

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL/HISTORICAL
CONTINGENCIES, DECENTEREDNESS,
AND MOVEMENT CULTURE
IN THE ENDURANCE OF
THE RASTAFARI

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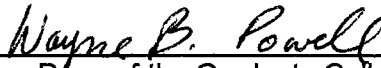
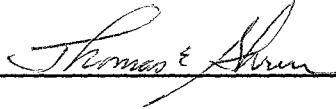
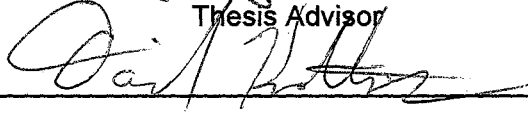
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
May 1999

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my major advisor, Dr Robert Lee Maril for his supervision, inspiration, and friendship. My sincere appreciation extends to my other committee members, especially Dr. Thomas Shriver and Dr. Michael Taylor, whose guidance, assistance, encouragement, and friendship are invaluable. I also would like to thank Dr. Donald Yates, although he is not my committee member, for his kindness and intellectual support.

I owe a special thanks to my Ethiopian friends and relatives for their strong encouragement at times of difficulty, and understanding throughout this whole process. Thanks also go to my family, especially my mom, Meeraf, for their support and their encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank instructors and graduate students at the Department of Sociology for their intellectual and emotional support.

This dissertation is dedicated to my dad, my hero, who is now dancing with the angels. I have always respected him for being instrumental in triggering my desire to appreciate knowledge for its own sake.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social movements arise out of a preceding social change; all the same, they are also the *raison de etre* for the forthcoming social change. This dialectical interplay between social movements and social change has given sociologists important reason to consider the study of social movements as one of the most important sub-areas of investigation. Sociologist Alain Touraine goes so far as to claim that "sociology *is* the study of social movements" (Scott 1990:5). Indeed, requisite in the investigation of social movements are the understanding of the multifaceted features of a social system within which the genesis and development of collective action takes place. Hence to understand a social movement entails becoming conversant with the details its society. With the understanding of social movements we cognize the history, contemporary developments, as well as the course of development of a given society. This research is intended to demonstrate the importance of studying social movements by considering the case of a non-western collective action, the Rastafarian social movement.

WHY THE RASTAFARI?

My interest in the Rastafari arose out of a puzzlement. The first question that came to my mind when I was acquainted with the salient features of the Rastafari was "Why would this group believe in the divinity of a historical figure, a person made of flesh and blood?" What is more, the late HaileSelasie I of Ethiopia, the living God of the Rastafari, although he established himself as an international stature, has a bad record which would disqualify him to pass for "God." To most of us born and raised under the regime where the feudal system, with HaileSelasie I at the apex, reigned supreme for more than three decades, it is hard to consider the emperor as a benevolent leader, let

alone as an individual endowed with divine power.

Given the historical place of Haile Selassie I in Ethiopian history one is tempted to depict the Rastafarians as a disillusioned cluster of people, rather than as a serious group with a real cause. It does not take much effort, however, to discover that the above explanation about the Rastafari is unsympathetic at best, and inane at worst. Yet the Rastafarian movement is so rich that only a serious study reveals its features. The anomalies inherent in the movement, like the one mentioned earlier, the endurance of the movement over an extended period of time, the unique universe of discourse that the Rastafarians have concocted, the impact of the movement on the Jamaican political culture, the Reggae music that acted as an impetus for the Rastafari to set up itself as an international phenomenon; all these and other concomitant issues deserve an extended sociological explanation.

This study deals with the endurance of the Rastafari. The study of the Rastafarian movement endurance is sociologically interesting for different reasons. Despite the absence of what social movement scholars consider as pivotal conditions for the development of a collective action the Rastafari has endured for more than six decades. The Rastafari has developed in spite of political opportunities and formal organization. Moreover, the narrative of the movement is so radical that it has faced a serious challenge from the Jamaican establishment. Despite all the problems that the movement has encountered not only did the Rastafari persevere but it has also developed its own movement culture. Its impact on the cultural and political landscape of Jamaica has also been great. A brief note on the history and nature of the movement helps us to understand the issue under discussion better.

THE RASTAFARIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Rastafari is the "language of rebellion" of the disadvantaged Jamaicans of African descent. Originating in the 1930s as a social religious cult, Rastafari has become a dynamic social movement in Jamaican society. Rastafari is not, however, confined within the bounds of Jamaica. In fact, since the 1970s Rastafari has obtained the status of "global religion" (Yawney 1994: 75). Outside Jamaica the movement has gained a wider acceptance in different corners of the world including, the Caribbean islands, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Africa.

Because of its "Biblical symbolism" (Simpson 1985: 286), the adherents of the Rastafari identify themselves with Ethiopia, an East African country that claims three thousand years of independence. The symbolic significance conferred to Ethiopia is based on an interpretation of various Bible verses, of which Psalms 68:31 is often cited: "Princes come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." On the basis of this and other verses, the Rastafari conclude that the late HaileSelassie I of Ethiopia is the living God and that Ethiopia is heaven. For Rastafarians heaven is not a transcendental reality which exists apart from our "empirical" limits of the earth, up there in the sky. Ethiopia is, thus, heaven which awaits the racial redemption of the Black person from the shackles of Babylon, a place where Black people are captives.

Because of this "flight syndrome," some scholars have described Rastafari as an "escapist movement" (Lanternari, 1963:137). Given the unswerving symbolic resistance they have shown against the dominant order of their society, such descriptions of the Rastafarians are hardly accurate. The symbolic message of their belief clearly communicates an opposition to the existing social order, a system without an open-ended political space. In so far as it is against an establishment which denies

subordinate groups to voice their grievances, the Rastafari is by no means an escape or flight from social reality. Hence, although some scholars such as Leonard E. Barrett has depicted Rastafari as a messianist-millenarian cult (1977), the appropriate sociological term that depicts the salient nature of the Rastafari is political-religious movement. The term political religious movement appropriately designates the Rastafari, for elements of novelty, political protest, and religion are undercurrent in the movement. As members of a religious movement the Rastafarians draw transcendental principles to justify their cause. Politically, the Rastafari is a civil religion, a movement of liberation which, based on a reinterpretation of the socio-political condition of the world at large and Jamaica in particular, manifests itself via symbolic resistance.

As a political religious movement the Rastafari is an emergent religion novel to the Jamaican culture. The religious assumptions of Rastafari are based on an interpretation of the Bible. Nonetheless, the dogmas of the Christian religion as spelled out by European Christianity are not embraced in toto. In fact, Christian missionaries are viewed with suspicion. The Rastafarians consider the otherworldly conception of heaven as deliberately concocted by the oppressing class to deflect the attention of Black people from seeking their promised land, Ethiopia. This "flight" from the Babylonian world is based on a secular interpretation of the prevailing socio-political condition of Jamaica and Rastafarians' belief that they are the reincarnation of the ancient tribes of Israel exiled to the West Indies for violation of the Law of God. Since they have been redeemed of their sin, they contend, the time has come to return to their place, and this is to be carried out under the auspices of HaileSelassie I.

In addition to these doctrines, the Rastafarians have maintained in a persistent and forceful way their collective identity through their unique language, music and

appearance. The Rastafarians are outwardly distinguished through their hairstyle known as dreadlocks. The "lyric language" of the Rastafari is a novel universe of discourse consciously created by movement participants of the cult. The language of the Rastafari is deliberately concocted to resonate with the philosophy of the movement. Reggae, an international pop music, is a rhetorical artifact that has allowed the diffusion of the philosophy of the movement into different corners of the world.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE RASTAFARI

The afore-discussed brief comments on the Rastafari do not due justice to the rich nuances of the movement. The movement is so intricate and multi-faceted that it defies simplistic explanations. The present study is intended to transcend such facile interpretations of the movement. While carrying out this task I had in mind three distinct methodological objectives: theory testing, historical analysis, and exegesis. Theory testing has been the primary purpose of the research. In the course of the study, however, I have found it appropriate to carry out the latter two tasks. It must be noted that these objectives are not end-in-themselves. They are intended to deal with the primordial issue of this study, viz., the movement endurance of the Rastafari. I briefly outline each objective below.

Theory testing

In executing this task I selected the political process model outlined by McAdam (1982). The model has been helpful in providing me with the basic framework as well as working hypotheses in the examination of the causes of the Rastafarian movement for more than six decades. The selection of the theory was based on the utility of its concepts in addressing the development of the movement. Its holistic approach is what differentiates the political process model from other social movement perspectives.

Rather than focussing on a single dimension that cause collective actions, the model gives due attention to both political, organizational, and cognitive processes.

Be that as it may, I have assumed from the outset that the theory can not be flawless. The cause behind this assumption has been that social movements are context-dependent. Since the model is formulated for the study of collective actions in Western societies, this gives us good reason to look for mismatches between the assertions of the model and a non-Western social movement. Consequently, I have given due consideration to those "facts" that contradicted the premises of the model. It was this approach that gave me ample ground to formulate new concepts and consult concepts from other theoretical perspectives. "Cultural/historical contingencies, "decentered movement", "structural and perceptual versatility" are among the concepts that I have coined in order to address the unique features of the Rastafari. Concepts borrowed from other perspectives include collective identity (new social movement theory), and politics of signification (the social constructionist approach).

Historical analysis

This method has been intended to put the Rastafari within the cycle of resistance that has for centuries existed in Jamaica. The cultural/historical contingencies that have paved the ground to the development of the movement clearly show that the Rastafari is not an isolated social phenomena. Although its uniqueness is undeniable, the movement is the result of a long historical progression. Its characteristics can only be unraveled in the light of the historical processes that have preceded it. This approach has been helpful in discussing political opportunities and the development of the Rastafari. The concept of "cultural/historical contingencies" is the result of such analysis.

Exegesis

This method involved describing and analytically interpreting the primordial features of the movement. This analysis has taken me into the different sub-fields of sociology, including political sociology, ethno-musicology, sociology of religion, and socio-linguistics. What is interesting about the Rastafari is that it is multifaceted. The religious, political, linguistic, and musical dimensions of the movement have been the subject of analysis. Often the scholars of the Rastafari de-emphasize the multi-faceted features of the Rastafari for the benefit of considering with one of its aspects. Although the salient features of the movement reside in its political and religious dimensions, the Rastafari is better understood from a holistic perspective. This approach allows us to see the movement as a coherent phenomenon whose nature manifests itself in different ways. Consequently, the social causes and the different ways by which the Rastafarian movement has asserted as well as defended itself becomes clear. This approach has been important in providing the background information for the study as a whole.

SUMMARY

Generally the purpose of this research has been to demonstrate the importance of studying social movements. What makes the study of social movements worthwhile is the fact that they both emerge out of social conditions, and they exert their influence on their respective society. This interplay between social movements and society is clear with the Rastafari. This study, however, is not about the social causes of the movement, although it is sociologically important in its own right. In this study I have focussed on another equally important topic, the issue of movement endurance.

The Rastafari has prevailed for more than six decades. Examining the reasons for its endurance is, therefore, sociologically interesting. In the examination of this issue I

have derived working propositions from the political process model. The model is selected because it considers structural, organizational, and ideational processes in the explanation of the development of social movements. Interestingly enough, the Rastafari, as we shall later in some detail, has survived the challenges that it encountered from the establishment without political opportunities and organizational strength. Instead ideational processes have played an important role. Hence, to examine the factors that enabled the Rastafari to endure is the main focus of this study. This central focus of the research is accompanied by the objectives of exegesis, a critical description of the basis features of the movement, historical analysis, and theory testing.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

This chapter deals with literature related to social movement analysis. The main focus of the chapter are the salient sociological orientations that have attended to the study of the origin, development, and demise of social movements. Theories examined include mass society theory, relative deprivation theory, structural strain theory, resource mobilization theory, political process model, new social movement theory and the social constructionist approach. Following an extended examination of these perspectives a brief critique of same is offered.

