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Horizons of Possibilities for a Future Without Guarantees

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ABSTRACT:

The paper examines horizons of possibilities for charting a course for the Caribbean to a sustainable future through a focus on the multiplicity of connections in which people and institutions of the region are involved. These possibilities, it is argued, are forged out of global processes that began with colonialism. They are predicated on a reformulation of regional relations away from forms of Westphalian sovereignty and Euro-American global centers of power. They are present in regional institutional arrangements and organizations that transcend boundaries shaped by histories of colonialism. They derive from the region's histories of anti-colonial resistance that have imbued popular conscience. And they are contained in the global scale of "tricontinental" relations through which are circulated different forms of rejection of Euro-American global domination. The paper examines their potential for transforming the Caribbean in ways that would maximize ecological sustainability, conditions of human sustenance, and regional autonomy.

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RESUMO:

Este artigo examina os horizontes de possibilidades para o traçar de um rumo para as Caraíbas em direcção a um futuro sustentável, centrando-se na multiplicidade de ligações em que as pessoas e as instituições da região estão envolvidas. Estas possibilidades, argumenta-se, são forjadas a partir de processos globais que começaram com o colonialismo. Elas baseiam-se numa reformulação das relações regionais, afastando-as das formas de soberania ocidental e dos centros de poder globais euro-americanos. Estão presentes em disposições e organizações institucionais regionais que transcendem as fronteiras moldadas por histórias de colonialismo. Derivam das histórias de resistência anti-colonial da região que impregnaram a consciência popular. E estão contidas na escala global das relações "tricontinentais", através das quais circulam diferentes formas de rejeição do domínio global euro-americano. O artigo examina o seu potencial para transformar as Caraíbas de forma a maximizar a sustentabilidade ecológica, as condições de subsistência humana e a autonomia regional.

KEYWORDS:

imperialism; neocolonialism; tricontinentalism; Westphalianism; coloniality

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1. The Condition of Coloniality

IF WE ARE TO IMAGINE a Caribbean future, we need to think of the region in a way that escapes interpellated and imbricated realities fashioned out of colonial histories. Current sub-regional formations, organized into the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Forum (the Caribbean subgroup of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific group of states known by the acronym CARIFORUM), and the French Overseas Departments (DOMS- (Départements d'outre-mer) all reproduce the structural relations of Caribbean colonial provenance. The DOMS persist as "overseas territories" of the French colonizing power. They all reproduce Westphalian forms of national sovereignty that, as Paul Lauren argues, referring to the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia (see Coggins 2021) is a product of international relations formed out of the imperative of capitalist and precapitalist forms to preserve colonial and postcolonial capitalist accumulation (Lauren 1988). This has served to inscribe the former colonies into neo-colonial system centered around the United States. The forging of new Caribbean "nations" into regional groupings assured the continuation of colonial relations. With the exceptions of Haiti and Suriname, the member states of CARICOM are English-speaking former colonies of Great Britain, as are all the OECS countries. CARIFORUM incorporates the Spanish (including Cuba), French, and Dutch former colonies of Europe into the European Union with the stated purpose "to manage and coordinate policy dialogue between the Caribbean Region and the European Union; and to promote integration and cooperation in the Caribbean" (Caribbean Community, 2017). The effect has been to refashion relations between these former colonies and the European Union (EU) into new "neocolonial" forms that left intact the internal colonial structures (of race, class, gender, and communal identities) as the foundational condition of global capital. These structures, according to Immanuel Wallerstein are indispensable to capitalism's need for an "axial division of labor" (Wallerstein 2004). Their persistence, organized through state authority is what has been termed by scholars such as Anibal Quijano as "coloniality" (Quijano 2000).

Rather than thinking of the "nation" and the "state" as integral elements in a single political constitution, Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot insists upon an understanding of the state as "a set of practices and processes and their effects…whether they coalesce around central sites of governments" (Trouillot 2001, 137). The point of such a departure from convention is to direct our attention away from formal systems of governance to allow consideration of alternative transnational, regional and sub-regional formations. The purpose here is to consider alternatives to the authority exercised through the apparatus of postcolonial national governance in efforts to mitigate the "state effects" of imperialism. Alternatives for the Caribbean must have as their goal the evisceration of these "state effects", meaning, the effects of imperialist and neocolonial forces that appear as processes and practices at every level of organization of the political economy, from the local to the regional and the global. The concern here is with "novel articulations of social

power"[1] that might provide possibilities for transformation articulated outside of formulations of "the nation." We need to examine possibilities for respecification and refashioning of Caribbean relations in ways that are organized strategically around alternative geographies, commonality of political and ideological interests and values, collective and individual security, and the preservation and enhancement of diverse cultural autonomies.

