

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE SOUTH AS SEEN FROM A CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

## 1. The CARIFORUM-EC EPA SEEN IN A WIDER CONTEXT

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*First in a Series*

The Cariforum-EU Economic Partnership Agreement has stimulated a very spirited, if belated, debate in the Caribbean on its merits, demerits, and the possible consequences for the region. We have learnt much about the technical aspects of the EPA, and what is at stake for the Caribbean, from the contributions of Clive Thomas, Norman Girvan, Havelock Brewster, Vaughan Lewis, and others with acknowledged expertise in the subject area. In their contribution to the EPA debate, Norman Girvan and Clive Thomas, in particular, drew attention to some of the broader aspects of the issue which might facilitate a better understanding of the attitudes, expectations, and actions of both sets of negotiators – the EU and the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). Describing the unfortunate situation in which he considers the Caribbean to be now placed with regard to the EPA, Clive Thomas alluded to the influence of elements external to both the substantive negotiations and the negotiating process itself: **"By no stretch of the imagination can blame for this situation be entirely attributed to the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). This has been a collective failure of the region, especially on the part of the political directorates that should have guided the process."** (Guyana and the wider world, Design and architecture of the EPA: The importance of self-critique, Stabroek News, February 24th 2008)

Why was there such a collective failure on the part of the region? In a series of articles beginning with the present one, I shall attempt to explore that particular aspect of the issue as well as other important aspects which have had, in my opinion, an indirect but determining influence on both the approach to, and the outcome of, the EPA negotiations. In doing so, I shall further illustrate and expand on some of the broader aspects that have been raised or discussed by Clive, Norman and others in contributions they have made both to the EPA debate itself and to the subject of development in the Caribbean. The debate so far has been largely concerned with the economic and

political aspects of the issue. In this series of article, I shall attempt to show how culture, taken in the broadest sense of the term, has had a determining influence not only the Agreement itself but also on the context in which the negotiations took place, the assumptions that informed those negotiations, and the framework which delimited their scope and possible outcome.

A fundamental element influencing both the approach to, and the outcome of, the EPA negotiations was a shared world view on the part of both sets of negotiators, a factor that Clive Thomas underlines: **"The EPA was considerably aided by the successful implantation of the EU's world view of the region and its future among significant sections of the region's intellectual and ruling elites, including those holding influential positions in the negotiations."** (Guyana and the wider world Suckered: The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as massive manipulation, January 20th 2008)

It is that "successful implantation of the EU's world view of the region and its future" which made it possible for the CRNM and the "the region's intellectual and ruling elites" to come to a meeting of minds on the EPA, an agreement which fits within a model of development that is, at best, inappropriate for the Caribbean and, at worst, detrimental to a region whose needs and circumstances differ so greatly from those of Europe. The effect of those very different circumstances showed up clearly in the consultation process which, as Clive Thomas points out, though advertised by both the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and the EU negotiating body as highly successful contained "design and architectural flaws." (Guyana and the wider world, March 16th 2008).

As Clive Thomas reports in his February 24th article, following its review of the EPA negotiations, the U K Parliament's Select Committee on International Development expressed some major concerns about those negotiations. The Committee condemned them for being non-transparent and conducted away from effective public scrutiny; it highlighted the fact that with the EPA negotiations "running parallel" to those of the Doha Round, they were bound to disadvantage the ACP states; and insisted that it was unfair to the ACP for the EU to push an agreement through without special and differential treatment. The following excerpts from the UK parliamentary committee's report, which are cited in Clive Thomas' February 24th article, are so startling in their open condemnation of the EPA negotiations and in terms of the detrimental consequences such agreements would have for the Caribbean and other ACP regions that they merit restating:

**"The EU is approaching the negotiations with the ACP as if they were playing a game of poker. The Commission is refusing to lay its cards on the table and to dispel the ACP's fear that it stands to lose more than it will gain. The ACP is negotiating under considerable duress**

**and the EU approach emphasizes the unequal nature of the negotiation process."**

**"Without special and differential treatment, the agreements will not be fair."**

**"Despite its over-riding policy emphasis on poverty eradication and sustainable development, for the EU the ACP-EU negotiations are primarily about one thing, namely achieving the progressive and reciprocal liberalisation of trade in goods and services, in accordance with WTO rules, not taking into account the level of development of the ACP countries and the economic, social and environmental constraints they are facing."**