MASS SOCIETY THEORY

Underlying mass society perspective is the idea that modernization has created a cluster of alienated individuals who live in loosely integrated societies. The theory contends that individuals in mass society lack coherent identity due to unprecedented social diversity, atomization and social change caused by modernization. On the basis of this contention, David Reisman (1970) sets up a distinction between what he calls "other-directed" and "tradition-directed" social characters. Whereas the later manifests itself in pre-modern societies, the later is characteristics of societies where industrialization has reigned supreme. Other-directed personalities are marked by fluid identities, for the gradual withering away of the factors that strengthen the fabrics of social ties have prompted people to be flexible in order to cope with emergent social organizations. In mass societies integration is further weakened by the prevalence of mass media. There is a one way medium of communication which motivates individuals to stick to the bounds of their isolation, that is, the avenues to respond back to the information conveyed are virtually closed.

People *most* affected by this process of alienation are, accordingly, motivated to trade off their sense of estrangement for social movement participation. "The ideal potential convert is the individual who stands alone, who has no collective body he can blend with and lose himself in and so mask the pettiness, meaninglessness and shabbiness of his individual existence" (Hoffer 1966: 39). Mass society theorists thus contend that social movement participation is conditioned by the passion to overcome self-alienating feelings. Participation is an individual effort. That is to say, social movement participants are not interested in collective actions as a means to an end, say political or economic goals. Social movement participation is an end unto itself, it is a manifestation of personal discontent intended to avoid self-estrangement.

Mass society seems to place the cause of social movements within a social context, for their emergence is associated with the development of complex societies which render social ties among individuals difficult. Researchers have found that social movements could arise partly due to the breakdown of routine social patterns (Piven and Cloward 1977).

The theory, however, betrays its underlying premise by suggesting that social movements are the arena in which people who are in a noxious psychological state attempt to solve their individual problems. Two major problems follow from this contention: 1. The perspective opts to blame individuals rather than trying to examine the problem in the light of larger societal developments. 2. By participating in social movements individuals are not attempting to solve their grievances but are engaged in a therapeutic exercise. Hence social movements are devoid of political motivations. In contradiction to contentions of mass society some studies have found that movements like the Nazi movement in Germany were composed of individuals who were socially well

integrated (Lipset, 1963; Oberschall 1973).

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY

The Relative Deprivation (RD) perspective (Davies 1962; Runciman 1966; Garr 1970; Vanman & Pettigrew 1971) upholds the view that what determines the formation of social movements is relative rather than absolute deprivation. Deprivation involves different factors such as insufficient income, unsatisfactory working conditions, violation of political rights, and disrespect of social dignity. These factors in and of themselves do not create relative deprivation.

Relative deprivation manifests itself in three different ways: fraternalistic, egoistic, and individual (Sayles 1984). Individualistic deprivation occurs when a group feels deprived in relation to its ideal standards. Egoistic deprivation asserts itself when a group of people develop the feeling of distress and frustration by comparing their state of condition with others. Fraternalistic deprivation transpires when an ingroup with a feeling of collective consciousness, without its members experiencing deprivation within the ingroup, feels deprived by comparing its position with other groups, say middle class blacks comparing their position with that of middle class whites. Relative deprivation, therefore, is not group specific. It can happen to any group of people irrespective of their material possession. More exactly, relative deprivation is a matter of perception of disadvantage which occurs when a group enters into some kind of comparison.

What is interesting about this theory is that it explains the anomalous finding that social movements do not happen under worst social conditions but during times of rising expectations. Under worst social conditions individuals are absolutely deprived, yet their expectations of the future is almost nil. On the other hand, when individuals observe the lives of others improving they too expect positive things to happen in the future.

Accordingly, the feeling of deprivation emerges when a group of people observe that others' life conditions are improving here and now, whereas their fate remains the same indefinitely.

In this connection a classic study has been done by Alexis de Tocqueville ([1856]1955). In his study of the French Revolution Tocqueville raised an interesting question: Why, he asked, did the French revolt under a progressive system rather than in Germany where, by every standard, peasants were worst off? A closer observation of these two countries during the period under discussion shows that "the most dangerous moment for a bad government is generally that in which it sets about reform" (214). In Germany thus peasants had known nothing save feudal servitude. In France, however, the sensibility of peasants to servitude had become more intense because of the reforms introduced before the revolution. The demand for more augmented, for the way to transcend suffering were conceivable.

Following Tocqueville's perspective a contemporary sociologist, James C. Davis, has come to the same conclusion. Social movements, as he notes, "are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal" (1962: 6). What happens in the short period of reversal is a cleavage between manifest and expected realities, thereby leading to a state of frustration and anxiety. Of paramount importance in this case is not the actual state of condition but the expectation of people. In so far as the gap between actual and expected satisfaction is tolerable political stability is the rule of the day. On the other hand, when there is an intolerable gap between expected and actual satisfactions it means that society has reached a point in time wherein social movements are most likely to form.

Relative deprivation was a dramatic improvement of over mass society theory which considers social movement participants as deviant. In addition to the destigmatization of social movement participants, Relative Deprivation theory dealt with an important issue: why do people in absolute deprivation fail to engage in collective protest?

Paradoxically enough, in responding to this problem RD theory stripped off social movements their political nature. RD theory, like mass society theory committed the fallacy of psychological reductionism. Factors associated with the individual and not the social became the focus of attention. This inclination to explain social movements is understandable given the fact that the theory has frustration-aggression and cognitive dissonance theories both of which are concerned with how individuals are engaged in the process of tension reduction when encountering psychological strain (Gurney and Tierney 1982).

This is not to deny the importance of the perception of grievances. As Jenkins and Perrow (1977) would argue grievances are constant background factors which led to social movements only when they are combined other structural and organizational processes. The theory, thus, fails to account why social movements come into being at a certain historical juncture as grievances are prevalent among certain group of people all the time. The main problem with RD theory in this case is that it confuses an intervening variable for as an independent variable. One can plausibly argue that the causal relation between movement participation and sense of awareness of relative deprivation is reciprocal; for instance, perception of relative deprivation could be augmented as a result of participation in social movements (Portes 1971; Useem 1980).

STRUCTURAL STRAIN THEORY

Unlike other perspectives which identify collective behavior in terms of psychological motives and patterns of communication, Smelser contends that the value-added perspective views collective behavior as "purposive behavior, in which people are trying to reconstitute their social environment" (Smelser 1980a: 8). Though psychological motives and patterns of interaction can have their influence on timing, content and intensity of a collective episode, they are not necessary conditions unto themselves. The five determinants which together make-up the sufficient conditions for the emergence of collective behavior include: structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth of a generalized belief, mobilization of participants for action and operation of social control.

Smelser also classifies collective behavior on the basis of the efforts made to reconstitute what he calls the component parts of social action: values, norms, organization of motivation and situational facilities. Collective behavior, according to Smelser, is the uninstitutionalized process of restructuring one of the components of social action. Depending on the nature of such reconstitution collective behavior manifests itself through different forms. The five types of collective episodes that Smelser identifies are: 1. The panic, 2. The craze, 3. The hostile outburst, 4. The norm-oriented social movement and 5. The value-oriented social movement.

It is on the last type of collective behavior this review focuses upon. A value-oriented social movement is, "A collective attempt to restore, protect, modify, or create in the name of a generalized belief" (Smelser 1962: 313). Because it involves the transformation of the four components of social action it is markedly different from the other types of collective episode. Value oriented movements aim at a total social restructuring. Such kinds of collective episodes resulting in large social transformations

include messianic, nativistic, millennial and revolutionary movements. By and large, value-oriented social movements reverse the hitherto prevailing organization of authority and economic structure.

Structural conduciveness

The first condition, structural conduciveness, requisite for the emergence of value-oriented movements can be compared to that of norm-oriented movements. The latter type, which involve the alteration of a certain ways of doing things, manifest themselves in societies where the "value system is differentiated from other components of action" (Smelser, 1962:320). In the case of value-oriented movements such differentiation is absent to the extent that the demand for normative changes crystallizes itself as a fundamental and far-reaching process. However, Smelser argues that, since this differentiation does not exist in pure form, there must be other conditions which bring about a value-oriented movement. These conditions include the absence of legitimate channels to express grievances and the existence of channels of communication by means of which the dissemination of generalized belief systems are fostered. In the case of political revolution, for instance, structural conduciveness refers to the following general structural arrangements: a) The differentiation of the value system from other components of action, b) The availability of means to express grievances, and c) Possibilities of communication.

Structural Strain

Smelser says that structural strain, as the second determinant of a value-oriented movement, must be seen as operating within the framework of structural conduciveness. In the absence of the latter, strain could be a pre-condition for another kind of collective episode, for instance, a norm-oriented movement. Strains conducive for a value-oriented

movement arise in different ways (Smelser 1962: 338 - 341). In societies where members face a situation which is beyond their comprehension, or lack the necessary techniques to overcome it, value-oriented beliefs are set forth. Also, value-oriented movements are most likely to arise in societies where physical deprivation is severe. Smelser, however, makes the following qualification: "Strains occur in different clusters, they accumulate in different sequences; they vary in strength and significance" (1962:342).

Generalized Belief

Regarding the importance of a generalized belief, the third structural condition, Smelser says that in its absence episodes fail to assume a coordinated social movement; they rather become fragmented outbursts, since those who participate in collective action don't "share [a] common definition of the situation" (Smelser, 1962:380). Value-oriented beliefs provide both an "explanation" of the prevailing state of strain, and point out the ways by means of which existing problems can be transcended. Particularly, precipitating factors, as concrete instances, furnish additional information as to how the mechanics of the "evil" system operates or a better social system could be attained. Depending on the availability of the avenues for restructuring the social order, social movements assume a passive or an active role. Such passive/active orientations range from a complete withdrawal from everyday life to the complete destruction of the existing social order.

Mobilization for Action

The fourth structural condition is mobilization for Action. Once a generalized belief is crystallized, leadership becomes crucial for a value-oriented movement to effectuate the change that it envisions. Charismatic leaders, as a result, play an

important role in mobilizing the followers of a value oriented movement for action. Leadership, Smelser contends, becomes less important at the latter stages of the movement because of factors related to "material aid from outside sources" and "the inherited organizational structure" (Smelser 1962: 356).

Action of social control

Smelser argues that action of Social Control, the fifth structural condition, are peaceful ways of containing value oriented movements. "This containment involves the selective closing of certain behavioral alternatives and the selective opening of others" (Smelser, 1962: 364). The first alternative, which Smelser calls "political effectiveness", entails ruling out both hostile violent expressions and challenging the legitimacy of the existing status. The second set of alternatives include accommodating peaceful ways of expressing grievances dealing with those strains that make possible the very existence of value-oriented movements. If an establishment fails to block or give access to these behavioral alternatives it is doomed to failure.

Smelser has to be praised for his attempt to present a holistic picture of social movements. Issues pertaining to social structure, mobilization, ideology, and social control are addressed. His theory by far outsmarts previous theories because it places social movements within a social context.

Nonetheless, the theory suffers from a major problem that it inherited from its parent perspective, functionalism. Given its underlying premises, functionalism can but give lip service to social change. Social movements are considered as forces of disruption rather than collective efforts on the part of out-establishment groups to bring some kind of change. The treatment of social movements as trans-institutionalized action also considers social movement participants as deviant. Consequently, despite its

holistic approach structural strain theory seriously fails from being a viable way of explaining social movements. It would be a contradiction in terms to embark on explaining social movements while at the same time relying on an ontological premises which would defend the existing establishment rather than considering social movements as a necessary moment in the evolution of societies.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY

During the last 20 years Resource mobilization (RM) theory has asserted itself as a viable sociological theory in social movement research and has been distinguished from classical social movement theories collectively known as "psycho-functional perspectives" (Snow et. al, 1986:465). While each of the perspectives within the psycho-functional paradigm had its own unique approach, they had one thing in common- an interest in social psychological processes. Questions pertaining to the motivation and behavior of movement participation were the main focus of discussion.