2. Contemporary Challenges to Caribbean Coloniality

There are current and historical forms of relations embedded in the Caribbean region that have managed to escape colonial imperatives, which are already activating challenges to neo-colonial imperialism.

2.1. The Venezuelan Challenge to Colonial Practice

One of the more significant and visible challenges to Caribbean colonial and neocolonial practice emerged out of a "Bolivarian Revolution" in Venezuela under the late President Hugo Chavez, founder of the Fifth Republic Movement and of its successor — the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. Its stated goal was to resolve the region's "intractable conflict with neocolonialism and neoliberalism" through transformations of its international relations. To accomplish this, President Hugo Chavez, who came to power in April 2002, embarked on a reformulation of Venezuelan regional and global relations by using the country's oil-derived revenues and reciprocal trade and aid agreements. In 2003 his government established a Petrocaribe facility that provided oil at highly discounted prices to 18 Caribbean and Latin American member states. The intent was to provide a material basis for the promotion of regional economic cooperation (Mallet-Outtrim 2013) (Clendenning 2003). The partnering countries in this effort were Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Petrocaribe was but one element in a much broader effort organized by Chavez to directly challenge U.S. imperialism, understood as the instrument of the Euro-American neo-colonial capitalist order. He proposed a leftist alliance of Venezuela, Cuba, and Brazil (later replaced by Bolivia) as an "Axis of Good" as a regional precursor to an OPEC-like alliance of Caribbean and Latin American oil producing states. Columbia, Ecuador, and Trinidad and Tobago were to be subsequently included in this alliance (Clendenning 2003). This was in direct response to the use of the term of "Axis of Evil" by the President of the United States, George W. Bush, in 2002 to signify what he described as a terrorist alliance of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.

[1] This term is taken from Robinson (2014, 2) in his discussion of the opening of new possibilities for challenging global capital.

2.2. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

Venezuela was also instrumental in the formation in December 2011 of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This group of 33 countries speaking 5 different languages was formed as a direct counter to the Organization of American States (OAS) dominated by the United States and Canada. Both countries were excluded from its membership. The Overseas territories of France (the DOMS), the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom were also excluded. Twelve of CELAC's members are in South America, eighteen are Spanish-speaking, twelve are English-speaking, one is Portuguese-speaking, one is French speaking, and one is Dutch-speaking. (Xinhua News, 2011). The incorporation of the Caribbean archipelago into the constitutive geography of Latin American represented a rejection of the historically rooted distinction made between the "mestizo" former mainland colonies of Spain and Portugal and the "creolized" plantation societies colonized primarily by Western Europe.

Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution was predicated on predispositions sedimented into Caribbean and Latin American popular consciousness. They were unleashed by the Fifth Republic Movement and its United Socialist Party of Venezuela through rememorializations of the anti-colonial regionalist aspirations of Simon Bolivar. The potential effectiveness of its challenge became evident when a Venezuelan orchestrated campaign in November 2005 successfully thwarted an American plan for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) intended as an extension of the tripartite North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The plan was met with determined opposition from a group of countries headed by Venezuela, including Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Dominica, Nicaragua, and Honduras after being labeled by Chavez as a U.S. "annexation plan" for "imperialist exploitation" (Horowitz 2014). Chavez proposed in its stead a "Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas" to be organized around regional collaborations on energy and infrastructural collaborations that were to be "gradually extended to other areas" with an eventual goal of total economic, political, and military integration of member states (Horowitz 2014). Brazil, Chile, and Argentina also raised objections to the FTAA because of the proposed inclusion of intellectual property rights prohibiting countries from providing price subsidies for agricultural goods traded in the global market. The exemption of Western Industrialized Countries from these prohibitions, imposed by the World Trade Organization on countries of the Global South, provided powerful confirmation of Euro-American neo-colonial privilege.

Venezuela's anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist challenges were stymied in the wake of a global collapse in oil prices in 2014 exploited by the United States in its efforts to reassert its regional power. The resulting near collapse of the country's economy sparked internal political turmoil. A deepening economic, social, and political crisis severely compromised the regime's ability, under the presidency of Chavez's successor, Nicolas Maduro, to meet even the most basic needs of the country's population and to sustain its regional initiatives.

