
Citation: COMITAS, LAMBROS / Gardner Cowles Professor of Anthropology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Director, Research Institute for the Study of Man, New York. **ETHNOLOGY: West Indies.**

Subjects:

[ETHNOLOGY: WEST INDIES.](#)

HLAS Volume: 49

Essay: IN THE ETHNOLOGY: WEST INDIES section of this volume, as in previous ones, I have included relevant publications on all Caribbean Islands, the Guianas, Belize, and the several West Indian enclaves located on the Caribbean mainland. Consequently, it comprises annotations of publications dealing with 24 discrete countries or dependencies in the region: Antigua, the Bahamas, Barbados, Barbuda, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, the US Virgin Islands, and Venezuela. Nearly a score of publications dealing with the Caribbean in regional terms are covered as well. And, although this section does not deal with the Caribbean diaspora, it does include one item on the topic, Anderson's bibliography of resource material on the Caribbean experience in Canada (item [888a](#)), a reference work that should be of interest to Caribbeanists. During this report period, territories receiving the most attention from scholar-writers were, in order: Jamaica, the Caribbean in general, Trinidad, Haiti, Belize, Martinique, Surinam, and Barbados. Since the cited publications cover a wide topical range and exhibit considerable theoretical and methodological variety, I attempted, for the convenience of the reader to classify most of these into broad categories as follows: CLASS AND ETHNICITY In this category, I include publications dealing with ethnicity, ethnic and socioeconomic groups as well as with more general problems of social structure and organization. These have been themes of considerable importance to Caribbeanists for many years and interest in them continues unabated. For publications dealing with broader aspects of these themes, see Hoetink (item [951](#)) on the evolution of ethnic relations in the Caribbean, Duany (item [929a](#)) on ethnicity in the Spanish Caribbean, Robotham's critique (item [987](#)) on M.G. Smith's pluralism, and Gordon (item [937](#)) on class and mobility in Jamaica. Baber (items [892](#), [893](#), and [894](#)) and Miles (item [968](#)) debate the appropriateness of class analysis for a Martinican community once characterized by Horowitz as homogeneous and peasant. Concentrating on small-scale societies, Olwig (item [978](#)) writes on the substantial changes over time in the nature of society in St. John, and LaFlamme (item [959](#)) sketches the coexistence of white and black "subcultures" on a Bahamian island. With reference to East Indians, see Clark (item [918](#)) on their social integration and separation in San Fernando, Nevadomsky (item [975](#)) on the transformation of the rural East Indian economy in Trinidad, and LaGuerre's (item [912](#)) updated and enlarged version of his 1974 collection on East Indians in Trinidad. On Jews, see Holzberg's (item [952](#)) full history and study of dynamics in

Jamaica, and Henry (item [949](#)) and Schoenhals (item [992](#)) on the Jewish community of Sosua in the Dominican Republic. For mainland populations, see three publications on French Guiana (items [917](#), [925](#), and [958](#)) which deal with ethnic groups, interethnic relations, and other aspects of the nature of that society, Gullick (item [946](#)) on myths of the Vincentian minority, Wilk (item [1000](#)) on Mayan ethnicity in Belize, Birdwell-Pheasant (item [903](#)) on language change and ethnic identity in a Belizean village, and Bourgois (item [908](#)) on mobility and ethnic discrimination of blacks in Limón, Costa Rica. Moya Pons (item [972](#)) and his collaborators deserve special mention for the recent publication of a very useful volume summarizing a multidisciplinary study of sugar workers' communities in the Dominican Republic. For more on socioeconomic groups, see Beckford (item [896](#)) on the relation of Caribbean peasantries to plantation economies and Mintz (item [969](#)) on the relative uniqueness of Caribbean peasantries. For specifics of peasant life, see Besson (item [899](#)) on family land in Jamaica and Paquette (item [979](#)) on farming, land use, and food production in Martinique. On peasant development, consult Gomes's collection (item [988](#)) on the factors of underdevelopment and the approaches that might overcome them, Blustain (item [904](#)) Jamaica land tenure, Drori (item [929](#)) on an experiment in agriculture cooperation, and Sutherland (item [996](#)) on economic success in a Belizean village. STUDIES WITH HISTORICAL ORIENTATION As belatedly noted in HLAS 43 (p. 119-142), Caribbeanists then were turning their attention increasingly to the records of the past in order to better resolve some questions of structure and organization. In recent years, this use of history has accelerated. In this regard, the appearance in English translation of Oldendorp's 1777 account (item [977](#)) of Moravian missions in the Danish Virgin Islands is most welcome as is Richard and Sally Price's reproduction (item [981](#)) of a long poem by John Stedman about his 1772 voyage to Surinam. For analytic treatment of historical texts, see Robiou Lamarche (item [985](#)) on a Taino myth and Jiménez Lambertus (item [955](#)) on Ramón Pané's famous relación. For aspects of the development of Caribbean societies, refer to Casimir (item [916](#)) on the mulatto oligarchy of Dominica, Johnson (item [957](#)) on Bahamian share, credit, and truck systems, and Emmer (item [931](#)) on the migration of female East Indian indentures to Surinam. On Maroons, see Groot (items [942](#)) on the different histories of Maroons in Jamaica and Surinam and the historical context of the Surinamese Maroon struggle for freedom, as well as Bekier (item [897](#)) on the perseverance of African religious beliefs among the Surinamese Maroons. González (item [936](#)) writes on Garifuna traditions in historical context and Boomert (item [906](#)) on the ethnohistory of the Arawaks in Trinidad and the Guiana coast. See Campbell (item [914](#)) on several aspects of Rastafarian social history. MATING, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY Although research on these traditional anthropological topics appears to be decreasing in volume, a number of useful publications made their appearances during this report period. See, for example, Harewood (item [947](#)) on the demographics of mating and fertility in Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago; consult Allman (item [888](#)) on types of Haitian conjugal unions, Lowenthal (item [964](#)) on the spousal relationship system in rural Haiti, Nevadomsky on changing patterns of marriage, family, and kinship among rural East Indians in Trinidad (item [974](#)) and on marital discord and dissolution among the same population (item [976](#)); refer to Gregory (item [939](#)) on absentee fathers and identity in Jamaica, and Sutherland and Kroshus (item [997](#)) on family and kinship in a Belizean village. HEALTH AND MEDICINE See Ebanks (item [930](#)) on the demography of infant/child mortality in

Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Jamaica, Dreher (item [927](#)) on maternal-child health and ganja use in Jamaica, Dalton (item [920](#)) on sociocultural and ecological factors related to St. Lucian schistosomiasis; Dressler (item [928](#)) on hypertension and culture change in St. Lucia, Hill and Cottrell (item [950](#)) on labeling, causes and treatment of mental disorders by blacks in Limón, Costa Rica, Mitchell (item [970](#)) on Haiti's eye care program, and Annis (item [890](#)) on blindness in Jamaica. Davis (items [921](#) and [922](#)) provides studies of ethnobiology and ethnopharmacology in Haitian zombification, and Laguerre (item [960](#)) writes on Afro-Caribbean folk medicine, folk healing, and folk healers.

WOMEN'S STUDIES The Women in the Caribbean Project sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (Eastern Caribbean) and the UN Decade for Women have stimulated considerable research and writing on women and gender relations in the Caribbean. During this report period, Social and Economic Studies (item [995](#)) issued two special numbers devoted to reports of the Project's work; the Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs (item [911](#)) organized a special issue on Caribbean achievements during the UN Decade; Les Dossiers de l'outre mer (item [926](#)) published an issue focused on gender-linked problems in the French Antilles and Reunion; and Ellis (item [1003](#)) edited a collection of writings by 18 Caribbean women on a variety of women's and gender-related themes. For other works published individually in other journals, see Mason (item [967](#)) on Jamaican working-class women, Griffith (item [941](#)) on Jamaican women, remittances and reproduction, Groot (item [943](#)) on Surinamese Maroon women as ancestors, priests, and mediums, André (item [889](#)) on the implications of differential male and female upbringing in Afro-Antillean societies, and Landman, McGregor and Desai (item [961](#)) on child-rearing in Kingston, Jamaica.

STUDIES OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION In recent years, there has been a significant increase in anthropological research on both traditional and new forms of creative expression in the Caribbean — in music, dance, art, and festival. For example, see Bilby (item [901](#)) on the Caribbean as a musical region, Dobbin (item [924](#)) on his excellent description and analysis of the Jombee dance of Montserrat, Moodie (item [971](#)) on Hispanic religious songs in Trinidad, Beck (item [895](#)) on Belizean Creole work songs, Lewin (item [962](#)) on traditional music in Jamaica, Bettelheim (item [900](#)) on the Jamaican Jonkonnu festival, Bilby (item [902](#)) on his review of books on Reggae and Rastafarian music, McCarthy (item [965](#)) on Barbadian public school songs, Pollak-Eltz (item [980](#)) on a calypso carnival in Venezuela, and Winer (item [1002](#)) on the lyrics of calypso as a reflection of sociocultural change.

IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION See Guenant and Marshall (item [945](#)) on historical and demographic context of changing Caribbean migration patterns after World War II, Richardson (items [982](#), [983](#), and [984](#)) on the socioeconomic impact of remittances sent by Panama Canal workers and of the return of these workers to Barbadian society, Gmelch (item [935](#)) on the more recent impact of return migrants to Barbados, and Marshall (item [966](#)) on an assessment of Vincentian contract labor to Barbados. De Albuquerque and McElroy (item [922a](#)) deal with six decades of Bahamian labor migration; Boswell (item [907](#)) analyzes internal migration to and from New Providence Island, Bahamas; Locher (item [963](#)) presents a gloomy prognosis for Haitian migration; and Fjellman and Gladwin (item [932](#)) deal with the migrant Haitian household in south Florida as an efficient, extended network. For other parts of the Francophone Caribbean, see Sainte-Rose (item [991](#)) on the image of migration held by Martinican school children, Toulemonde-Niaussat (item [998](#)) on Laotian Hmong refugees in French

Guiana, Gorgeon (item [938](#)) on Brazilian migrants in French Guiana, and Calmont, Gorgeon and Urfie (item [913](#)) on Haitians in French Guiana. Finally, I am pleased to report a resurgence in the use of life histories and autobiographies for a fuller understanding of the Caribbean past and present. Crane (item [990](#)) uses the technique for reporting on life stories from Saba; Smith and Smith (item [994](#)) present the autobiography of a centenarian, an Antiguan workingman; Wasserstrom (item [999](#)) offers the words of key members of the Sistren Theatre Collective in Kingston, Jamaica; and Adams (item [887](#)) collects a number of short, somewhat autobiographical stories of an adolescent Carib boy from Guyana. I am indebted to Ellen Schnepel for her valuable contribution in preparing the annotations of the French publications.