RM theory, on the other hand, moved to the other side of the continuum thereby relegating social psychological factors to a secondary role. Instead, the how of mobilization became the focus of attention. The theoretical and research problems addressed became: How do emerging movement organizations seek to mobilize and routinize the flow of resources? Where are resources located? How does the existing political apparatus affect the organization of resources? These and other issues have been extensively treated and meticulously documented in the works of many RM theory scholars (Gamson, 1975; Jenkins, 1983; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1976; Morris, 1984; Oberschall, 1973; Rule and Tilly, 1972; Schwartz, 1976).

The paradigm shift from a psycho-functional perspective to RM theory had many far-reaching consequences. First, in contrast to the individual-oriented collective

behavior theories of the 1950s and 1960s which marginalized movement participants (Benford 1993), RM theory proceeds from the assumption that participation in social movements involves rational calculation. This vantage point allowed RM theory to deal with the free-rider dilemma posited by Mancur Olson (1965). Secondly, the logical extension of this assumption was that social movements are not meta-institutional. Social movement activities, far from being viewed as an outlandish behaviors on the part of movement participants, were considered as actions entailing cost-benefit analysis. In essence, RM theory placed the study of social movements within the realm of political and organizational sociology (Buechler, 1993). Consequently, RM theory extricated social movements from a social psychological enterprise that considered them to be illustrations of deviance and disorganization. Finally, RM theory, on the basis of its organizational analysis, tended to treat social movements from a middle range perspective (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). Because emphasis is placed on the organizational level, such a meso approach allowed the researcher to offset the imbalance created by individual-centered and abstract approaches to the study of social movements..

RM theory, however, was not merely a reaction to the drawbacks of traditional social movement theories; its emergence and growing salience was closely knit with the civil rights movements of the 1960s and early 1970s (Buechler 1993). Sociologists who actively participated in these social movements found that there is an incongruence between existing theories and the nature of the social protests and their participants. In the light of the then protest movements the explanatory weaknesses of these theories was apparent. First, the participants of these social movements were to a large extent members of the middle class defying the assumption that social movement participants

manifest anomic and deviant characters. Second, previous theories were premised on psychological views that fail to account the true nature of these movements. Third, some of these theories place emphasis on short-term collective actions that could hardly afford an explanatory leverage to the longstanding and organized social movements. By and large, the fact that the classical social movement theories were ill-suited in explaining the civil rights movement stimulated the necessity for a paradigm shift. According to Buechler "RM theory therefore offered a satisfying resolution of the increasing tensions between prior theories and emerging movements" (1993: 219).

These resolution found its expression in the three assumptions outlined by McCarthy and Zald (1976). These assumptions contrast RM theory to the traditional views of social movements. The differences between these two perspectives reside in the support base, strategy and tactics, and relationship to larger society of social movements.

Support Base: With the traditional views the support base of social movements lies within an aggrieved set of people who provide resources and labor requisite for the fulfillment of the goals of the movement. In contrast, RM theory contends that social movements are not necessarily based upon an aggrieved group. Major sources of support may come from "conscience constituents", individuals who provide the resources to support collective action on behalf of others. At times supporters of a social movement might not be committed to its basic values.

Strategy and Tactics: The strategy and tactics of a group, according to the traditional view, is determined by leaders. Factors that influence leader's tactics include past relations with authorities, the success of past strategies, and the ideology of the group. By contrast, RM theory does not view interaction between authorities and leaders

as the only factor. Due attention is also conferred to intragroup strategies and tactics. Issues pertaining to the mobilization of supporters, the dilemmas encountered as a result of conflicting aims, and the relation between tactics and inter-organizational competition and cooperation are the subject of study.

Relation to Larger Society: Older theories of social movements by concentrating attention on the impact of the environment or social movement organizations, have glossed over how the latter use the environment to their advantage. Attention was geared towards the extent of tolerance and hostility in the larger society. This lopsidedness is partly due the absence of a comparative organizational focus in the study of social movements. RM theory, on the other hand, examines how social movements utilize the existing infrastructure of society. "The aspects utilized include communication media and expense, levels of affluence, degree of access to institutional centers, preexisting networks, and occupational structure and growth" (1217).

Resource mobilization was the dominant paradigm in social movement research for the last two decades; this was for a good reason. The strength of RM theory resides in considering social movements as political in nature, and rejecting the classical view that movement participants are marginal. These salient features are at the core of the theory's concern that the acquisition of resources plays a crucial role in the origin and development of social movements.

Resource mobilization, however, suffers, so to speak, from the sins of excess. It exaggerates the importance of organizational factors and the role of elite in the genesis and development of social movements. Because of its professional organizer model the theory can but emphasize the importance of the elite and the middle classes in conferring their resources and knowledge work to a social movement. This contention raises a

serious problem: if social movements, as RM researchers acknowledge, involve the alteration of the social structure and/ reward distribution of a given society, won't the progress of a social movement be constrained by the intentions of the in-establishment groups? As Hall (1995: 9) argues: "The goals of the funder ... may have an impact on whether an individual SMO [Social Movement Organization] is limited or feels constrained in its actions by the funding source. A funder may not 'allow' certain types of collective action or object when certain issues, persons, or events are the target of action." Hence, as social movement participation involves cost-benefit analysis the role of the elite can not be an exception to this rule. The interest of the elite is always at stake when they give or withhold their resources. The support of social movements by the elite is predicated upon the promotion of their own self-interests. Elite involvement has less to do with a sincere concern for the less powerful members of society; their involvement has much to do with their desire to keep in check the direction of a movement and get the most out of the prevailing conflict (McAdam 1982).

Insufficient consideration of the issue discussed above also has lead RM theory to belittle the role of out-establishment groups. The implication of the assertion that in-establishment groups are willing to extend their help to social movement participants is that out-establishment groups are incapable of promoting and sustaining social movements by themselves. This glosses over the fact that, although out-establishment groups do not have resources at their disposal, they are capable of incapacitating an establishment by withholding their "accustomed cooperation" (Piven and Cloward 1977).

By withdrawing their accustomed cooperation the powerless are capable of causing institutional disruption. Besides, on the basis of their meager resources, they are capable of promoting social movements. McAdam (1982) has shown how certain

socio-economic conditions, such as the migration of blacks to the north, has allowed the promotion and development of black insurgency with the minimum intervention of elite groups. Aldon Morris (1981, 1984) took this contention further. Not only did, during the civil rights movement, the black community organized itself to a limited degree, but the critical resources necessary were provided by the community. In this case black churches has played a significant role. Morris cogently emphasizes that the internal dynamics of a movement, that is, the visions and desires of movement participants and the strategies that they employ, are the decisive factors in the success of collective actions.

Another criticism of RM theory is that it gives scant attention to the role of ideology in the genesis and development of social movements. This neglect was what prompted the social constructionist approach to the study of social movements. The marginalization of ideology on the part of RM theory is an extension of its assumption that ideology is a constant background among out-establishment groups that its analytical importance becomes less significant in accounting for the genesis of social movements at a particular historical juncture.

Buechler (1990) makes an interesting point in this connection. As women are structurally dispersed across class and race line mobilizing them for the same cause has meet serious difficulties. This constraint has been tackled through reframing processes and enlightening women on the individual level. A good deal of time has elapsed before women realized that sexist practices could be overcome through collective activity. Hence grievances were not a constant background, rather they "form a complex process of symbolic framing to which ideology -broadly understood- makes a central contribution" (Buechler 1990: 88).

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

New social movement (NSM) theory is a recent development which has asserted itself as an alternative paradigm in current social movement research. Originating in the 1980s and having its roots in the Continental European tradition this new approach claims that its subject of study are social movements whose salient features are markedly different from the traditional social movements (Castells 1983, Melucci 1989). The architects of this approach include Manuel Castells of Spain, Alain Touraine of France, Alberto Melucci of Italy and Jurgen Habermas of Germany (Buechler 1995).

Although all new social movement theorists are not interested in displacing and transcending the conventional assumptions of Marxism, NSM theory has to a large extent emerged as a critical reaction against classical Marxist view of collective action (Buechler 1995). According to NSM theorists, two important reasons have made Marxism of limited utility in addressing the issues pertinent to contemporary collective actions. First, classical Marxism assumes that all forms of social processes are ultimately reducible to economics. This view affords secondary status to non-economic aspects of social life. Second, Marxism contends that the role of a social group in a collective action is defined by its place in the processes of production, hence all other social identities are relegated to a secondary status.

Nonetheless, NSM theorists account the emergence of new social movements in terms of structural changes that took place in the system of production in the Western world. Changes in the system of production has prompted the state in the Western world to intervene into hitherto private domains. New social movements, accordingly, are nothing but collective efforts to "reclaim" those domains that pertain to the private world. What is new about "new social movements," therefore, has much to do with values and

issues , action forms, and constituencies of the new social movements (Offe 1985: 828-832).

Constituencies

The "class base" of new social movements can be contrasted to "old social movements" classical examples of which include workers and farmers' movements. Participants of the latter type are recruited from a single class whose interest is centered around the same economic goals. On the other hand, the mobilization potential of NSMs is not located within a monolithic social group. Although new social movements are instances of "middle class radicalism" (Kriesi 1989: 1081), their constituencies cut across different segments of the population, including professionals, workers, students, housewives etc.. However, due to their sensitivity, awareness, and free time, money and energy at their disposal social movements are represented by what are known as "knowledge workers" (Kriesi 1989).

Issues and Values

Unlike the old social movements the issues about which new social movements are concerned are non-economic. They rather focus on issues pertaining to culture and improvement of the physical and social worlds. The demands, by and large, are "class unspecific" as in the case of environmental concerns and highly localized issues pertaining to women. Although the aforementioned concerns are variegated and disorderly, they ultimately reside in specific values. At the basis of the values of these concerns of NSMs are personal autonomy and identity, and opposition against centralized control. These values are not novel, yet they find a refined version within the framework of NSMs.

Modes of Action

This involves methods and ways by which NSMs maintain their collective identity (internal mode of action) and meet the challenges that come from without (external mode of action). In terms of external mode of action NSMs utilize unconventional, albeit legal, means. Mostly these tactics involve making use of the presence of a large number of people for the purpose of bringing the concerns of the movement to the attention of the public. These protest tactics are accompanied by demands which find expression in negative and disapproving terms, such as "never," "Ban," "Freeze" etc.. "Protest tactics and protest demands leave ample room for a wide variety of legitimation and beliefs among the protesters" (Offe 1985: 830). With regard to an internal mode of action, NSMs maintain collective identity by non-organizational means. While old social movements rely on formal organization and principles of differentiation be it horizontal (insider Vs. outsider) or vertical (leaders Vs rank and file members), with NSMs the mode by which individuals become "collective actors is highly informal, ad hoc, discontinuous, context sensitive, and egalitarian" (Offe 1985: 829).

The strength of the new social movement theory lies in bringing to our attention that social movements take place within a defined historical context. Indeed, all social systems do not exhibit the same characteristics as each is the product of its time. That current social movements are influenced by contemporary development is an issue that ought to be considered seriously. As Buechler (1995: 460) argue by presenting "historically specific formulations of societal totalities and the forms of domination they entail, new social movement theory has much to tell us about the roots of contemporary social activism and the dynamics of movement emergence." New social movement theory, by focussing on concepts like collective identity, has rejuvenated our interest in

social psychological processes in the study of social movements.