2.3. Brazil's Efforts at Regional Respecification

As the U.S. turned its focus to the Middle East, and decidedly so beginning in the first decade of the 21st century, Brazil rapidly established itself as the most influential power in Latin America. Like Venezuela, its leaders began using the country's growing influence, however tacitly, to challenge U.S.-centred imperialism after the election of a Workers' Party under the progressive leadership of President Lula da Silva in 2003. Publicizing its historical ties to the Black global Diaspora, the da Silva regime turned decisively toward the Anglophone Caribbean and Haiti, while significantly expanding relations with Africa. It established embassies in most of the Caribbean countries, formalized relations with CARICOM (the organization of English-speaking former West Indian colonies of Great Britain along with Haiti and Suriname). In 2010 Brazil signed several bilateral and regional-wide agreements with CARICOM member countries that included generous support for Haitian reconstruction and cooperation on sugar, ethanol, energy production, and education. It also embarked on significant expansion of trade relations with Caricom countries. To signify its progressive turn, the da Silva regime established political and economic relations with Cuba and strengthened ties to the radical Chavez government in Venezuela. In 2013 it formalized a "Guyana-Brazil Working Group" to solidify relations with Guyana as a "sister country. Proposals for major investment initiatives included joint projects with China (Kaiture News 2013).

Reflecting general popular understandings, Rosanne Glasgow, writing for a newspaper in Trinidad and Tobago, saw in the Brazilian initiatives opportunities "to secure (the Caribbean's) existence in this new globalised world" (Glasgow 2011), and the potential to break the "history of colonial rivalry (that)…. conditioned intra-regional isolation and mistrust and created linguistic barriers". Cooperation with Brazil, she added, "can be a movement from our overreliance on the United States, Europe and Canadian markets" and a foil "against the United States' considerable (political and economic) influence" (Glasgow 2011).

As is the case with Venezuela, efforts by the Workers' Party to challenge neocolonial domination were stymied by what one scholar described as the "chaos' and "shock" that the region experiences from never-ending, ever changing (and violent) trans-territorial flows of global cultural, social, economic, and political forces in which it is embedded (Stavans 1995). In 2018 these forces led to the election of a conservative government under the right-wing leadership of Jair Bolsonaro who immediately reinstituted policies and practices aimed at re-intensification of neoliberal and imperialist relations. The re-election of the Workers' Party under Da Silva in 2022 came with considerable uncertainty, raising questions about the regime's ability to manage the chaos and shock of transnational capital.

2.4. The Potential of Mexico

Caribbean relations with Mexico, an emerging regional and global power, bring with them new decolonizing possibilities. Like Brazil, the country strengthened its relations with the region. In 2012, the establishment of a CARICOM-Mexico Joint Commission ushered in, according to a CARICOM official, a "deepening and

broadening relationship (that will) contribute not only to the growth and prosperity of the economies of our countries but also …. strengthen our coordination in responding to internal challenges and promoting our interests in order to influence global developments" (CARICOM Secretariat 2012).

Relations between Mexico and the broader Caribbean come with the potential for transforming the politics, economics, and strategic positioning of the entire region. As one of the emergent global powers, Mexico can become a strategic hub that provides a link between the Caribbean and the Pacific Rim countries of Latin America, Central America and the Pacific Region It adds to the region a population of 130 million and its U.S.$2.4 trillion economy (the 11th largest in the world) (Central Intelligence Agency 2021), together with a tremendously advanced manufacturing capability equal to many industrialized developed economies.

The formalization of relations with the Caribbean can place Mexico in the driver's seat in the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) tri-lateral trade block, creating possibilities for refashioning and reformulating relations with the United States and Canada. The country's membership in a Pacific Alliance with Peru, Colombia, and Chile (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021) offers additional possibilities for alternatives to NAFTA, significantly reducing the country's heavy dependence on trade relations with the United States.

2.5. The Anti-Imperialist Challenge by Cuba

Cuba represents the clearest example of a turn away from western-centered capitalism and from the colonial relations in which the region is inscribed. After a revolutionary break from its post-independence quasi-colonial relations with the United States, the country entered a near exclusive relations with the Euro-Communist Warsaw Pact group headed by the Soviet Union. With the absolute support and under the protective umbrella of the latter, its revolutionary leaders, led by Fidel Castro who came to power in 1959, reorganized the country into a socialist state. It managed to preserve its anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist challenge even after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact alliance and the reinsertion of its member countries, including Russia, into global capitalist relations.

