

**ABSTRACT****OLD CONCEPTS, NEW THEORIES? CARIBBEAN RADICAL THOUGHT AT THE CROSSROADS.**

Meagan Avion Sylvester

Commencing from the early independence period in the Anglophone Caribbean, there emerged a few theorists who prized development ideals and not the mirror-image concept of modernisation as the goal. Following on this belief these scholars embarked on a tradition of radical scholarship, which provided strident protest to colonially-minded asphyxia in both its content and character. Alternative paths to development have been tried with mixed results. Some have failed, while others have succeeded with limited potency. There are myriad reasons for either the strengths or weaknesses of radical attempts at change and to a limited extent these are explored in this work.

In this study, the period under review is 1960-2002 and the investigation will be undertaken at three levels. Primarily, a descriptive historical overview of past radical development thinking in the English-speaking Caribbean will be presented. Secondly, at the empirical level, the work will shed focus on whether there has been either a growth or decline in radical development theorising in Social Science scholarship in the Anglophone Caribbean. Thirdly, at the theoretical level, the study will identify to what extent there is a relationship between the growth or decline in radical theorising and the ascendance of the neo-liberal project. This thesis utilises both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (phenomenological) methodologies. The radical scholarship of two groups of theorists is juxtaposed one to another in order to speak to the nature, scope and definition of the rise or decline.

The findings from the literature review and the field review have revealed that generally speaking there has not been either a growth or decline in radical theorising but instead there have been periods of waxing and waning. Secondly, the quantitative results of this work indicate that there is no fundamental numerical difference between the produced scholarship of the old (New World) theorists and that of the new radical theorists. The phenomenological analysis shows that the rise of the neo-liberal project has had an impact on radical theorising to the extent that two reactions have emerged. For some scholars, the fall of the socialist project and the prominence of the neo-liberalism have caused them to cease the production of radical scholarship in order to focus their academic endeavours on policy formulation and consultancy opportunities for international organisations. For others, there has been a resurgence of the radical practice of contestation of Western hegemonic discourse together with the development of new theories which seek to chart a path forward for a re-generated analysis of the Anglo-phone Caribbean reality.

**Keywords:** Meagan Avion Sylvester; Radical thought; New World Group; Neo-liberal project; Western hegemonic discourse; Anglophone Caribbean.