The problem with new social movement theory is that it grossly exaggerates the difference between "new" and "old" social movements. Two problems emerge out of such distinction. First, although the sociological relevance of stressing the unique features of social movements is undeniable, the theory, nonetheless, by setting up a sharp distinction between "new" and "old" movements, misses the historical continuity between past and present collective actions. No social movement has come into being without being anteceded by other forms of collective action.

Second, the features accorded wider significance in new social movement discourse have also prevailed with "old" social movements. No social movement has existed as a collective action working within one of the facets of social life only. Since social movements in one way or another involve challenging the dominant order their effort cannot merely be confined to a single issue. No issue stands by itself; every issue which is the focus of a social movement is either presupposed by or related to other issue or issues. Hence, cultural themes that occupy a central place in new social movement discourse are in one way or another related to other issues, say the political, and vice versa.

This is by no means to suggest that as a result of certain social conditions some issues have become more important than others. In contemporary Western societies cultural themes have gained a wider significance for "cultural conflicts have intensified because of new links between cultural and socioeconomic processes" (Plotke 1995:122).

This does not mean that social movements have become synonymous with cultural movements, rather still legal and distributive issues coexist along with issues pertaining to culture. The claim that social movements have come into being as a result of the

excessive intervention of the state in personal affairs clearly shows the political nature of new social movements.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

Since the 1970s resource mobilization theory has acted as the "normal science" of social movement research. The theory has made many worthwhile contributions to the analysis of social movements. Indeed, "the focus on rational choices, organizations and macro social structure stimulated a plethora of research on topics ranging from networks to tactical innovation to regime crises" (Benford 1993: 198). The perspective has, however, downplayed the importance of social psychological aspects of social movements and collective action: For instance, the interpretation of grievances and other ideational elements have received scant attention (Snow et al. 1986). In their attempt to transcend the limits of conventional collective behavior theories, thus, scholars of the RM perspective "threw the baby out with the bath water." They viewed ideational factors as unessential and not deserving of serious attention.

This neglect of interpretive issues was the inevitable end-result of the basic premises from which scholars of RM theory began their analysis of social movements. Since attention is focussed on the acquisition and deployment of resources, the RM framework leaves little room for ideational considerations. According to Snow and Benford (1988:198) "Mobilizing beliefs and ideas are seen as ubiquitous and relatively unimportant determinants of movement emergence, mobilization and success." This ubiquity/constancy assumption of RM theory left unexamined some crucial aspects of social movements such as the definition of the situation of movement participants, the interpretation of grievances, and the processes by which these interpretations of social reality are diffused among movement joiners, and the ways they are defended when they

meet resistance were taken for granted rather than explained.

Recently in an attempt to remedy these problems a different perspective involving the "resurrection of social psychology" (Hunt and Benford, 1994: 488) has emerged. The new line of thought follows a social constructionist approach while at the same time going beyond the limits of traditional social psychological perspectives of collective behavior. More precisely, "the resurgent social psychology has jettisoned the old baggage of irrationality and social pathology" (Gamson, 1992:54). Taking the problem of meaning seriously (Benford, 1993), theorists of the social constructionist approach have developed a plausible account of how "objective" processes are translated into forms of collective thought. For social movements to assert themselves organizational and structural conditions alone don't suffice. The process of reality construction - in which movement joiners engage in the definition of the situation, attempt to win the hearts of others, and defend their vision of what is and what ought to be whenever and wherever they meet resistance - plays a crucial role.

In highlighting the importance of the role of meanings and ideas in social movements, Snow and his associates (1986) have developed the concept of framing. The concept of framing, borrowed from Goffman, refers to "an active, process-derived phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Snow and Benford 1992:136). This process of reality construction involves agency because it is an active process on the part of movement participants, and the resulting products are contentious because they challenge existing interpretive frames.

Collective action frames, Snow and Benford (1992) note, are the product of the of framing, the process of assigning meaning to social events. As a set of beliefs and ideas, collective action frames, energizes and justifies social movement activities. In this

regard they play three distinctive roles, punctuation, attribution and articulation.

Punctuation serves as an "accenting device" by which an aspect of society is singled out as unjust and immoral requiring a solution of some kind. Punctuation in and of itself does not suffice to predict the character and orientation of a collective action.

Punctuation, therefore, must be accompanied by a mode of attribution. Attribution is both a diagnostic and prognostic technique involving both processes of assigning blame to the perceived social problem and indicating the means of resolving it respectively. In their response to the question "Who is to blame?" social movements can have a psycho-salvational orientation, or responsibility could be assigned to socio-structural conditions (Snow and Benford 1993). The distinctive feature of collective action frames does not just reside in the existence of ideational elements. Ideational elements must somehow be linked by means of the mode of articulation. Articulation is a "signaling and collating device" by which a plethora of events and experiences are aligned together in a relatively organized style.

In addition to the concept of framing, the efforts to resurrect social psychology have yielded numerous concepts: cognitive liberation (McAdam 1982), frame alignment (Snow et al. 1986), consensus mobilization (Klandermans 1988), social movement community, (Taylor and Whittier, 1993), identity talk (Hunt and Benford 1994), and others. Like the new social movement theory, the social construction approach emphasizes the importance of social psychological processes. Indeed our understanding of collective action is indeed truncated if we gloss over the importance of ideational factors. In social movements where cultural themes occupy an important place the value of the concepts offered by the social construction approach is significant. The study of collective identity and meaning construction broadens our understanding

regarding the how of social movements.

We must be careful, however, not to exaggerate the importance of these subjective factors. Our effort to understand collective action would be seriously limited if we see ideational processes unto themselves. If we do not place them within a social context our explanation of social movements would be less comprehensive. "Concepts such as collective identity master frames packages and the like should be solidly rooted within their relevant structural contexts" (Morris 1992: 369). A better approach would be, then, to examine the interrelatedness that exists between social psychological processes and the social structural basis within which social movements originate and develop.

THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

The political process model is a perspective which was originally spelled out by Tily, Tily, and Tily (1975) but later found its full fledged elaboration with Doug McAdam (1982). The term political process is intended to reflect the two ideas central to the model. First, unlike classical perspectives which consider social movements as psychological phenomena the political process model sees social movements as politics by other means. Social movements are organized political activities on the part of those groups who are denied access to institutionalized politics. Second, the model contends that social movements should be examined processually, rather than studying the different phases of a social movement separately.

Like the Resource Mobilization Theory the model is premised on the basic assumption of elite theory that political power is concentrated in the hands of few individuals, "thus depriving most people of any real influence over major decisions that affect their lives" (McAdam 1982: 36). Both perspectives, accordingly, see social movements as collective efforts on the part of excluded groups to advance their interests

through meta-institutional ways.

Yet the political process model, consistent with the principle of Marxism, contends that the structural power relationship between the power elite and excluded groups is not absolute and inevitable. Although there is an immense power disparity between the power elite and excluded groups, the latter possess an "insurgent potential" that would ultimately allow them to come up with an alternative socio-economic system. This insurgent potential of excluded groups stems from the position they occupy within the prevailing socio-economic system.

The political process model, therefore, strongly contends that excluded groups are capable of generating and sustaining political insurgency. Resource mobilization theory, on the other hand, confers a good deal of significance to the role played by segments of the elite in rendering their support to the cause of mass action. Where RM theory exaggerates the role of the elite the political process model sees an "abiding conservatism" on the part of the elite. The elite are more interested in defending rather than inserting themselves in political insurgencies that would disrupt the realization of their interests. "Members of the polity resist changes which would enhance their interests even more than they seek changes which would enhance their interests" (Tilly 1978: 135 Quoted in McAdam 1986).

In asserting that political action can be instigated and maintained by those who do not belong to the establishment, the political process model does not gloss over the importance of environmental factors. Political insurgency indeed can be constrained by environmental factors. Yet "this force is not constant over time. The calculations on which existing political arrangements are based may, for a variety of reasons, change over time, thus affording certain segments of the population greater leverage with which

to advance their interests" (McAdam 1982: 39). The implication of this view is that environmental factors nor processes inherent within a movement alone do not suffice to account social insurgency. Social insurgency rather is the result of the interplay of both factors. The ebb and flow of social insurgency, consequently, is determined by three interrelated variables: cognitive liberation, organizational strength, and political opportunities.

Political Opportunities

Political opportunity refers to the period when those groups who are often denied access to power are, due to a unique political, economic, or social circumstances, endowed with the necessary political leverage to undertake collective action. Politics, therefore, is not a closed system in which the polity exercise an all time and smooth exercise of domination. The model assumes that politics involves periods of instability and stability. During periods of political stability the ruling classes bar excluded groups from participating in meaningful political activities.

Periods of instability, on the other hand, allow excluded groups to make successful political actions. Political instability brings to the forefront the contradictions of the prevailing status quo, thereby encouraging excluded groups to participate in the process of meaningful political action. Political instability could come as a result of different social, political, and economic processes. According to McAdam (1982: 41) "Among the events and processes likely to prove disruptive to the status quo are wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes." The civil rights movement of the 1960s got the most out of both national and international developments. Nationally, the voter base of the Democratic Party was drastically changed as a result of the growing black electorate,

a group which strongly pressed for change. Internationally, as the United States had to respond to the criticism against its segregationist policies.

Political opportunity in this sense resembles to what classical theories of social movements call structural strain. The two models, however, markedly differ in the way they posit the causal sequence of the two processes. Whereas with classical theories the relationship between the two is direct, viz., social movements are immediately followed by acute structural strains, the political process model sees an indirect relationship between the two processes. The latter contends that the causal sequence between the two processes is mediated by the restructuring of existing power relations.

The two models also differ in terms of time span in which the two processes take place. The classical model accounts social movements as though they immediately follow a dramatic social event. The political process model rejects this view as too simplistic, for social movements are the result of a long social processes. The "processes shaping insurgency are expected to be of a more cumulative, less dramatic nature than those identified by proponents of the classical model" (McAdam 1982: 41).

Organizational Strength

The existence of conducive climate does not necessarily lead to social insurgency unless there is an aggrieved population which is ready to get the most out of the prevailing political opportunity. More exactly, excluded groups must be organized to seize political opportunity for action. "To generate a social movement, the aggrieved population must be able to 'convert' a favorable 'structure of political opportunities' into an organized campaign of social protest" (McAdam 1992: 44).

The very existence of social movement organizations endows insurgents with four important resources. First, the recruitment of social movement participants is directly

proportional to the strong attachment of individuals to out-establishment groups. That is to say indigenous organizations provide "facilitative contact" wherein member recruitments are promoted. Second, indigenous organizations do not only provide material but "solidary incentives" as well. Third, "established organizations of the aggrieved population ... constitute a communication network or infrastructure, the strength and breadth of which largely determine the pattern, spread, and extent of movement expansion" (McAdam 1982: 46) . Finally, the existence of established organizations entails that there are leaders who can provide their organizing skills.

Cognitive Liberation

Political opportunity and organizational strength provide the "structural potential" for the very emergence of movement insurgency. Although these variables are crucial for the generation of a social movement, in and of themselves they do not bring about social movements. They must find a subjective translation in the minds of movement participants for a social movement to assert itself.

Hence, political opportunity and action are not related to one another in a mechanical fashion, that is the former is not immediately followed by the latter. The relation between the two is mediated by subjective processes that takes place in the minds of social movement participants. This intervening variable that involves the transformation of consciousness is what McAdam calls cognitive liberation. Cognitive liberation can have three distinct aspects: 1. A significant number of people realize that the prevailing establishment is unjust and wrong. 2. People transcend their fatalistic orientations, and realize that change is possible. 3. The political efficacy of the aggrieved people is augmented, that is they believe in their potency to effect social change (Piven and Cloward 1979, Quoted in McAdam 1988).