Cuba has inspired regional decolonial imaginaries in profound ways. It supported progressive and transformative efforts throughout the Caribbean and Latin America while providing pivotal and determinative assistance to Africa's anti-colonial campaigns and anti-capitalist efforts including with military protection and support for radical movements and regimes. Its Spanish and African dual provenances locate the country at the fulcrum of efforts at regional reformulation. Its paradigm of a viable alternative to relations steeped in colonial discourse and practice has interpolated Caribbean imagination and consciousness by demonstrating the possibilities of anti-capitalist global alliances. But its effort to protect itself and defend "the revolution" against the forces of U.S. centered imperialism have come at the expense of local and community autonomy and individual freedom. That goes against the grain of forces for their assertion that are deeply embedded in Caribbean consciousness. Like Brazil and Venezuela, Cuba has not escaped the chaos and shock of the global flows of imperialist forms of coloniality.

2.6. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States

Eleven Leeward and Windward Islands of the Caribbean have formalized their economic, political, social, and cultural relations into an Organization of Eastern Caribbean State (OECS) (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States 2021) (see also British Broadcastig Service 2008). The Organization was formed, in part, out of attempts to deal with the narrative of economic unviability of "small" territories – a derivative of Fordist ideas of economies of scale, mass production, and mass consumption located at the center of development discourse. Presumptions of resource deficiencies associated with small size have forced countries in the Caribbean archipelago into a plantation-like dependence on tourism as the primary path to effective integration into the global economy. This is notwithstanding the critical, central, and pivotal roles their territories played in the economic accumulation that catapulted Europe into global dominance. Understood as the only route to "development," tourism interpolated these small territories into the global capitalist market and its international relations of imperialism. According to development economists inspired primarily by the work of Walt Rostow, insertion into these relations of global capital is the singular predicate for transformation of the "undeveloped" Global South into modern developed economies (Rostow 1960).

The intent of the OECS was to forge its member countries together into a more efficient and effective extra-national organizational framework to overcome the presumptive problem of small size. Elements of national authority were transferred to a regional body organized into an Economic Union. The unintended consequence was the fashioning of a scalable framework that contained within it the possibilities for rejection of Westphalian forms of sovereignty with implications for region-wide economic integration, economic autonomy, and economic self-determination. The OECS member countries committed themselves to the free circulation of goods and trade, the free movement of labor, unfettered transfers of financial resources, a region-wide capital market, a common currency, a common Central Bank, and a common external tariff. Money and fiscal policies were harmonized, uniform trade policies established, and common health, educational, and environmental policies adopted, all under the jurisdiction of a regional Assembly of Parliamentarians (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 2021). There is nothing new or innovative about these arrangements. They replicate, in many ways, the Economic Community formed over two decades earlier, after which they were patterned. But regional arrangements in the Caribbean come with different valences because of the possibilities they offer for escape from neo-colonial Westphalian forms of governance, organized into territorially bound national entities. The OECS has the potential for transforming disparate national governing entities into an effective political and economic union. As the central feature of every single country in the region, this has plagued every attempt at regional reorganization. It represents a radical departure from this failure. Its Economic Union Treaty can serve as a template for an overarching institutional arrangement of a Caribbean under one regional umbrella, significantly mitigating dependence on global capitalist markets, especially with the inclusion of Brazil and Mexico.

3. The Environmental Imperative of Decolonization: Guiana Shield as a New Subregion

One of the "state effects" of colonialism is the disarticulation of nature's ecosystems and the human relations contained within them. Possibilities exist for their rearticulation within the Caribbean region. The existential imperative of such a rearticulation on a global scale has become evident by the work of environmental advocates such as Vandana Shiva, a leading environmental thinker and winner of the Right Livelihood Award (The Alternative Nobel Prize). She proposes decentering the formal "market economy" and its replacement by 'nature's economy," where production remains within ecological limits under conditions of sustainability. Production and consumption, she argues, should be confined to what is needed for human sustenance (Shiva 2005) in keeping with the limitations imposed by nature.

"Traditional" practices typical of those in numerous indigenous communities in Latin America can and must inform these transformative efforts. They offer hope for global sustainability and increased food security while providing potential solutions to the existential threat of global climate change and resource depletion. As models of non-capitalist production, these practices have attracted the attention of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In its assessment "traditional farming, fishing, pastoralism/herding, foraging and forestry are based on long established knowledge and practices that help to ensure food and agricultural diversity, valuable landscape and seascape features, livelihoods and food security" The FAO considers adoption of these practices to be essential if the world is to "manage the risks to food and agriculture that result from natural and human-induced disasters climate change impacts, soaring food prices, and other emerging issues" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2009). To this is added the wealth embedded in the pluriverse of knowledges and practices of the region's diverse people who have been brought together from every region of the worlds by colonial commandment and out of which has been forged the region's "massive and diffracted confluence of cultures" (Glissant 1997, 153) These need to be the driving forces of transformation, displacing Europe as the universal center of knowledge.