**"Any agreement offered to the ACP must have a developmental component; should not conflict with regional integration processes; should not demand liberalisation in sectors where the EU has not itself liberalized; and should not seek to put onto the agenda in regional negotiations, issues which the ACP group has previously rejected as the all ACP level."**

It is not only the EU but also the North, as a whole, and the international financial and development organizations which they fund, that have succeeded in instilling their world view into the minds of the intellectual and ruling elites of the South. The reason for this is two-fold: language and education. In the late 1920s, the American linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, were the first to postulate the thesis that different languages embody different world views and that the language we use determines, to a large extent, how we think and the way we view the world around us. Thus, the language we use is more than a mere instrument for expressing our thoughts, it actually helps to determine them. It influences how we frame questions, how we organize our arguments, and how we solve puzzles with logic and reasoning. Nietzsche had come to a similar conclusion well before Sapir and Whorf. Noting the strange family resemblance between Hindi, German, and Greek thought, Nietzsche concluded that when there is linguistic kinship it is inevitable that a common grammatically-based philosophy would predispose thought to produce philosophical systems which develop along the same lines. Virtually all countries in the South have had to adopt one of the major European languages as their principal medium for communicating with the outside world. The vast majority of those countries have also found it necessary to choose that same European language as the principal language of instruction in their education system, and the language of communication with the outside world or with other linguistic groups in the country.

Many expressions in the "adopted" languages often reflect experiences, embody attitudes, imply assumptions, and depict images which are alien to the peoples of the South. The latter, for the most part, have internalized the dissimilarities between the experiences, attitudes, assumptions, and

images which are part and parcel of the European language they have adopted and their own living reality, to such an extent, that they often seem unaware of the absurdities to which that situation frequently gives rise. Thus, people who have known only a tropical climate find themselves perfectly capable of singing Christmas carols which recount the experience of dreaming about a white Christmas without feeling any sense of the absurd. The problems that arise in having to speak the language of a dominant culture, which does not reflect one's own history, life experiences, or socio-cultural reality, is by no means restricted to peoples in the South. Despite his marvellous command of the English language James Baldwin was moved to declare, in one of his essays, that his quarrel with the English language was that it reflected none of his own experiences.

It is principally via the language of public instruction, adopted by their respective countries, that the intellectual and ruling elites of the South have acquired Western/Northern world view(s), which they have largely internalized and appropriated as their own. When their education is completed in universities of the North, as is the case with virtually all academics and senior professional staff in national, regional, and international entities/organizations, experts originating from the South often become the most ardent advocates of Northern policies towards their own regions and countries despite their dubious relevance to, or benefit for, their own peoples. That psychological phenomenon, which is also present when the native language of a people is the same as that of the dominant culture, as is the case with the Caribbean, might perhaps help to explain the attitudes adopted and the decisions taken at the Caribbean regional level in respect of the EPA. It might also help us understand the continuing attempts to defend those decisions in spite of the damning report of the Select Committee whose conclusions, most surprisingly, appear to be largely ignored by both sides in the current EPA debate. One can understand why Caribbeans in favour of the EPA would keep silent about the Select Committee's harsh criticism of the Agreement but it is very puzzling that Caribbean critics of the EPA have apparently done the same. One would have expected the Select Committee's critical review of the EPA to form the centerpiece of Caribbean opposition to the Agreement, in view of the considerable weight that review must necessarily carry with Caricom governments. Issuing from the parliament of an important EU member state which would not espouse a cause that is inimical to its national or regional interests, the review should enjoy the greatest credibility, precisely because it cannot credibly be considered partisan or biased in favour of Caricom and other ACP regions.

In his paper, The Post Colonial Economy and Society: Facing the Challenge (February 11, 2008), Norman Girvan identified a very important problem faced by the Caribbean and most post-colonial societies – the problem of disempowerment – the origins of which he traces to the colonial era: **"Colonial economy was more than a system of production, it was above all a system of production relations and a system of power; a system that kept the mass of the population**

**without access to land, to education, to credit, to technology, to the means of economic advancement, to social power and to political power. Disempowerment and lack of access translated into persistent poverty. Poverty was not an accidental result or by-product of the inanimate workings of market forces or the laws of economics. It was a deliberate policy of the colonial state. So fashioning a post colonial economy and society is really about the empowerment of the mass of the population; the collective empowerment of the society as a whole."**

I would suggest that language was, perhaps, the principal vehicle of that collective disempowerment. Such disempowerment was all the more effective because its influence operated essentially at the subliminal level. That particular process would appear to be a perfect subject for deconstruction which might, indeed, turn out to be a necessary precondition for achieving the collective empowerment that, as Norman Girvan quite rightly points out, is essential for fashioning a post colonial Caribbean economy and society.