The development of cognitive liberation is closely knit with the development of organizational strength and political opportunity. In the presence of political opportunities and organizational framework excluded groups realize that they can undertake collective action. That is to say, political opportunities render cognitive liberation by providing "cognitive cues" that suggest that the establishment is in a precarious situation.

The importance of organizational strength resides in providing "stable group settings" for the emergence and diffusion of cognitive liberation. In the first place, the understanding of "public issues" is more likely to happen under situations wherein there is strong social integration among groups of people. In settings where social integration is weak it would be hard to find the minimum number of people to undertake an effective collective action. Secondly, strong social integration provides individuals with the right set of circumstances to perceive social problems in the light of "system attribution," rather than accounting problems in terms of individual factors.

The Social Control Response to Insurgency

The development of social movements is affected by the social control response of in-establishment groups. This is simply because social movements are not only conditioned by political opportunities, they also exert their pressure on the political system as well. In-establishment groups, accordingly, react to this pressure in a way that would protect their interests. The extent of reaction depends on the strength of insurgent forces and the level of threat the movement poses over the interests those groups who get the most out of the prevailing status quo.

The level of threat that a social movement poses to in-establishment groups is determined by the tactics and goals that a social movement pursues. The tactics of social movements involve institutional or non-institutional means. The latter pose the

greatest threat to the establishment, for movement participants, by utilizing tactics that deviate from the "proper channel" of overcoming problems, send the message that the prevailing power structure is not legitimate. The same process holds true with regard to the goals of a social movement. A reformist social movement is less threatening since its demands can be accommodated within the framework of the existing social system. Whereas revolutionary social movements will meet a serious resistance on the part of the elite because their social, economic and political position will be affected by the outcomes of the radical policies that this collective action entails.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Almost all the social movement theories discussed in this chapter have something to contribute to the understanding of social movement endurance. Yet each one of these perspectives, save the political process model, puts an emphasis on some dimension of social movement endurance. Resource mobilization theory, for instance, exaggerates the role of organizational factors in the development of social movements. According to this theory without organizational strength social movements are doomed to fail. On the other hand, perspectives such as the social constructionist approach consider ideational processes as decisively important. Indeed this theory has emerged by restoring social psychological factors which RM has relegated to a secondary status.

The picture is different with the political process model. In the explanation of movement endurance, this model takes into account three variables simultaneously, political opportunities, organizational strength, and cognitive liberation. On the basis of these three variables we can have a better understanding of social movement endurance. That is why the working propositions for this study are derived from this model. By and large, the working assumptions are centered around the assumption that

social movement endurance is positively correlated with the three variables discussed by the political process mode. Yet these propositions will not be considered as absolute. They are taken as ideal types that help us understand why the Rastafari has endured for more than six decades. The method of ideal type and other concomitant methodological issues are the topics of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter outlines the method utilized in the investigation of the Rastafari. I lay out the research questions and discuss the central themes that were the focus of this study are highlighted. Finally, the data sources for the research is also discussed.

THE METHOD OF IDEAL TYPE

One of the reasons that motivated this research was the absence of theory testing with regard to the study of the Rastafari (for an exception see Cashmore 1979 and Johnson-Hill 1995). The absence of such an approach has made it difficult to delineate the contribution of researchers to sociological theories in general and social movement theories in particular. This, however, is not to deny the merits of atheoretical descriptions of the movement. One of the advantages of these studies is that they have provided us with an indepth understanding of the movement.

Consequently, bridging the gap between research and theory has been one of the most important tasks of this study. Each perspective considered in this paper tells us what to look for with regard to the nature, genesis, development, and decline of social movements, and each brings some aspect of a social movement into sharper focus. Every perspective, however, is not equally helpful in understanding the subject of this research. Hence, in outlining the research problems of this study I have selected the political process model. The political process model is the best alternative because of its broader perspective, examination of social movements in the light of a stratified system, and its emphasis on the importance of ideational factors.

Yet in examining the Rastafari from the political process perspective I had a double-pronged approach. On one hand, I utilized the model in laying the foundation of

the research and use its concepts in examining the reasons for the endurance of the Rastafari over an extended period of time. The theory has in this sense provided me with the framework and sensitizing concepts to analyze the processes involved in the development of the Rastafari. The role of political opportunities, organizational strength, and cognitive liberation in the development of the movement has been the major focus of this study.

On the other hand, I considered the perspective as an ideal type. That is to say, I examined how the perspective captures the actual features of the social movement under investigation. This allowed me to have a critical stance regarding the political process model itself instead of blindly imposing its concepts on the research subject. Hence, not only did I kept an eye on those evidences that confirm the assumptions of the model, but "hostile evidences" were also given due attention. Whenever I encountered an anomalous situation I had to examine the matter in the light of other/new concepts. This approach proved to be productive. I was not only free to borrow concepts from other theories (especially those that have extensively dealt with social psychological processes entailed in the development of social movements), but also I was in a position to coin new terms appropriate to the study of the dimensions of the movement which the political process model has failed to account.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this study came out of the three variables that the political process model outlined as the most important conditions for the emergence as well as the development of collective actions. The research, however, was not entirely based on these pre-structured questions. In the course of the study a number of questions have also emerged. These emergent questions were largely responsible in

providing the clues for alternative directions. While dealing with these questions the underlying vantage point of the research has been that social movements are collective actions that emerge as a result of social, political, and economic inequity, that is, that social conflict is effected by the an imbalanced distribution of power and resources.

Primordial Problem

The main focus of this study, however, was movement endurance and the Rastafari. This is what I have called the primordial problem of this research. Why has the Rastafari sustained its existence for more than six decades? This is an interesting issue because of the radical posture of the movement and the scant political opportunities it received. Social movement researchers have noted that collective actions with a radical outlook are most likely to face the greatest challenge even in places where people are relatively free to express and organize themselves. In deed, the Rastafari have faced the utmost challenge that a collective action can face, including the physical annihilation of their communes. Therefore, the problem why the movement not waned in spite of all these severe challenges is a pivotal issue that deserves serious sociological investigation.

Satellite Issues

However, the primordial problem with which this study is concerned becomes too abstract unless we break it into further issues that ultimately allow us to unravel the social dynamics involved in the development of the Rastafari. Satellite issues that revolve around the primordial issue are thus of practical importance. Not only do these issues sharpen our practical orientation while handling the main issue, but they also pave the ground for us to make a theoretical contribution as well. In the framing of the satellite issues for this study the political process model has played the major role. The concepts

of political opportunity, organizational strength, and cognitive liberation have been of great importance in formulating questions pertaining to the development of the Rastafari. More exactly, it is on the basis of the basic assumptions of the political process model that I have formulated working hypotheses for this study.

Working Propositions: On the basis of the first variable (political opportunities) I asked: what were the political opportunities that were available to the Rastafari? The first working hypothesis of this study, accordingly, has been that movement development is positively correlated to the availability of political opportunities. The more political opportunities are accessible, the more likely is a social movement to sustain its existence. In the course of the study, however, I found this hypothesis to be narrow as the Rastafarians were consistently denied political space conducive to the development of their movement. Yet the Rastafari has flourished in spite of political opportunities. In order to resolve this anomaly I had to broaden the concept "opportunity" to include cultural and historical opportunities. This finally led me to ponder over the cultural and historical contingencies that were available to the Rastafari. The problem also lead me to inquire into other factors that have conditioned the Rastafari to develop. All these problems amounted to considering the Rastafarian movement as a dynamic, rather than an abeyant, collective action.

With regard to organizational strength, the second variable, the focus of my attention has been in investigating the mechanisms that have maintained the coherence of the movement. In this case the working hypothesis is that the more a social movement is formally organized the more it becomes successful in executing its collective actions, and thereby the more it endures. Once more the history of the Rastafari contradicted the hypothesis suggested by the political process model. The

Rastafari has been largely a collective action in spite of formal organization. Following this finding the problem I inquired has been, how did the Rastafarian movement sustain its existence without organizational strength? It was at this point that the question of organizational and doctrinal flexibility in the development of the movement was raised. This problem, in turn, lead me to examine the causes that prompted structural and perceptual versatility among the Rastafari.

Finally, the subject of my examination has been focussed on the issue of the role of cognitive liberation, the third variable, in the Rastafarian movement. The more, I hypothesized, a social movement develops its cognitive liberation the better it faces the intellectual challenges that it encounters and the more it perseveres. This hypothesis has been of great importance to the present study because it was here that I have found the most pivotal causes for the survival of the Rastafari in the absence of organizational strength as well as political opportunity. This inquiry further lead me to the problem of whether cognitive liberation is merely an intervening variable between structural strain and collective action. The answer has been in the negative. I found that cognitive liberation can be an important causal force in the survival of a movement. The language, life style, the form of informal discussion, and other ideational processes have played a significant role in maintaining the identity of the movement.

By and large, it is in the dynamics of the movement culture of the Rastafari that one finds the most important reason for its survival for more than six decades. The movement culture of the Rastafari has never been uni-dimensional, nor has it been static. With the passage of time the movement has expanded its horizon as well as expressed itself through different dimensions, including religion, language, music, and politics. The dynamics involved in the movement culture of the Rastafari, thus, can be

delineated into three aspects, namely, cognitive liberation, symbolic signifiers, and the politics of signification. Through its cognitive liberation the movement has defined its frame of reality; whereas its symbolic signifiers and its intense participation in the politics of signification has allowed the movement to define its boundary and defend itself in the face of adversaries respectively. Movement culture alone, however, is not responsible for the endurance of the Rastafari, cultural/historical contingencies and the deceteredness of the movement also have equally contributed to the survival of the movement. Hence a holistic approach could give us a better account of the Rastafarian movement endurance rather than merely relying on a single causal factor alone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In dealing with these research problems I have found it of paramount importance to set the stage. For this purpose I have dealt with the background information to the study in a separate chapter. The chapter is intended to highlight the basic features of the movement in order that in the chapters that follow the main focus is to deal with the issues of theory testing and construction. This chapter has been of significance in meeting the challenge of amalgamating the findings and conclusions of several sources of information. In dealing with this challenge I have followed the strategy of classifying the movement in accordance with the areas where it has made significant contributions. Consequently, in the discussion of the basic features of the Rastafari I have considered the movement as an organic whole within which multiple features exist. These salient characteristics as interdependent parts define the essence of the movement. For the sake of convenience and clarity each part has been examined unto itself, while at the same time bearing in mind that it is part of the larger whole.

There are four themes around which the nature of the Rastafarian movement has

revolved around. These themes include language, politics, music, and religion. The Rastafari originally arose as a religious movement with a central theme that Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the living God whose mission is to liberate black people in Africa as well as the diaspora. Gradually the Rastafarians developed a language of their own which, in their opinion, reflects the philosophy of their movement. Later as the movement gained a wider recognition it made a significant impact on the political culture of Jamaica. In the midst of all these processes, especially after the 1970s, was Reggae music which gave the movement plausibility both locally and internationally. Hence, the justification for having four themes (religion, politics, music and language) in the chapter that deals with the basic features of the Rastafarian movement.

SOURCES OF DATA

The study has been based on the analysis of primary and secondary data. The former included data made available mostly through the "movement intellectuals" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991) of the Rastafari, whereas the latter are information gathered by researchers. In these cases we have both firsthand/secondhand data and interpretations about the nature, origin, and development of the movement. The information gathered as a result has been of prime importance in examining the historical progression of the movement, delineating its basic features, and, above all else, in confirming/disconfirming the themes of the political process model with respect to movement development, as well as constructing new concepts suitable to the study of the Rastafari.

