerging dominant classes that eases the expansion of capitalism.

It follows from this that because so-called middlemen mediate class relationships, they are also faction leaders. Thus, the fact that leaders come from elite segments is explicable. It is not simply that these actors have the time and resources; rather, factional politics is a corollary of their position in the class structure, both locally and nationally.

The implications of these conclusions for the analysis of dependency and West Indian society should be clear. Rajgahr Village is not an encapsulated structure that has stood on the edges of Guyanese history and society. It has been, and is, an integral part of this historical process. Rajgahr always has been located within the national class structure, and the nature of this class structure necessarily affects the politics and dynamic of the so-called national level. What are needed now in West Indian studies are more analyses that will focus on the patterns of class formation and the mechanisms of mediation between competing, and at times cooperating, segments. In this way, we can increase our understanding of dependency and in so doing perhaps develop a greater capacity to end it.

#### notes

<sup>1</sup> The concept of economic duality, which it is clear that sociologists also accept, ignores Demas's previous point: so-called peasants may produce not simply for subsistence, but also for the market, both local and international. The number of permutations possible, therefore, within the "peasant" type is great. Thus, because the dualistic emphasis lumps together all rural cultivators, it simplifies the complexity of the local agrarian structure. This shortcoming is a further argument for the approach to be taken here.

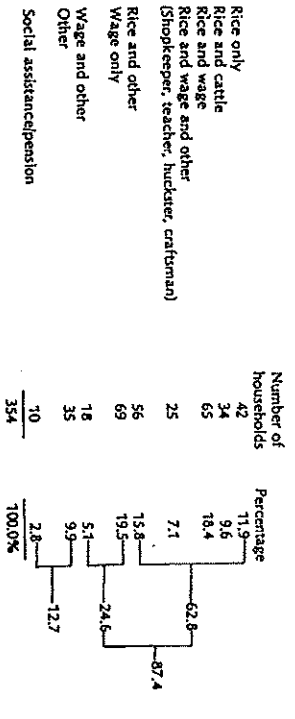
<sup>2</sup> Frach's (1967) analysis in fact goes somewhat further because of his attempt to use political economy. However, his study "does not . . . challenge the distinction between peasant and proletarian adaptations" (Mintz 1973:104). In fact, its goal is to deal with the typology, rather than with local differentiation.

<sup>3</sup> This linkage that I am suggesting between the local dynamic and middleman has been touched on by Long (1975). However, his view of the local level is in terms of modes of production, of which the peasant and plantation can be regarded as examples. This creates, however, the danger of traditional typologies in a new guise. Further, as will be seen, Long's view of middlemen as linking modes of production and the relations therein to the possibility for "entrepreneurial profit" is a rather limited view of the complexity of middleman roles. Long's final point, that this type of study "has the added advantage of being compatible with the study of class formations" (Long 1975:227) is intriguing; it is attempted in this paper. Unfortunately, Long does not pursue the issue.

<sup>4</sup> Despite Firth's (1965) point that we reserve the term "mediator" for the realm of dispute settlement, I am purposefully using the term here. First, this usage locates the paper within the third paradigm; Firth's argument was addressed to Silverman's paper (1965). Second, "mediator" is the term, as Firth has noted, that most aptly fits a situation of conflict and conflict is the focus of the paper, although it is located differently. Third, other terms have certain implications. For example, "broker" implies solely the entrepreneur while "intermediary" implies the ostensible neutrality of the go-between.

<sup>5</sup> Research was carried out between February, 1969 and April, 1970 under the auspices of the Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship Programme and grants from the Centre for Developing Area Studies, McGill University, and the Research Institute for the Study of Man. In preparing this paper, I am grateful for the extensive suggestions made by M. Blinacow and the comments of P.H. Culliver, both of York.

<sup>6</sup> The general pattern as follows, indicates the overriding importance of two sectors, rice and wage labor.



<sup>7</sup> As Young (1958) makes clear, this was not simply because of emancipation, but because of a more complex process of internal conflict related to wage rates and then, in 1847, to the economic crisis in Britain in which a devalued pound lowered wages in Guyana and encouraged Africans to invest in land.

<sup>8</sup> This depression was a product of British policies vis-à-vis preferential prices and the imported quotas and duties assigned to cheaper slave-grown sugar from Cuba and Brazil (Nath 1970:80-81, 87).

<sup>9</sup> The systematic introduction of indentured labor had a relatively checkered history: see Nath (1970).

<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to piece together the transition from planter ownership to corporate control, particularly in the Guyanese context. Nath notes that "the decade between 1840 and 1850 witnesses the downfall of the old proprietary body" (Nath 1970:86) while by "1871, it was reported that only 14 or 15 of about 135 estates were owned by local residents" (Mandle 1973:61). This history lies beyond the scope of the present paper. What is of interest, however, is that the period of indenture placed the East Indian laborer into an already existing plantation structure that was located within a "modified plantation economy" (Girvan 1973).

<sup>11</sup> By 1895 the price of sugar had fallen to less than one-half of what it was in 1881, and the sugar producers were once again confronted with difficulties. . . . A Royal Commission . . . in 1897 was unable to suggest any remedy for the troubles of the sugar producers except the conversion of the estates into land settlements, and the substitution of other tropical products to be grown by peasants on their own holdings. . . . It is significant that the sugar producers did not reduce the influx of immigrants when the depression took place. . . . As both the export of sugar and its price went down steadily the reason for bringing in such a large number of immigrants . . . could have been no other than to reduce the wages (Nath 1970:87).