The adoption, by a people of the language of the country of another culture or society as their principal means of communication and language of public instruction can have other significant consequences. This is particularly so when the language adopted is that of the (former) colonizing power. Colonization is a form of domination and the dominant power often feels the need to justify its absolute control over colonized peoples by disparaging the latter, their culture, their abilities, and their capacity to assume responsibility for their own destiny – a destiny that the colonial power invariably claimed it controlled in the interests of the colonized people themselves. Such demeaning attitudes towards colonized peoples are inevitably reflected in the language of the colonizing power, the very same language that provides the lens through which colonized peoples have learnt to view the world.

In all European languages, without a single exception, the word "black" has become a synonym for all that is bad, sinister, or detrimental, except when it is used simply to describe the primary colour; and the word "white" has become a synonym for what is good, unblemished, or pure. In English, this is to be seen, for example, in the expression "a black day" or in "whitewash", when that latter word is used in a figurative sense. It is perhaps in French, however, that such linguistic disparagement is the most striking. A person accused of an illegal act is routinely described in the French media as having been "*blanchi*" (whitened) when acquitted by a court of justice, in contrast to the technical term "acquitted" that would normally be used in English in similar circumstances. Likewise, when a person's reputation suffers from the public revelation of some discreditable action on his part, it is invariably described as having been "*noircie*" (blackened). Although that particular expression might occasionally be used in English in similar circumstances, such usage is not as systematic as it is in French. The regular, almost automatic, use of the word "black" to describe anything that is negative is

so deeply ingrained in French speakers, and so established in their reflexes, that they do not even appear to notice the occasions when the figurative use of the word is utterly absurd or ridiculous. In 1993, the French Minister for Cooperation addressed a meeting of journalists specializing in international affairs. Wishing to sound upbeat about Africa's development problems, without the slightest trace of irony he described the region's situation in the following words: "*Tout n'est pas complètement noir en Afrique*" (All is not completely black in Africa). *Le Monde*, the most prestigious French newspaper, reported the Minister's remark, verbatim, the following day with a similar absence of irony and without comment. A few years ago, the eastern seaboard of the United States was buffeted by a severe snowstorm which produced a whiteout that caused authorities in the affected regions to close schools, stop bus services, and urge people to stay at home. Displaying the eerie images of the whiteout to his TV audience, the presenter of a French prime time television news programme made the following comment: "*Quelle journée noire pour l'Amérique!*" (What a black day for America!)

The ubiquitous use of such tendentious language could not fail to have a psychological effect on the peoples of French-speaking African countries, whose elites are among the most enthusiastic supporters of Francophonie, the organisation France has established to defend the French language against inroads from English and, to promote French culture. The organization was originally conceived for French-speaking countries, the vast majority of which are situated in Africa, but because of France's aggressive use of its language as a political and economic tool in the service of its national interests, it has been extended to include any country with a historic link to, or an interest in, the French language. To that end France succeeded in persuading, with promises of development aid, two Caricom countries, Dominica and St. Lucia, to join the Francophonie organization. The great importance France has always placed on the French language as a strategic instrument for perpetuating French power and influence is strikingly illustrated when the French Prime minister, Camille Chautemps, in March 1938, decreed Arabic to be a foreign language in Algeria. That decision, and the policy it applied, compelled all Algerians to be educated exclusively in French, thus depriving them of an essential part of their identity. Apart from the detrimental psychological effects of such a policy, when Algeria won its independence the country was faced with the need to re-learn its own language, for which it had to recruit thousands of teachers of arabic from Egypt and other Arab countries.

