

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the evolution and dynamics of settlement in Barbados. In so doing, it is not only confined to discussing "pattern", but by implication, "process", since any pattern must be the outcome of a particular process.

The discussion is confined mainly to the 1940 - 1970 period, but an attempt has also been made to trace the evolution of the pattern from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, through an examination of both the historical factors as well as some quantitative assessment of changing patterns.

In both the Introduction and in Chapter 1, it is suggested that the spread of free settlement in Barbados has been due as much to the faltering sugar economy as to the tireless efforts of the newly emancipated labouring class to rid themselves of the plantation experience. The result of all this was continued growth in the number of free settlements and consequent space-filling, culminating in a pattern more uniform than random.

Having traced the early development of settlement, the discussion is then confined mainly to the 1946 - 1970 period in an attempt to discuss the dynamics of settlement in modern Barbados, by focussing on internal migration, population change and population densities. Furthermore, bearing in mind that settlement is more than just flows and points, but indeed has a spatio-economic dimension, an attempt is made to examine the effect of the economic superstructure and the spatial organization of the economy on the settlement pattern. This is accomplished by an examination of spatial socio-economic inequalities in terms of a

rural-urban/lagging-development regionalization of the population of Barbados.

In Chapters 2 and 3, therefore, the regularities in settlement pattern are discussed from the point of view of the parish units. However, in Chapter 4, the regularities are discussed within a central-place framework, in which continuities and discontinuities in the way of (central) places are uncovered. This reveals that there exist imbalances in the distribution of higher level and lower level places, and by implication in the distribution of functions, since the higher level places tend to be concentrated in the urban/developed parishes, while there is a preponderance of lower level places in the rural/lagging parishes.

Therefore, the discussion of settlement in Barbados ends with an attempt at a rationalization of the settlement pattern, in terms of deriving the locations for a set of service centres which would facilitate more equitable distribution of urban amenities and services throughout hierarchy of places.

The discussion of settlement in Barbados is not merely descriptive. Throughout the text, much emphasis has been given to the theoretical considerations of settlement geography and the need to derive, modify or apply indices of measurement.