There is a 1.7-billion-year Precambrian geological formation in northeastern South America known as the Guiana Shield (Gibbs, Barron and eds. 1993). It is one of the most important ecological sub-regions in the world comprising the entirety of Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and portions of Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. It is home to a wealth of natural resources with vast potential for sustainable production of alternative energy and sustainable agro-production consistent with national, regional, and global food security. Its diverse ecosystem, its absorptive capacity as the "lungs" of the world, and its vast rainforests are contained in what is the largest undisturbed areas of primary tropical forests in the world. Possibilities for rearticulation into the ecological, sustainable and sustenance imperatives identified by Shiva are negated by the legacies colonial disarticulation that have separated the region into colonially defined Westphalian forms of national authorities and into separate communities existing in conflictful relations with each other, both within and among its territorially defined boundaries. The Shield has become transformed into an arena of contestation over the conflicting geostrategic interests of powerful global

actors. Indigenous traditions of human sustenance and ecological sustainability have been disrupted and destroyed by the exploitative and extractive interests of the European colonizers and their imperialist progeny.

The Shield is considered the "last best hope" for human sustenance (Thompson 2016). People and cultures with sedimented connections to everywhere in the world, brought together by the global colonial project, join a multiplicity of indigenous communities in the formation of its constituent demographics. They are all connected by a network of tricontinental relations.[2] Those with "traditional" original claims to the Guiana shield are organized into an influential global indigenous movement with integral ties to the global environmental movement that support them and advocate for their interests.

The Guiana Shield can become the fulcrum for transformation into alternative forms of subregional organization that challenge and reject Euro-American imperialism. Cooperative and coordinated engagement in such an effort by the multiple countries of its constitutive subregion brings with it with possibilities to challenge and reverse the disarticulations of colonialism and the latter's respecification into American-led imperialism. Such possibilities for rearticulation and refashioning can be realized only when conditions of human sustenance become linked to practices of sustainability in resource use where people work to provide the necessities to maintain their lives, rather than for the perpetual accumulation of profit (Shiva 2005, 15-18). As one of the world's emerging global powers, Brazil is especially well placed to add strategic currency to a common agenda of evisceration of the effects of centuries of colonialism and disarticulations that is at the root of the existential crisis posed by global capitalism.

The point of discussion of the Guiana Shield is to propose forms of organization alternative to the Westphalian state that are unhinged from the predicate of the colonial and capitalist imperatives of perpetual accumulation. As a sub-regional formation, a Guiana Shield that is rearticulated and refashioned around the imperatives of ecological sustainability and human sustenance comes with significant transformative importance. It also has the potential for setting the stage for a new global political economy.

4. Refashioning the Greater Antilles

As a social geography, the Greater Antilles has received official recognition as a subregion of the Caribbean because of the proximate concentration of the largest territories of the archipelago within its bounded area. What is lost in the focus on physical geography is the shared political histories of its constituent territories that have been distorted and disarticulated by colonialism and imperialism. The inclusion of multiple small islands in the group, with the Cayman Islands as the most significant

[2] Tricontinentalism replaced Third Worldism as the referential term for the alliance of countries in the Global South forged as an alternative to Cold War alignments with the Western and Eastern European "First" and "Second World" group of countries. It first used at the Great Havana Tricontinental Conference hosted by Cuba in 1966 to the inclusion of Latin America in the alliance. (Young 2001, 1-11).

of these, exposes the distorting effects of the sub-region's association with size, which highlights the largest of the Caribbean islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Hispaniola (the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, rendering invisible the many smaller islands contained within its geographic boundary. Collectively, the islands of the Greater Antilles comprise 90 percent of the total land area of the Caribbean archipelago. With a total population of 39 million, all the constitutive territories of the Greater Antilles except Puerto Rico (an unincorporated territory of the United States), and the Cayman Islands (a British Overseas Territory) are independent countries. But this is a product of another geographic distortion because it excludes the circum-Caribbean countries located on the mainland of the Caribbean Sea that stretches from Mexico in North America to Brazil in South America. There is a geostrategic advantage derived from their inclusion. Colonial disarticulations have separated the territories of the Greater Antilles linguistically, politically and in their geopolitical orientations. Despite geographic proximity and a common history of colonialism and hybridized ethno-culture, Mexico is discursively excluded the Greater Antilles, notwithstanding its location on the shores of the Caribbean Sea at a distance from Cuba of a mere 128 miles.