France is the only European colonial power that has apparently succeeded in maintaining a complicit, paternalistic, and neo-colonial relationship with the political leadership and elites of its former African colonies who seem more attached to France and to French culture than is compatible with defending and futhering the interests of their own countries. It not unusual for a French Ambassador to a francophone African country to be appointed by the president of that very country, as

one of his senior advisers, after retiring from the diplomatic service. On one such recent occasion, there was not even a decent interval between the two appointments. The French ambassador took up his position as presidential adviser in the country of his last posting in the days following his official retirement. Whether voluntarily retired or forcibly removed from active political life, every former Francophone African political leader, almost without exception, retires to live out the rest of his days in France rather than in his own, or another African, country. None of the political leaders of English-speaking Africa has ever gone to live in Britain on retiring from political life, and no British ambassador has ever been employed as an adviser to the president of an anglophone African country in which he had previously served. Indeed, neither of those two bizarre situations appears even conceivable in Anglophone Africa. The role French language and culture have played in bringing about such an astonishing state of affairs should not be underestimated. Similarly, the role of language, education and professional training in predisposing certain Caribbean elites to uncritically accept economic arguments and premises of dubious benefit for the Caribbean, which are proposed by countries and organizations in the North, should not be underestimated.

In the language and terminology of development utilized in countries of the North, the paradigms have already been established, the framework within which discussions/negotiations on any development issue are to be conducted is already delineated, the ideological concepts and constructs that inform and underpin such discussions/negotiations are already determined, and the range of possible actions or choices available to the various actors already defined. Knowledge of the existence of such implicit preconditions permits a better comprehension of the significance of two relevant observations Clive Thomas has made about the EPA, namely, that **"the scope of the consultations was pre-determined and effectively limited to one of two options for Caricom"**; and that **"basically the methodology of CRNM's consultations was flawed by its own deliberate avoidance of consideration of options other than the two on offer by the EU [with the result that] the region, therefore, was largely reactive to EU positions."** (16 March).

## Second article

### World Views and Models of Development

All models of development are essentially cultural. They are invariably inspired by a worldview which reflects a people's hopes and aspirations, determines their life goals, moulds their

notion of what constitutes the good life and the type of society they construct to achieve it, shapes the institutions they create to sustain that society and influences their choice of solutions for the problems that confront it. The predominant world view that prevails in the countries of the North, which subscribe to the Western value system, might vary in certain specifics from one Northern society to another, but it is based on a core of shared Western values which have been forged over the centuries by religion, history, and geography. That shared world view, and the values that underpin it, not only permitted a consensus to emerge on desired economic, social, and political goals which, in turn, had a determining influence on the kind of economy, society, and polity that eventually developed but also a consensus on the general principles that should govern the management of the economy, guide the organization of the society, and shape the form of the polity.

A set of concepts, postulates and premises that were based on the values underlying that shared world view came to be formulated in respect of each of the above subject areas, which effectively delimited the range of acceptable options, possibilities, and outcomes. Whatever fell outside of that culturally-determined range of options was not considered legitimate for it had not been validated by consensus, shared values, or common experience. Moreover, a set of parameters developed which also delimited the scope of debate and discourse on issues related to those very areas, and relevant norms, definitions, and terminology evolved that reinforced such limitations. Consequently, the language and the terminology commonly utilized in the development debate influence how questions are framed, how arguments are organized, and how problems are solved with logic and reasoning.

Keith Nurse illustrates the above perfectly, in his observation that when most people think about development they are principally operating with one or both of the following theses:

(A) Development = Western development = Modernization, and

(B) Development = Growth = Economic growth = GNP growth.

Thus, **"the conceptual framework used determines what we see and how we act in the world."** (Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development, paper prepared for the Commonwealth Secretariat, June 2006).

Another illustration is provided by Clive Thomas' observation that the scope of the EPA consultations was not only *pre-determined* but were also flawed in favour of the EU, because the methodology utilized by the CRNM *deliberately* avoided consideration of options other than the two on offer by the EU. **"No effort was made to explore outside the EPA box and to search for non-EPA non-GSP options.....In the absence of counter-proposals for framework agreements from CARIFORUM or for that matter other ACP-EPA groupings, other options were**

**effectively foreclosed"** (Guyana and the wider world, 16 March, 2008). Clive's statement, which demonstrate that the failure to consider options "outside the EPA box" not only relates to Caricom but also to the other ACP-EPA groupings, would tend to support my thesis that the EPA negotiations took place within a pre-determined framework that, to a significant extent, was the product of a culturally-determined outlook which was either shared or embraced by the CRNM.