<sup>12</sup> Even on estates, resident laborers were allotted small plots of land "as an inducement for them to work on the plantation" (Mandle 1973:68).

<sup>13</sup> Meeting of the Combined Court, July 22. Extract from a speech by Sir James Sweetenham, Governor.

<sup>14</sup> Other relevant factors were that the amount of land allocated was insufficient for families to become full-time cultivators, while to open new lands required capital that settlers could not raise in the absence of credit facilities.

<sup>15</sup> Between 1899-1903, some 14,693 tons were imported; between 1904-1906, some 8,092 tons (Nath 1970:256). By the war, the colony was self-sufficient. British interest, therefore, in expanding production is clear. These data also point to a major analytical flaw in many studies, namely, the assumption that colonial administrative interests were simply sugar interests. After 1903, the position of sugar improved (Nath 1970:87-88) and "the sugar industry viewed rice as a competitor for labor" (Mandle 1973:42). Yet, government incentives for rice production were being introduced. The state must, therefore, be kept analytically distinct from sugar interests, and periods when their interests diverged and converged must be explained.

<sup>16</sup> The ending of indenture was set within the context of pressures from rising Indian nationalism and the relative autonomy of the colonial administration in India (Tinker 1974). This is another indication of the relative autonomy of the West Indian context as well as for others, the complexity of world-economic conditions and the political ramifications that stemmed from the administration of a world-wide imperial system with varying, and at times competing, demands. This complexity has been ignored in the macrostudies.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Combined Court, Special Session, November 5, 1908. The company left the court by in 1916.

class formation in Guyana

<sup>18</sup> Address of the Governor to the members of the Combined Court, Annual Session, February 7, 1910.

<sup>19</sup> Combined Court #21. First Special Session, Report on the Condition of the Colony of British Guyana during the Great European War and on the Chief Problems Awaiting Solution (British Guyana 1918).

<sup>20</sup> Combined Court Paper #780, 1914. Combined Court Paper #820, 1914. Resolution #40, 1919, Combined Court.

<sup>21</sup> Report of the Immigration Agent General, 1900-1909. Combined Court Minutes, Sessional Paper #563, 1910. Report of the Committee of the Combined Court, Special Session (British Guyana 1911).

<sup>22</sup> There are four types of tenure relevant here: (1) households are held in freehold and each has (2) a cultivation lot associated with it; also held in freehold; (3) behind this area are Crown lands leased to the village residents; (4) behind this area and across the Abary Creek are Crown lands leased to individuals.

<sup>23</sup> For example, between 1910 and 1913, drought severely limited returns; between 1914 and 1917, returns were good; in 1918, there was a crop failure; in 1919 and 1920, crops were good; in 1921, floods destroyed the crop; and by 1922, there was a general depression due to low prices and competitive market conditions (British Guyana 1910-1911; 1911-1912; 1912-1913; 1913-1914; 1916; 1917; 1918; 1921; 1922).

<sup>24</sup> This is apparent from the data on loans and repayments presented in Report of the Bank Committee of the Local Government Board and the Co-operative Credit Banks Established in the Colony (British Guyana 1921, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1930).

<sup>25</sup> For example, we find the following: "villagers were still dependent on the estates for supplementary earnings" (British Guyana 1911-1912). Then, in 1913, "there was a cutback in labour on the estates. . . Villagers came to the Immigration Agent General's office and complained that there was no work available. . . and that the fifeed crop had failed because of lack of rainfall" (British Guyana 1913 and 1914). On the other hand, "by 1917, although wage rates were increasing, there was a shortage of labour on the estates. . . due to the succession of good rice crops [and] the high prices paid. . . which attracted potential workers from the estates" (British Guyana 1917 and 1918).

<sup>26</sup> The mill that the run-stop owner bought had been owned by a settler who was Hindu, illiterate, dependent on estate labor and, hence, absent from the village for periods of time. In short, he had little capital and the mill quickly went into debt. It appears therefore, that "outsiders" who were located in interstitial areas were the only individuals who at this time had sufficient capital to provide the base from which local-level capitalist development could take place. However, the notion of outsider should not be taken to refer to "change from above." Rather, the two millers had been inside the rural sector but outside the village.

<sup>27</sup> These kin were the only villagers who had large tracts of land. These were located in a private estate next to Rajagar. They did not begin extensive cultivation until the millers were available to provide the capital. In any case, they did not inherit this land until the mid-twentieth century. Finally, these kin did not necessarily sharecrop with their miller kinsman; the majority worked with the other miller.

<sup>28</sup> As Young (1958) points out, local government had grown up rather haphazardly in the Guyanese context, generally as a response to ad hoc needs. The colonial government was constantly attempting to rationalize the system. At this point, the attempt had direct implications for the development of factionalism and the processes of class formation.

<sup>29</sup> Given the initial stages of mechanization as well as the large amount of capital that would have been required to develop all the Abary land for cultivation, large-scale cattle herds were introduced. This altered the role of cattle in the village economy. Previously, families generally had kept a few milk cows in the village. The Abary area, however, was too far from the village; cattle became used instead as "insurance policies" and as a means for capital accumulation.

<sup>30</sup> These policies included providing farmers with under-fire gasoline and guaranteed prices for paddy.

<sup>31</sup> As noted previously, all Crown land rice areas under the Council's control were filled as of 1953. The increasing demand for rice acreage combined with the general PPP policy made the 1959 decision almost inevitable.

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