While deciding to utilize primary and secondary data, which involve non-interaction with the movement participants of the Rastafari, I have been, from the outset, aware of the disadvantages and advantages of the method. The advantages of utilizing

this research strategy could be classified as academic and nonacademic virtues. The latter is the most noticeable. It has to do with time and money. In terms of money expenditure, there is a marked difference between such a method and the methods involving participant observation and indepth interviews. The same holds true with regards to the amount of time required to collect data. Although time consuming the process of collecting data has been carried out in accordance with my schedule. The advantages and disadvantages of the sources in this study has to do with intellectual processes involved in any research. These are discussed in the following sections.

Primary Data

Primary data first and foremost included the works of the Rastafarians themselves. The works of Rastafarian movement intellectuals such as Leonard Howell, Ras Sameul Brown, Dennis Forsythe, Bob Marley, Maceda Lee, Maureen Rowe, and Imani M. Tafari-Ama, were extensively consulted. These movement intellectuals have played an important role in both articulating the basic features of the Rastafari as well as interpreting the movement itself from an insider's perspective. The advantages of consulting the works of these movement intellectuals of the Rastafari is obvious. In this case the information gathered is equivalent to those acquired as a result of indepth interview or participant observation. This is because in these cases the Rastafari have spoken for themselves profoundly.

The disadvantage of relying on the information of this group is that they do not necessarily reflect the views of the rank and file members. Besides the Rastafari is not a monolithic group. Interpretations of the central themes of the movement, as we shall see latter, differ across individuals as well as groups. The problem, however, was not so serious since they too were exercising epistemological individualism within the bounds of

the precepts of the movement. Rather their information has been of crucial importance in the undertaking of this study.

Secondary Data

The most important advantages of secondary analysis resided in what I have termed as academic virtues of the method. Secondary sources provided the fertile ground for a comparative analysis. Data from different sources were compared to yield a broader picture of the issues under investigation. In the case of the current research, secondary data analysis has been of great significance in capturing the multiple facets of the Rastafari. Since the researches have been conducted at different times the historical evolution of the movement was readily available. Also studies conducted at different levels of analysis provided the micro, meso, and macro dimensions of the movement. The advantage of the secondary analysis, by and large, lay in providing the fertile ground for synthesizing information. The effort to incorporate different information, in turn, provided clues for identifying new avenues of inquiry as well as formulating alternative concepts.

The disadvantages of secondary analysis lie in the absence of a medium of communication that exists between the primary and secondary researcher. The latter has no control over the biases of those who have carried out the primary research. This has to be considered seriously as data collection, analysis, and then conclusions made out of them are not paradigm-free. That is to say, these processes depend both on the peculiar perception, and ideological motives and inclinations of the researcher. The perspective and the purpose for which the research was originally intended may be inconsistent with the motives of the secondary researcher such as myself.

Not only the primary researcher, but the secondary researcher carries out his/her

study with definite motives and inclinations. With the latter the most challenging problem has been dealing with temptations in selecting data, findings, and conclusions that would confirm or disprove the working hypotheses at hand. Even those who are open-minded can not completely avoid conscious/unconscious temptations to select data which are in favor of their premises. Moreover, one of the factors mentioned as the virtues of secondary data analysis, viz, information integration, has its downside. The articles, books, and other relevant materials produced have been so vast that the secondary researcher encounters the problem of sifting together all the information available.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the examination of the Rastafarian social movement endurance data are derived both from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources largely involve the works of movement intellectuals of the Rastafari. Secondary sources are the researches carried by different scholars. These sources have been important in terms of delineating the different processes that the movement has passed through, the problems it encountered, and the mechanisms by which it withstood this problems. Utilizing such sources is not without its weaknesses. The views of the movement intellectuals don't necessarily reflect the views of the rank and file. On the other hand, the weakness of secondary sources is related to the biases of the authors.

Since one of the primary goal of this study has been theory testing the method of ideal type has proven to be important. This method involved comparing and contrasting the working assumptions derived from the political process model with that of the actual development of the Rastafari. Such a method has resulted in examining the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing the political process model. Almost a new perspective has emerged as a result. In order to facilitate this process I have presented background

information about the movement.

CHAPTER IV

THE RASTAFARIAN MOVEMENT

Social movement dynamics is gauged, among other things, by the ability of its participants to create their own movement culture. The Rastafarian movement is a triumphant collective action in this sense. The Rastafari have created their own movement culture which is multi-dimensional in its manifestations. It consists of music, religion, politics, and language. In this chapter I will discuss those aspects of the Rastafarian movement culture one at a time. This chapter is intended to give background information to the theoretical analysis and working hypotheses testing that I will undertake in the forthcoming chapters.

RELIGION

Religious perspective is among the facets that lies at the center stage in the world outlook of the Rastafari. Given the fact that, since the days of slavery, music and religion, as a medium of expression, have occupied an important place in the cultural repertoire of the Jamaican protest movements, (Barrett 1997, Chevannes 1994, Waters 1985) this is hardly surprising. What is most interesting about the Rastafarian religion is the audacity of its adherents to transcend the matrix of the socio-cultural and religious beliefs of Jamaican society and, on the basis of their personal and collective experiences, construct a novel theological system. Although this theology was not created from the scratch, its emergent qualities have demanded the intrepidity and ingeniousness of the Rastafarians.

Exogenous and Generative Features

The Rastafari as a genre of religious movement possesses what sociologists of religion call "exogenous" and "generative" features . Reflecting exogenous traits the Rastafari involves secular endeavors to change the social environment of its members.

In its efforts to carry out this task the movement has reinterpreted the course of history. The historical experience of black people in the diaspora is interpreted in the light of the new metaphysics of the movement. What emerges as a result is a historical consciousness that completes, what the Rastafari call, "the half untold story."

In addition to this emergent historical consciousness, this-worldliness is one of the salient features of the Rastafari that gives it a strong political flavor. Despite its reliance on the information available in the Bible, the diagnostic and prognostic dimensions of the movement are limited to this physical world. The Rastafari do not spin utopian thoughts that offer members satisfaction at the psychological plane alone. The subject of blame and the solutions offered by the movement are within the bounds of this physical world. What is more, the blue-print of the future society suggested by the Rastafari does not remain at a theoretical level. It finds its manifestation in the lively and creative life style of its movement participants. Hence, what the Rastafarians propound ought to be finds an expression in the subculture of their movement.

The generative aspects of the Rastafarian religion is visible in the innovate endeavors that movement participants of the Rastafari have shown in the process of deconstructing and constructing beliefs. This innovative side of the Rastafari finds expression, among other things, in its rejection of both African-derived as well Christian religions (Briener 1986). The latter is dismissed as a "sky-gazing" and "death-worshipping" religion which was intentionally utilized by those in power to subjugate and deflect the attention of black people from seeking their freedom. African-derived religions, such as Pukumania, on the other hand, are rejected on the ground that they are "decadent," and can not accommodate the emergent metaphysics of the Rastafari which is premised on practical consciousness. For instance, the Rastafari are against these religions because of their emphasis on possession rather than inspiration.

"Possession requires a voiding of personality to make way for the God Rastafarianism instead insists on the authoritative individuality of the prophet" (Briener 1986: 37).

Another important aspect of the Rastafari in which its generative aspect finds expression lies in its rejection of faith in favor of the discovering of truth (Owens 1976, Clarke 1994). Truth, according to the Rastafari, is not merely attained as a result of one's unmeditated, and uncritical acceptance of what is stated in a sacred book or promulgated by a minister, priest, or a guru. There are, for instance, according to the Rastafari, a number of statements in the Bible whose truth-value is subject to doubt. A classical example in this connection is one in Peter 2:18: "Servants be subject to your master with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward [crooked]." Truth, according to the Rastafari, unfolds itself within the individual as a result of personal experience, prolonged discussion with the brethren and sistern, and communications with God. Movement participants of the Rastafari, then, do not simply believe in what is offered to them by a charismatic figure. Here we see a marked difference between the Rastafari and established Christianity. Each Rastafarian is a prophet in his/her own right (Briener 1986). Unlike the latter which has declared that revelation is completed, with the Rastafari revelation is open-ended. This is a very important assertion as each member is believed to be an aspect of God, and the group as a collective is perceived to command the course of events rather than being conditioned by them. The Rastafari, accordingly, make a distinction between external and internal sources for their assertions (Clarke 1994). External sources are those that are exterior to the individual Rastafarian including written materials such as the Bible; internal sources, on the other hand, refer to the individual or group experience of the Rastafari.

Reincarnation

The Rastafarian idea of reincarnation is one of the areas wherein both external and internal sources are available in the justification of their doctrine. The Rastafarians believe that they are the reincarnation of the ancient tribes of Israel. In this sense blacks, not Jews, are the chosen people of God. The diaspora of Black people is explained in terms of their violation of the Law, the covenant they have broken. The information in the Bible is offered as an authentic external source for the blackness of Ancient Israelites. Solomon's first chapter of the Song of Songs 1:5-5;5:11 is proffered as an evidence: "I am black and comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black because the sun has looked upon me His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven." On the basis of this and other Biblical statements the Rastafarians conclude that Solomon and his ancestors are black.

Internal sources, however, are by far the most important ones. An internal source is "the book within" unearthed through the processes of meditation and reasoning (discussion) among the brethren and sistern themselves. This contention of the Rastafari shows that to be born black does not suffice to be a member of the Rastafari (Brown 1997). Rather to be a Rastafarian, through meditation and reasoning, one has to be in a position to transcend the "sky gazing" and "death worshipping" religion of Babylon. The Rastas believe that the self-understanding gained thereof coincides with the history of Jah people as chronicled in the Bible. According to the Rastafari, although it has undergone some modifications in the hands of oppressors, the Bible is the "purloined history of black people" (Waters 1985:47). If there is an incompatibility between the Bible and the truths discerned by the Rastafari it is not because the latter are amiss. It is rather because the information in the Bible has been deliberately embellished to foster

the interests of those groups who wanted to perpetuate slavery and its antecedent forms.

The Living God

Since black people have been redeemed of their sin, the Rastafarians contend, the time has come to return to where they belong. Hence, their interest in repatriation. The repatriation program is too big to be carried out by a historical figure. At the same time, it is a folly, the Rastafarians think, to expect an invisible, abstract, a God up there, to perform the miracles of repatriation. Since the Bible says that "I am God of the living," the Rastafarians found the Jesus of Sunday schools, a white God with blue eyes living in the sky, as sophistry, and unreasonable. Hence, the repatriation program is to be carried out under the auspice of the living God, a divine being who is less abstract and more visible to those who worship him; more exactly, a divine being who dwells among human beings. And this living God is HaileSelassie I of Ethiopia.

The Rastafarian concept of God had its origin in the prophecies of Marcus Garvey, John the Baptist of the Rastafari. The Rastafarian notion of God, however, differs from that of Garvey (Lewis 1993). Garvey was of the opinion that just as whites envision God as white there is no reason why blacks also can not perceive their God "through black spectacles". Garvey said "We Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the eternal God- God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the God of all time. This is the God in whom we believe, but we shall worship him through the spectacles of Ethiopia" (Garvey 1923/1969: 44). Garvey also spoke of the coronation of a black African king who would free blacks from the shackles of oppression. Before he left Jamaica for the United Kingdom Garvey is to have said: "Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black king; he shall be the Redeemer". Garvey, nonetheless, did not specifically mention by name who this king is, nor would he endorse the Rastafarian contention that Emperor HaileSelassie of Ethiopia fits his prophesy. Garvey was critical of the emperor. Robert L. Hill (1981), in

his study of the early Rastafarians, contends that it would be highly inconsistent for Garvey to suggest that an African king, such as HaileSelassie, would be the redeemer for the African diaspora.