The standard model of development which countries of the North have elaborated, in its several variant forms, on the basis of their societies' specific economic and political needs, in response to the particular demands of their respective social and physical environment, and in harmony with their cultural values and world view, was subsequently deemed to be universally valid. The fallacy of that assumption is illustrated in the case of the EPA which, as Clive Thomas points out, is underpinned by weak theoretical and empirical premises precisely because it serves countries with vastly different levels of development and capacity. (Guyana and the wider world Suckered: The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as massive manipulation, 20 January 2008)

Nonetheless, that development model continues to be promoted as the only viable or credible one for solving the development problems of countries of the South. The latter's very different values and experiences were delegitimized and the considerable differences that exist between the South and the North, in terms of their physical conditions, socio-economic needs and circumstances, and cultural values have been deemed irrelevant. Keith Nurse describes that Western/Northern tendency to legitimize/universalize the particular and to delegitimize the rest: **"mainstream notions of sustainable development fall within the narrow confines of modernization theories of development which prioritize an image and vision of development scripted in the tenets of Western technological civilization that is often promoted as the "universal" and the "obvious" (Aseniero 1985). What it does is to legitimize so-called modern Western values and to deligitimize alternative value systems thereby constructing a global cultural asymmetry between the "West" and the "Rest" (Nurse 2006)**

In that respect also, Norman Girvan suggests that **"a critical stance is sorely needed in today's world of neo-liberal globalisation; as an antidote to the claims to universal validity of neo-classical economics and to universal applicability of neo-liberal policies."** He observed that if greater care had been taken on that score, the "standard neo-liberal package of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation" would not have been so recklessly applied as it was in many countries and the results would not have been as disastrous. (Second Annual Surendra Patel Lecture on Development, November, 2005). I would venture to suggest, however, that with the exception of a few intellectuals who have learnt to think outside the context of the dominant Northern world view, it is highly unlikely that development thinkers and planners in the South would adopt such a

critical stance until they are ready, willing, and able to discard the concepts, postulates and premises inspired by that dominant world view, which not only determine the limits within which possible development options and outcomes are sought but also the parameters of the development debate itself. Language, education, and professional experience have created tremendous odds against such an eventuality, particularly in the case of professionals from the South who have been appropriately moulded by a career in international organizations.

Because of their high cultural content, it is difficult, if not impossible, to successfully transfer development models from one cultural area to another unless they are substantively modified and adapted to the different cultural environment in which they are to be applied. Advocates of the standard Northern model of development, who are convinced of its universal validity, tend not to accept that because they neither recognize or acknowledge its high cultural quotient. Culture is like accents, however, we tend to notice other people's, never our own. Thus, Northern development models, which were originally "made-to-measure", have by and large been transferred and applied in countries of the South in a "ready-made" form. There was, and still is, little or no adaptation or modification of those models to take account of local needs and conditions. Therein lies their fatal flaw.

The underlying values of Northern models of development are firmly rooted in Western/Northern culture, which have not only generally prevented their successful transplantation to the very different socio-cultural structures of most countries in the South but, as Norman Girvan has rightly observed, such transplantation has also had disastrous consequences for many of them. Discussing the U.K. Parliament's Select Committee report on the conduct of the EPA negotiations, Clive Thomas noted that the Committee was appalled at the cynical, manipulative way the EU was handling the negotiations, comparing it to a game of poker "where the winner-takes-all." The winner-takes-all approach appears to be an intrinsic feature of Northern models of development, one that is also systematically applied in areas of development other than the economic. It is, for example, a staple feature of Northern models of political development which allow the political party that obtains even a very slight majority of the vote in parliamentary elections to win exclusive political power.

That particular principle/practice, which is consistent with exclusive government, appears to be specific to Western culture but to none other. Henri Mendras has observed that a system which permits half of the electorate plus one to govern the other half of the electorate minus one, with the consent of the latter, is one that no society and no civilization other than that of Western Europe and the United States has considered legitimate in the past two centuries. (Henri Mendras, *L'Europe des Européens: Sociologie de L'Europe Occidentale*, 1997). Virtually all other (non-Western) societies

traditionally practised power-sharing and inclusive government, rejecting exclusive rule by any group in the society.