Colonial distortions elide what is the most significant link among the territories of the region, refashioned here by the inclusion of Mexico. Notwithstanding geographic proximity and colonial history, what is most significant is a commonality of political ideology produced out of common histories of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial challenge. Radical anti-imperialism is imbricated into the national imaginaries of the people in all its territories, even though suppressed, subdued, and distorted by Westphalian forms of post-colonial governance. National identity and sovereign power around which national consensus is manufactured and naturalized have had the effect of containing and disciplining the will to challenge systems of governance by state-controlling elites who serve imperialist interests. The Cuban Revolution, as the most contemporary of these anti-imperialist challenges, has already been discussed. It is important to examine the regional provenance of this revolution. It came within the context of the ever present and ongoing struggles by the Haitian people against coloniality, which, in turn, inspired Latin America's campaign for independence against Spanish colonialism. Popular struggles of resistance embedded themselves in the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century, culminating in progressive Marxist-inspired socialist reforms. In 1972, these very struggles brought a progressive government to power in Jamaica that paved the way for governing forms of democratic socialism. In 1991, perpetual resistance to coloniality and aspirations for radical transformation embedded in popular consciousness brought the progressive regime of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti.

The fact that three major anti-imperialist and decolonial revolutions, (the Haitian, Mexican, and Cuban Revolutions) occurred in the Greater Antilles says something about the rhizomic connections and errancy that infuse popular consciousness and ideologies of governance throughout the entire Caribbean region. The tricontinental influence of Cuba on the popular consciousness of the global south where most of the world's population resides is one such contemporary example. In the Greater Antilles, popular forms of anti-imperialism have prevailed notwithstanding the disciplining and distorting technologies of American power even in the U.S.

"unincorporated Territory" of Puerto Rico and in the independent Dominican Republic where the U.S. influence has been enormously pervasive since the end of Haitian Revolution in 1804.

The histories of decolonial challenges mounted by countries of the Greater Antilles including Mexico, however fleeting their impact, have inscribed themselves into Caribbean popular consciousness. They offer horizons of possibilities for non-capitalist decolonial alternatives, not merely in the Caribbean, but for the entire tri-continental project of liberation.

5. The Caribbean Future and the Changing Topographies of Global Power

Rather than forms of international relations "rooted" in imperial centers, what is being asserted, following Eduard Glissant, is that Caribbean consciousness are embedded in rhizomic forms of relations that are products of a multiplicity of circular and overlapping global and regional processes of "errantry" and "transparancy" (Glissant 1997).

New global forces have been unleashed by shifts in production and investment functions to the Global South in the wake of what has been identified by David Harvey as "a crisis of overaccumulation" (Harvey 2006, 411-51). The crisis constricted opportunities for investment in countries in the Global North. In response global capital has been forced to seek investment and market opportunities in the Global South (Choonara and Harvey 2009). This has laid the groundwork for the growing power of many "emerging" economies including China, Brazil, India, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, and Turkey, Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Egypt because of the shift in global accumulation that the response engendered. It has initiated, according to Jack Goldstone, a "megatrend that will change the world" (Goldstone 2010) with the potential to destabilize typical and entrenched forms of neo-colonial statist power. When combined with the "relative decline" of the Euro-American industrial powers, this "megatrend" comes with the possibility of creating spaces for genuine development, democracy, and freedom in the Global South. They can provide the Caribbean with unique opportunities for transformation by refashioning and re-mapping regional relations currently imbricated in neo-colonial forms of imperialism.

6. The Liberating possibilities of Tricontinental Relations

There is a global scale to Caribbean relations that cannot escape colonial distortions. These are evident in its sub-regional formations, even those forged out of colonial provenance, because they defy Westphalian forms of territorial sovereignty and distorted national imaginaries fashioned out of relations to a single colonial power. This fallacy is exposed in CARIFORUM through articulated relations among all the former colonies, Departments, and Associated States of Britain, France, and Holland. These reveal possibilities for counternarratives to colonial distortions. They insert the Caribbean in relations with all of Europe's former colonies now organized into an African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of the European Union (ACP). As members

of CARIFORUM, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Belize interpolates the archipelago into network of relations with Spanish speaking South America and Portuguese speaking Brazil. Similar relations are even more extensively articulated in the already discussed 33-member group of CELAC countries.