In 1930, the difficult crisis period for the lower classes of Jamaica, Garvey's prophecy was believed to have come true when Ras Tafari Mekonen, the pre-coronation name of HaileSelassie (which means Power of Trinity in an Ethiopian language), tracing his line of kinship to Solomon and taking the title "King of Kings, Conquering Lion of Judah, Elect of God, Defendant of the Faith, 225th descendant of the dynasty born of the biblical loves of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon" became emperor of Ethiopia. Further proofs for the divinity of HaileSelassie were found in the Bible, especially in the fifth and nineteenth chapters of Revelation. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5: 2-50). The Rastafarians, having the Bible as their source, symbolize this living God as Jah.

Absurd as it may sound the Rastafarians contention of HaileSelassie as the living God is based on sound reasoning. The emperor might have been a despot. But these existential evidences miss the point that the Rastafari's belief is not based on a blind faith. The symbolic significance of the emperor is what is important. The search for a living God must be seen in the light of the existential situation of the Rastafari and its constituents. As Nettleford (1998: 320-321) noted HaileSelassie's "titles carry great significance for a people long deprived of self-esteem and a sense of self-worth." Indeed in the process of restoring black identity and pride the symbolic significance of a living God is highly important. The living God is not an absentee absolute power that has left the world to run in its own way. God is one among the living. In fact God and his people

are indistinguishable: every person is an aspect of God, or God resides in every person. Consequently, the living God as a symbol "evokes a dimension of sovereignty" (Johnson-Hill 1995:309).

Babylon/Zion

The idea of HaileSelassie as the living God presupposes the distinction between a negative space, Babylon, and a positive place, Zion. This dichotomy between Zion and Babylon occupies a central place in the religion of the Rastafari. To justify this distinction, among the Biblical references made by the Rastafari include: "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon The Great, The mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (Rev. 17:5). On the basis of this and other information believed to be pertinent to the issue, the Rastafari conclude that Babylon is the negative space where black people are captivated, where laws are made to conquer and humiliate human beings, the result of all of which is, as one Rastafarian put it, "uhhola confusion and chaos" (Faristzaddi 1987) in the world today. Only the destruction of Babylon in an apocalyptic fashion shall bring peace and love unto those who seek and deserve it.

Zion, on the other hand, represents that which is sacred and positive. In Zion all the problems of black people are overcome. Zion, therefore, is heaven; but heaven is not a transcendental reality, a world residing beyond this physical world. The Rastafarians are against the idea of heaven as "a pie in the sky". In accordance with this worldly view of heaven members of the movement contend that *Ithiopia*, the Rastafarian word for Ethiopia, is heaven, and Axum, an ancient city in Ethiopia, is the "New Jerusalem." Although the two worlds are irreconcilable, there is a possibility for a middle ground to appear as a result of the overlapping of the two zones. When this overlapping takes place the Rastafarians say the ground for "Buffer business" is paved (Yawney 1976:224). Buffer business is a process wherein the two contending parties, as

in the case of politics, enter into some kind of agreement involving an act of deception. Buffer business breads nothing but buffer pollution, contamination in every realm of social life.

Given the fact that the Rastafarians exist under the Babylonian system, how is entering Zion made possible? There are two possibilities, according to the Rastafari. The first one involves physical repatriation to Ethiopia/Africa, a process preceded by Armageddon, which, according to the Rastafari, is an inevitable catastrophe. Only with the destruction of the decadent system comes the salvation of the chosen peoples of God, the true Israelites, the King of Kings people, the original name the Rastafari gave to themselves.

The second involves mental repatriation. This is carried out through the processes of reasoning and meditation. Mediating in this intellectual and religious ritual is smoking ganja (the holy herb, marijuana), considered by the Rastafari as a healing practice. Babylon is so seductive that it entraps the mind in the chains of enslavement. Hence, freeing oneself from this mental entrapment is occasioned when the mind's eye becomes open through "black light" (revelation). The smoking of the holy herb paves the ground for the mind to cleanse itself from the state of pollution (spiritual darkness) and allows one to partake in the world of Zion. Ganja smoking, thus, facilitates the transcending of Babylon's boundaries and the apprehending of new possibilities" (Edmonds 1998:355). The justifications for the sacramental traits of ganja are also based on Biblical grounds: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth" (Psalms 104:14). The Rastafarians consider the sacramental use of the holy herb comparable to that of the Christian communion cup (Owens 1976) Ganja smoking, thus, is carried out for the healing of the nation (Forsythe 1995). This and other views collectively find an

expression in their concept of "livity."

Livity

Before the Rastafari embark on Ethiopia, they believe that they have to start living in accordance with the future philosophy which they call *livity*. Livity is the way of life of the Rastafari. This way of life transcends the inconsistency that human beings in the Western world have set up between themselves and the rest of nature. The Rastafarians prefer to live by the philosophy of "living in the dust" (Clarke 1994) which involves respecting and honoring the laws of nature rather than the desperate endeavor of subduing them. The attempt to control and master nature on the part of the Western man is responsible for most of the social problems that the world experiences today. It also has created a philosophy and weapons that will end up in the annihilation of the world. Furthermore, to live by the dictums of the Western world is to acknowledge a life style where the artificial has become the real, and people are nothing but the prisoners of unnatural desires and ambitions.

One of the areas livity manifests itself among the Rastafari is in their dietary rules, where natural/organic food is preferred to processed food. Every Rastafarian is the temple of God and what he or she does with regard to his/her dietary habits either amounts to defiling the body or respecting it. This rule is vividly stated in the Bible: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelth in you? If any man defile the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (Corinthians 16-17). The Rastas, accordingly, abstain from meat, salt and alcoholic beverages. Meat is avoided because the slaughtering and killing of animals is believed to be barbaric and induces aggressive traits that are part of the Babylonian mind-set. Alcoholic beverages, as stated in the Bible (Proverbs 41:4-6), do not only pervert judgment, but they deflect ones attention from the enlightening consequences of using the holy herb. Salt is avoided

because that which is natural should be eaten as it is without any form of seasoning.

An important aspect of livity and by which the Rastafari are easily identified are dreadlocks. Dread locks, tangled hair, are the prime facie appearance of the Rastafari by which they are easily typified by outsiders. Wearing dreadlocks involves living naturally. What grows naturally should be left to take its natural course. Also religious reasons are offered to justify the wearing of locks. In this connection among the oft cited Biblical statements is Numbers 6:5: "All the days of the vows of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in which he separates himself unto the lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow" (Numbers 6:5). Just as Samson had his power in his hair dreadlocks with the Rastafari are emblematic of their power against Babylon. Dreadlocks also symbolize the mane of the lion. There are reports that both in Jamaica and Guyana Rastafarians have tried to act out the role of Daniel in the lion's den, as a result of which some have been killed (Forsythe 1995:114-115).

LANGUAGE

Social movements, particularly the radical ones, are known for their profound impact on the social and cultural system of the societies within which they exist. Languages are not an exception to this rule. Great revolutions, like the French Revolution (Alleyne 1989), have made a tremendous impact on the evolution of languages. Words of the ancient regime fail to convey the direction and intent of a new social order envisioned in the philosophy of a social movement. Hence, by deconstructing the language of the establishment new words are introduced that contest against existing frame of reality. The emergent vernacular of the Rastafari appropriately fits this description. The Rastafarian position on language is premised on the assumption that language falls short of being merely a medium of communication.

Language is not neutral to the parties using it. Every language is the language of a defined social group.

Dread Talk

On the basis of such a presumption, the Rastafarian movement has made a significant contribution to the Jamaican speech situation. The Rastafarians have concocted a unique vernacular variously known as "Dread Talk", "Iyaric language", "the Emperor's language", "Soul language", and "lance". The language is deliberately constructed to resonate with the religious, political, cultural, and philosophical assumptions of the movement. As Nettleford (1976: ix) has pointed out the Rastafari "are inventing a language, using existing elements to be sure, but creating a means of communication that would faithfully reflect the specifics of their experience and perception of self, life and the world."

In the light of the aforementioned relationship between social movements and culture the fact that the Rastafari have come up with a new language congruent with the values of their movement should not come as a surprise. The concoction of a new language by the Rastafarians can be interpreted as part of their symbolic resistance against what they believe is the provenance of domination. By "refining" the Jamaican Creole, the Rastafari have used their language as an instrument of protest. The movement participants of the Rastafari have every reason in acting accordingly. To speak the language of the status quo is to accept submission, and to empower the dominant social groups. The vice versa holds true when one speaks soul language. To be endowed with soul language means to reassert one's dignity and to defy the power of the establishment.

Lexical Expansion

Interestingly enough, the modification undertaken by the Rastafari takes place in

the realm of lexicon, where the superstrate language (standard English) has exercised its greatest dominance. The language of the Rastafari, therefore, is not entirely new. Its development is closely knit with the Jamaican Creole language. As Velma Polard (1980: 320) has indicated Dread Talk, which falls in the middle of Jamaican Creole/standard English continuum, "is an example of lexical expansion within a Creole system." This expansion manifests itself in three dimensions.

Alsopp (1980) has categorized the three modifications made by the Rastafari as morphological, lexical, and semantic. Morphological adjustments are phono-semantic modifications that would make the word to be consistent with their functional meaning. Examples include *ublin* (u+ blind = university and all the people there); *blainjaret* (blind + garet = cigarette); *ovastand* (over+stand = understand). Lexical adjustments involve reconstructions in what are known as "I-words" (Nettleford 1978:201). There are two sub-categories here, involving pronominal function and initial consonant replacements. In the pronominal function the Jamaican Creole "me" is replaced by "I". For instance *I-n-I* means you and me. However, as we shall see later, the implications of this replacement "are far more extensive than the simple SJE [standard Jamaican English] pronoun 'I' could ever bear" (Alsopp 1980: 36). Finally, with initial consonant replacements the initial syllable of certain words is replaced by "I" to denote positive function. Examples include *Isearch* (research), *Ilekt* (select), *Imanz* (demand), *Ikelararion* (declaration). Chevannes (1994:1) cites an interesting poem by Joe Rugless in which the poet expresses the Rastafarian relish for repatriation and renunciation of the Jamaican political system:

"Jamaica is islan',
but is no Ilan"

Translated in lay terms this means that Jamaica is an island, but it is not the land of the "I", that is, the Rastafari.

Reconstructing Language

The Rastafari, as the aforesaid observations indicate, did not invent a new language, but they refined the Jamaican Creole language so that it becomes more congruent with their belief system. This process therefore does not merely involve the process of "recreolization" (Edwards 1986), an act by which a group of people prefer to use the Creole language of their ancestors rather than decide to imitate the language granted a lofty status. The Rastafari are also interested in reconstructing the English language rather than merely recreolizing it, although the latter has an important place in the making of Soul language. The incompatibility that exists between the signifier and the signified aspects of many English words is what, according to the Rastafari, needs circumspection.

This incompatibility manifests itself into two ways, that is, in the structure and sound of words. Words like "wisdom" contain a negative sound which is inconsistent with their meaning. The word wisdom when fractured sounds *wise-dumb*; hence it is replaced by *wizzy* or simply wise. On the other hand, the structure of words like "understand" consist of two syllables which together fail to convey the exact meaning of the word. "Understanding" is an act of enlightenment which involves an uplifting process, the word under, accordingly, is not in its right place. Hence the Rastafarian word *overstand*.

Word, Sound, and Power

All these attempts on the part of the Rastafarians to create compatibility between the signifier and the signified in the English language finds expression in the motto "WORD, SOUND, and POWER," a trinity. According to this slogan words are the ultimate expression of power. Words are, thus, simultaneously sound and power. Words are not sound merely because they are related to the sense of hearing, but also

because they are capable of creating delightful sensations. Words also assert their power by creating emotional reactions including fear, anger, or submission (Chevannes 1994: 227). By speaking soul language, thus, every member is endowed with a new sense of identity that allows him/her to transcend the mode of thinking that has conquered the minds of black people in the diaspora. This supersession is depicted by the term *positive vibration*.