Emphasizing that the winner-takes-all principle/practice is inspired by the Western world view, is rooted in Western culture, and is hallowed by Western tradition and historical experience, Mendras explains why it cannot be transferred successfully to other cultures:

**The concept that half plus one confers legitimacy to govern is not a mere abstraction of which one can be convinced intellectually. It is a view of the world and of others, a vision of society in which confidence reigns because of the existence of a state of law: the firm conviction that when the party in power loses, the new government will respect the Rule of Law, and the rights of the minority. It is an entire system of values and norms, incarnated in institutions and customs, which are inculcated only by means of a long apprenticeship and through a continuity of social relations and of institutions. This subtle ideological construct, which it has taken learned jurists centuries to develop, cannot be transferred from one civilization to another, like a turn-key factory. (pp.49-50)**

Notwithstanding the fact that it is so very specific to Western culture, the winner-takes-all principle/practice was invested with universal validity by the North and deemed appropriate for application in countries of the South. When they granted independence to their respective colonies, the United States and European colonial powers, without a single exception, had that principle enshrined in the independence constitutions of all their colonies. Much like the standard neo-liberal economic development package which the North also considered universally valid, the transplantation of the winner-takes-all principle to countries of the South has had disastrous consequences for the latter. Recent events in Kenya, the Côte d'Ivoire, and Zimbabwe, to cite only three examples out of many, are a striking demonstration of the absolute folly of Northern assumptions that their principles, concepts, constructs, and practices are universally valid, and that what is good for the North must necessarily be good for the South.

Referring to the severe criticism and censure, which the EU's tactics and modus operandi in the EPA negotiations provoked in Europe, Clive Thomas noted that "**nothing of the kind has been echoed in our region, except for the voices of a few NGOs and academics.**" (Guyana and the wider world - Design and architecture of the EPA: The importance of self-critique, February 24th 2008). The failure of the EPA negotiations, and the manner in which they were conducted, to provoke a similar level of protest in the Caribbean although it was that region, not Europe, which stood to lose from the negotiations underlines the apparent incapacity of peoples in the South to challenge the premises or the assumptions that underpin Northern development models. This effectively prevents them from considering other options than those proffered by such models.

The winner-takes-all principle is a fundamental feature of every variant of the standard Northern/Western political model. The fact that that organizing principle continues to be applied, without any modification or adaptation, in virtually all countries of the South despite the great danger it poses in divided multi-cultural societies and the violent political opposition it has often provoked from minority groups who resent being excluded from power, is an eloquent illustration of the incapacity of countries of the South to seek options other than those available under that standard political model.

Here again, we see the same contrast between the utter incapacity, on the part of countries of the South, to deviate from the standard Northern model adopted by them and the capacity of countries of the North to do precisely that when they find that standard model unsuited to their society. The only two European countries with hereditarily multicultural societies, Belgium, Switzerland, have both rejected the winner-takes-all principle as being incompatible with the multicultural composition of their societies. Consequently, they have each adopted a formula that allows the different linguistic groups in the society to share political power. With a population of only 10 million, Belgium has established a federal system of six governments and parliaments which is designed to share power between the country's three linguistic communities – Dutch-, French-, and German-speakers.

Under Switzerland's "magic formula", the seven cabinet posts at the federal level are shared out, on a proportional basis, between the four major political parties which, between them, cover the entire political spectrum. Furthermore, each of the country's three linguistic groups (German, French, and Italian) *always* has at least one representative in the federal cabinet. After the federal elections of 2003, the president of one of the political parties, the Christian Democrats, declared that any change in the "magic formula" would bring political instability to the country. Switzerland's particular form of democracy has not only proven to be extremely effective but comparative national surveys also show it to be the world's most successful democracy in terms of active citizen participation and *citizen satisfaction*. After undertaking a study into why Belgium and Switzerland are stable democracies in spite of their linguistic and religious divisions, Arend Lijphart concluded that it was because they had adopted an inclusive form of government, to which he gave the term, "consociationalism." (Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Explanation, 1977). A more recent study has found that a consociational system of democracy significantly reduces the incidence of violent ethnic conflict in divided societies. (Marta Reynal-Querol, Why Some Democracies Fail: Stability, Political Systems and Civil War, 2001).