The global scale of the networks of Caribbean relations and their embeddedness in tricontinental errantry can act as bulwarks against the processes and practices of neocolonial imperialism because they insert the region in world-spanning challenges to coloniality. Such insertion can have geo-strategic and geo-political implications for regional self-sustaining political and economic security.

Tricontinentalism became the new signification of the global anticolonial movement and its "tricontinental politics of postcolonial critique" that combined and incorporated decolonial critiques from Asia, Africa, and Latin America/Caribbean. First codified (or named) at the Great Havana Tricontinental Conference of 1966, the intent was to signal the development of new forms of "internationalist political identifications" in global postcolonial formation and to pose "epistemological challenges" to imperialist practice (2001, 1-11). The possibilities for changing the world engendered by the "megatrend" identified by Goldstone, are already becoming evident in tricontinental relations among emerging powers located in the global south.

6.1. The BRICS Group of Countries

Brazil has been integrally involved in tricontinental relations with emerging powers. It is one of the five members of a collaborating and coordinating group known by the acronym of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) that together constitute the collective homes (in 2019) to 42 percent of the world's population. Members of the alliance produce 32 percent of the world's GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity PPP). Collectively, they hold U.S. $4.46 trillion in foreign reserves (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2019). Their intent is to challenge Euro-American financial and economic global dominance and to serve as an alternative to Euro-American dominated International Financial Institutions, particularly the World Bank and the IMF. The country's membership in BRICS brings to the Caribbean opportunities for accessing developmental and foreign exchange support and assistance free from Euro-American impositions and free from the dictates of global capital (Hintzen1995). It also inserts the most powerful emerging countries in the Global South into the tricontinental relations of the Caribbean.

6.2. Relations with China and its Possibilities

Relations with China are articulated through narratives of tricontinentalism. The country represents itself as engaged in efforts by the Global South to challenge and negate Euro-American economic, political, social, and cultural domination. This is explicitly emphasized as a rationale for China's relations with the Latin American/Caribbean region and for its support of countries engaged that oppose Western imperialism. This has been the rationale behind the economic, political, and strategic support it currently provides to Venezuela, which has proved critical and essential

for the success of the embattled Maduro regime's ongoing efforts to stay in power in the wake of U.S. interventionism.

Strengthening relations with China can be critical to efforts by the Caribbean to challenge and resist North Atlantic neocolonialism. Over the years, these relations have been formalized and strengthened to the mutual benefit of both. Numerous visits by the highest levels of Chinese leadership have signified the importance they place on these relations. With 659 million people and a combined GDP of U.S. $5.29 trillion (in 2016) relations with the region are elemental to China's global wide network of trade and economic relations. The importance of these relations was signaled in 2001, when then President Jiang Zemin proposed development of economic, diplomatic, and military relations with the region. This was followed by visits in 2004 and 2008 by then President Hu Jintao and in 2009 by then Premier Hui Liangyu and then Vice President Xi Jinping. In June 2012 Premier Wen Jiabao made a visit to the region followed in June 2013 by current President Xi Jinping (Castaneda 2009).

Over the years, multiple agreements of cooperation have been signed in the areas of energy, finance, agriculture, infrastructure, science and technology, aerospace, tourism, education, cultural exchange, and people-to-people exchanges. In 2005, a China-Caribbean Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum was established and formalized at a meeting held in Kingston Jamaica. This was followed by a Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean on November 5, 2008, emphasizing the commitment of the Chinese administration to "sound, steady and all-round growth" and highlighting the country's efforts at deepening and widening cooperation and involvement with the entire region (Xinhua News 2008).

Chinese leaders see the growing relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, which they treat as a "single strategic entity" (Jessop 2012), as an "inseparable" aspect of "south-south cooperation" (Mi 2013). They point to the "common challenges" that both face, emphasizing in this regard "rural urban migration, sustainable development, environmental protection, and the widening wealth gap" as the foundation upon which their developing relations rest (Mi 2013). China brings to the relationship the power of its global economic might as the world's largest economy, based on GDP Purchasing Power Parity, and as the holder of the world's largest reserves of foreign exchange. It is the second largest trading partner of Latin America.