Neither Ireland does not quite fall into the same category as Belgium and Switzerland since it is not independent but that country, too, has finally accepted that a system of exclusive government

cannot produce political peace and stability in a deeply divided, multicultural society. Where Belgium, Switzerland, and Northern Ireland, were able to adapt the standard Northern/Western political model to make it more compatible with the multicultural composition of their respective societies, the countries of the South, which are generally more divided than those three European societies, in terms of the number of culturally different communities that make up their societies, have, with very few exceptions, proved incapable of doing so. Why such a total failure on the part of the South, especially since that particular political model is not only alien to their indigenous cultural traditions and historical political practice, but has also often had disastrous political and social consequences? Here again is a striking demonstration of the sterile nature of political institutions which do not have a cultural anchor in the society to which they have been transplanted.

The adoption of Northern political models by countries of the South was condemned to be unsuccessful not only because those models did not reflect the latter's political, social, and cultural realities but, more importantly, because it also excluded the possibility of political innovation and invention. The capacity for innovation and invention is an essential requirement that enables societies to adapt to changed circumstances and to respond to new challenges. The absence of such a capacity inevitably led to the development of politically sterile societies in the South, societies which had lost the ability to invent local futures for themselves. Their futures were/are invented elsewhere, by others.

Discussing a similar development in Arab countries which occurred towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a development that she attributes to Europe's "civilizing mission" and its colonial policies, Karen Armstrong observed: **"What had been a living civilisation [Islam] with its own identity and integrity was gradually being transformed into a bloc of dependent states that were inadequate copies of an alien world. Innovation had been the essence of the modernizing process in Europe and the United States: it could not be achieved by imitation."** (*A History of God: From Abraham to the Present - The 4,000-Year Quest for God*, 1993, p.413).

There is a symmetry here with the Cariforum-EU EPA situation. Such symmetry is suggested by the close association between political development and economic development, in view of the capacity of the one to inhibit or facilitate the other. But it is also suggested by the general failure of the South to explore options, in both areas of development, other than those available within the development parameters established by the North, which can arguably be attributed to the general adherence by countries of the South to a world view which reflects a reality that is not theirs. Generally speaking, it is intellectuals from the North, not from the South, who are the most fervent advocates of divided societies in the South adopting an inclusive form of government in place of the exclusive form offered by Northern political models. With few

exceptions, intellectuals and ruling elites in the South tend not to consider any options that fall outside the scope of those models.

Similarly, in the matter of the Cariforum-EU EPA, it would appear that only a handful of intellectuals, most of whom had previously been associated with the New World Group, who advocate that options should be sought, not only outside the specific proposals of the EU but also outside the standard Northern development model itself – the "standard neo-liberal package of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation" formulated in countries of the North. I have already compared the vigorous opposition in Europe to the EPAs, and the manner in which they have been conducted, with the acquiescence of Caribbean national and regional authorities to the EU's EPA proposals and the general apathy of Caribbean public opinion on the issue, except in the case of Haiti. The symmetry with the attitudes of elites and intellectuals in Africa, in respect of the standard Northern political model, is evident.

The New World Group, a Pan-Caribbean intellectual movement that was founded in the 1960s, aimed to indigenise economic and social thought in the region. The group's foundational philosophy, as described by Lloyd Best, was that Caribbean people needed a cosmology, and a theory of society and economy, that is rooted in the peculiar experience and aesthetic of the region. It argued that it was only on that basis that appropriate development policies for the region could be devised, which would allow Caribbean people to realise their latent potential. (*Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom*, in Norman Girvan and Owen Jefferson (eds.) Readings in the Political Economy of the Caribbean, 1971). Four decades after the New World Group was founded, Norman Girvan, one of the prominent members of the Group, still found it necessary to reiterate "the need for the customisation of knowledge to suit the circumstances of the local environment." (Lessons from the Struggle for a New International Technology Order, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, XXVII, No. 1; 2006)

The considerable intellectual energy invested by the New World Group during the years it functioned, an effort that was continued by former members of the Group in their individual capacity, to promote a cosmology and a theory of society and economy which reflected the region's unique experience and aesthetic, appears to have had little or no effect on the Caribbean mindset. Why have Caribbean elites remained generally insensitive to such a crucially important issue? What would be required to bring about a fundamental change in their mindset? Have other countries or regions in the South succeeded in the above respect? If so, how did they realize such an achievement? The issues raised by those questions will be explored in forthcoming articles in this series. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the first two questions will provoke a debate that might suggest some answers.