The country has used relations with the Caribbean and Latin America to considerable geostrategic advantage. In 2004 with support from and advocacy by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela (the largest economies of Latin America), it was granted permanent observer status in the 35-member Organization of American States (OAS). In 2009 it became a permanent member of the Inter-American Development Bank (the major development bank in the region) to which it contributed U.S. $350 million (Castaneda 2009), demonstrating the power of its economic might. As a full member of CELAC, it participates in meetings of the community's foreign ministers and heads of government. In January 2014, a China-CELAC Forum was established. The country hosted the First Ministerial Meeting of the forum in January 2015. It was attended by over 40 ministerial level officials including several heads of state. China used the occasion of the meeting to sign a U.S. $20 Billion China Latin American Countries and Caribbean States Cooperation Plan. The Plan

made bilateral loans available to the region, funded invests in projects in Venezuela and Ecuador, and to over US$50 Billion to CELAC countries It awarded 6000 scholarships and 6000 training opportunities to students in the region (Li and Yanzhou 2015). The choice of CELAC as the primary organization around which China's regional relations are organized is predicated upon the Community's stated objective of challenging North American and European neo colonialism.

Relations with China brings to the Caribbean possibilities for reorienting economic exchange and political relations away from Euro-America and providing relief from the expropriative consequences of "unequal exchange" identified by Samir Amin to be at the critical centre of imperialist relations of dependency (see Amin 1974).

Relations with China open horizons of possibility for transformation by freeing the region from neocolonial relations of dependence on Europe and North America. But the country's model of state capitalism and its position as the most important global actor in relations of neoliberal transnational capitalism complicate and circumscribes the role it can play as an agent in fashioning of an alternative to neoliberal globalization.

6.3. India's Diasporic Attachments

India's relationships with the Caribbean are forged out of the colonial history of indentured plantation labor brought to the region as a substitute for and compliment to enslaved Africans during the nineteenth century. The country enjoys especially strong bilateral relations with the former British colonies of Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, and with the former Dutch colony of Suriname. South Asians comprise the largest single segment of the populations of all three of these countries. Their hybridized Caribbean identities are articulated in networks of relations forged out of common histories of colonialism.[3] Through relations of errantry, India became an inspiration for anti-colonial nationalist movements in the Caribbean. It played a central role in challenging European postcolonial global domination as one of the founding members of the "Third World" group of countries formed in 1955 as the precursor to tricontinentalism. Many of Europe's former Caribbean were members of the group. It is a member state of the Commonwealth of Nations that has brought together the former colonized territories of Britain in a formal organizational arrangement, which includes all the independent countries of the Anglophone West Indies. The country's relations with the region have become extended to Brazil because of its India's membership in the BRICS group (The High Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago 2014) (Government of Guyana 2014).

India serves as an example of the multiple manifestations of errantry forged out of common histories of diasporic and colonial relations in which Caribbean tricontinentalism relations is embedded. These add resonance to the country' historical ties to the Caribbean and to its involvement with the region as one of the dominant economic and political actors on the world stage. They contribute significantly to

[3] I use "articulations" following Stuart Hall to include both "enunciations" or specification of these relations and the linkages that can be formed by and through them (Fiske 1996, 213-214; Grossberg 1996).

possibilities for turning away from the neocolonial and imperialist relations in which the Caribbean is involved.

7. The "Revisioning" of the Caribbean

The point of the chapter is to focus on horizons of possibilities embedded in Caribbean relations that are manifest in existing organizational arrangements or that remain latent in nonagentive forms of popular consciousness. It provides an argument for alternative ways in which these relations can be harnessed for reimagining and reconstituting challenges to global capitalism in which the Caribbean region is embedded. These relations challenge colonial interpellations of Caribbean identities "rooted" in territorially defined nations or in diasporic provenances. They are produced through rhizomic connections forged out of global processes and practices of colonialism. This has engendered what Karl Polanyi (1944) has called a double movement. On the one hand, Caribbean consciousness is entrapped in neocolonial forms of imperialism that mobilize and manufacture consensus around Westphalian forms of national sovereignty. On the other, rhizomic connections formed out of tricontinental errantry on a global scale challenge, resist, and reject neocolonial forms of imperialism in which the latter is imbricated. The result is a "Caribbean postcolonial" that, according to Shalini Puri, is fraught with ambiguity and contradictions (Puri 2004). This explains the multivalences of Caribbean regional and subregional formations that tie the region firmly to its colonial past while at the same time inspiring pervasive anti-imperialist challenges throughout the region. As countermovements, the latter contain within them possibilities for decolonial transformation. These ambivalences and contradictions are evident in the regional formations discussed as case studies. The chaos and shock of the forces of neocolonial neoliberal imperialism may very well render unthinkable or unworkable rearticulations of regional relations such as those contained in a subregional alliance of Guiana Shield countries, or in a reconstituted Greater Antilles, or in the reorganization of the entire Circum-Caribbean into a political and economic unit patterned after the OECS. So, any discussion of possibilities for transformation come without guarantees for the future of Caribbean relations.

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