Following the metaphor of positive vibration all terms denoting a retrogressive movement are cast off. Among the words that are incompatible with the positive philosophy of the Rastafari is the word "back." The word back has a negative connotation both in the spatial and temporal sense of the term. Since "creation is an axis forever revolving onwards" (Faristzaddi 1987), the Rastas contend that the word back needs to be supplanted by the word "forward". Referring to the movement to Ethiopia a Rastafarian would prefer to say "*I-n-I* shall go forward to *Ithiopia*" rather than "We shall go back to Ethiopia." Chevannes (1994: 169) notes how a group of Rastafarians reacted to a speech made by a senior official who used the expression "go back to our history." Although the idea resonates with the Rastafarian philosophy, the expression was flawed because of its incompatibility with the lexicon of the movement. The appropriate expression would be "go forward to *I-n-I* history," for enlightenment of "the untold history of black people" is a positive process rather than a retrogressive move.

Afro-centrism

In accordance with the philosophy of positive vibration many of the words in soul language are aimed at the ennoblement of Africa and things African. Nonetheless, in spite of insatiable interest in things Ethiopian and African in general very few words of African origin are part of the Rastafari lexicon (Roberts 1988). This should come as no surprise as the exposure of the Rastafari to African culture and language is limited by,

among other things, geographical distance.

Yet the Rastafarians exert a good deal of effort to learn African languages, especially Amharic - the official language of Ethiopia. Amharic is believed to be the original language used in writing the Bible. Amharic words are either incorporated into soul language directly or, in most cases, in a remodelled form. For instance, the Amharic expression *Satta massagana* which means "Give Thanks" is incorporated in Soul language. Other remodelled Amharic names include *I-yammie* (sun) and *Iyahyacca* (moon) (Hommiac 1994: 165). Rastafarians also adopt Amharic names, such as *Negus*, *Berhan*, to denote their conversion to the new religion. Hutton and Murrell (1998:50) note the psychological importance of African names thus: "What is most important about African names is the psychological identity and black consciousness that they inspire in diaspora Africans, and in Rastafarians in particular, as they identify themselves with African nobility, strength, endurance, deities, and resistance."

Collective Identity

Soul language does not only allow the Rastafari to define their reality, it also acts as a means to demarcate their boundary. By speaking soul language the Rastafarians set up a distinction between themselves and the rest of society. Hence, soul language is not only a medium of communication among the Rastas, but it is also one of the ways by which they as a cohesive group differentiate themselves from the rest of society. In this sense, Dread Talk is an ingroup dialect which distinguishes them from other outgroups.

Nonetheless, soul language is not meant as the language of exclusion, that is, a language of sequestration intended to safeguard the interest of a prerogative group of people. As the language of freedom it is by no means confined within the selected few. Nor is it intended to carry out a clandestine operation. As Alleyne (1989) said soul language is a universal language. Hence, Rasta language has double features. On one

hand, as a universal language it is available to those who need to cleanse their mind from "false consciousness", or free their minds from mental and spiritual entrapment. On the other hand, just as members of an ingroup normally use symbols such as names, slogans, dress, or badges to identify themselves so the Rastafari are distinguishable from outgroups by their lyrical language. In most cases it may be possible to identify Rastafarians by their appearance, particularly through their dreadlocks, yet in the absence of this mark they could be identified by their unique mode of communication (Owens 1976). The internalization of the lyrical language shows the degree of commitment on the part of the followers of the movement.

MUSIC

Rastafari is very much associated with Reggae music. Reggae is a specific genre of popular music which asserted itself in the late 1960s in Jamaica, a country with the highest per capita output of records in the world (Manuel 1995). For this reason Jamaica is reputed to be "the loudest island in the world" (Salter 1994: 521). Although it is very much associated with the ethos of the Rastafarians, Reggae is Jamaica's contribution to world music repertoire. Hence, Reggae is a "place-specific music" (Carney 1994) in its origin, but a global music in its impact. Reggae is also global in the musical triangulation sense of the word, for it is a synthesis of both local and international musical elements.

The importance of Reggae music to the movement has manifested in three ways. First, the ethos of the Rastafarian movement has become much more accessible to the public, more than any other medium of expression, via Reggae music. The harmonious synthesis of sound and protest lyrics in the music has invigorated the message of the movement. Second, Reggae music has been not only the conduit through which the philosophy of the Rastafari diffused, but it has also been one of the ways by which the

Rastafarians have voiced their protest. Reggae music in this case is one of the manifestations of resistance through rituals. Third, Reggae music has played an important role in the identity formation of the Rastafari. Reggae music has served as a centripetal force which has acted as a cement in holding together the constituents of the Rastafari.

The Roots

Reggae began in the late 1960s, but its emergence was not abrupt. This new style of music, like other forms of music, was the product of long evolutionary process. The description of this process helps us to understand both the factors that have contributed to its development as well as its nature in contrast to other genres of Jamaican music. The roots of Reggae music can be traced back to the arrival of Africans to the Caribbean. Although slaves were not in a position to retain their African customs and beliefs in toto, they were active enough to fill the "cultural vacuum" (Johnson & Pines 1982) created by slavery. Since the preservation of African culture has been affected by several historical processes, speaking of the roots of Reggae in Africa, we have to look for those general elements, rather than particularities, that have found their way in Reggae music. General features of African music that have prevailed in Jamaican as well as in Caribbean music are collective participation, emphasis on rhythm, and vocal call-and-response singing style (Manuel 1995: 6-7).

Given this scenario one thinks of the ways by which the preservation of the aforementioned elements of African music is made possible. Often in this process of transmission social groups act as carriers of culture. The famous Maroons of Jamaica, a group of runaway slaves who settled in the mountainous region of the country, appropriately fit this description. As a result of their vehement resistance against British colonial rule the Maroons were in a position to set up their own autonomous

communities. This autonomy in turn enabled them to preserve African culture in general and songs and dances in particular. One area in which the retention of the elements of African music by the Maroons is made possible is through religious music. This is understandable as religious music tends to be more conservative in terms of retaining musical style and content (Manuel 1995). The elements of African religion among the Maroons were retained in the form of ritual ceremony in which spiritual and physical healing is the main focus. Relevant to the case under discussion is the case of Kumina, the dance form that accompanies Myal ceremony.

Mento, Ska, and Rocksteady

The influence of the African elements has a repercussion on the different popular musical expressions of Jamaica, including Mento, Ska and Rocksteady. These are the three waves of indigenous Jamaican popular music that preceded Reggae.

Mento directly descended from the music and dance of slaves. This musical style originated in the late 19th century as a result of the amalgamation of European social dance music and African derived stylistic features (Bilby 1995, Johnson & Pines 1982). The influence of Latin American music especially calypso is also visible. Despite these different influences, however, Mento is basically a traditional Jamaican folk music. Mento was predominantly the music of rural dwellers "performed by ensembles consisting of little more than a harmonic and few percussion instruments, by rural string bands featuring banjo and guitar, or even by large orchestras that included piano, trap drums, and a brass section" (Bilby 1995:153). Mento was brought to Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, when a large number of people migrated to the urban areas between 1940 and 1960. The migrants, accordingly, brought with them the drum rhythms of mento and Afro-Christian religious cults to the urban center (Robinson et al 1991). These developments had an impact on the latter appearing popular music, Reggae,

although, as we shall see later, Reggae is more satirical and political than mento.

The second wave of Jamaican popular music that had an influence on Reggae was Ska. Ska originated in the 1950s. Ska truly reflects what musicologists call "cross-fertilization". This style of music derives its origin from different backgrounds including Mento, American jazz, Blues, and R & B. Ska came into being largely as a result of the process of modification that Jamaican studio musicians carried out with regard to R & B.

Although Ska was mostly music meant for entertainment, like Reggae music that emerged later, it also dealt with social commentary. The fact that most of the Ska artists came out of the ghetto experience, did mean that their popular songs were about burning issues like poverty, oppression, unemployment and so on. This social commentary is more pronounced in another indigenous Jamaican popular music which came into being in the mid 1960s, viz, Rock Steady. Rock Steady is more relaxed in its tempo than ska (Mulvaney 1990). Yet this form of music, although unique with regard to social commentary, is similar to Ska in its rhythm.

Reggae

From the foregoing discussion we can see that Mento, Ska, and Rock Steady were the expressions of Jamaica's cultural identity. This expression further finds its most vivid manifestation with Reggae music. Speaking of this music Mulvaney (1986:117) states that Jamaica's "continued struggle for racial, cultural, and national identity amidst contemporary and interrelated problems of class, race, and poverty has found no voice louder than that of the Rastas and their reggae music."

The importance of Reggae, however, is not confined within the domain of Jamaica. Originally, Reggae was a place-specific music performed in and around the capital, Kingston. Over the years, due to its melody and its social commentary about every form of hegemony which relegates certain groups of people to a second class

citizenship, Reggae has become a global music appreciated by peoples of different colors. Reggae in this sense is a "notable addition to the expanding repertoire of transnational popular culture" (Savishinsky 1994: 260). Reggae is a global music not only because of its impact internationally, but also because of its background, that it is a synthesis of different musical elements. Incorporated in Reggae music are Afro-Jamaican and Afro-American Jazz/R & B musical features (Johnson and Pine 1986). Perhaps this is one of the most important reasons why the music has attracted the attention of people in different corners of the world. In this regard the role of the prominent Reggae singer, Bob Marley, is worth describing.

Bob Marley

Bob Marley was one of the most prominent "movement-intellectuals" of the Rastafari, and he is aptly described by the adherents of the movement as the true "Rasta Prophet," while others have called him "the first Third World superstar," and a "revolutionary artist." Bob Marley was born in 1947 in the parish of St. Ann of rural Jamaica. Interestingly enough, this was the same place where Marcus Garvey, considered by the Rastafari as their intellectual predecessor, was born. Marley's mother, Cedella Booker, is a Jamaican African, and his father, whom his son never met, was a major in the British Army. Although Marley was born in rural Jamaica he spent most of his teenage and adult life in Trench town, Kingston, the capital of Jamaica.

Before Marley became a Reggae superstar he had to pass through different apprenticeship. First, like other singers he served as "reggae apprenticeship" (Hebdige 1987: 78), including "cutting a few forgotten r&b records for a local producer". Later his situation became different when he met influential figures like Desmond Dekker, Joe Higgs and Mortimer Planno who introduced him to the Rasta philosophy as well as encouraged him in the cultivation of his talent. The result of Bob's effort were recordings

including "Judge Not" and "One Cup of Coffee". Marley's true talent began to materialize with the formation of Bob Marley & the Wailers in 1964. Included in this group were Peter Mackintosh and Bunny Livingston, who later came to be known as Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer respectively. During this time the Wailers recorded a couple of tracks. The band, however, was short lived because of factors pertaining to financial problems. And Marley left Jamaica to join his mother in the United States as a result of which he missed an important event in the history of the Rastafari, the visit of emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

In 1968 the Wailers regrouped themselves. Soon after, the band gained reputation both in Jamaica and the Caribbean. The most important reason for this success, especially in Jamaica, was the fact that the Wailers identified with the life-world of the Jamaican youth in particular and the oppressed in general. The themes at the center of their songs were violence, poverty, and oppression. Albums like "One Love", "Love and Affection," "Jailhouse Keeps Empty," and "Rude Boy Ska" were created along this line (Clarke 1980: 100). Furthermore, the Wailers identified with the rebelliousness of the youth by portraying the "Rude boys" image. Rude boys "were young men who gave voice to their disaffection, establishing reputation for ruthlessly defending their corner, and hustling their way to their next meal or dance entrance fee" (Salter 1994: 525). With growing success, the Wailers cast off the Rude Boys image.

In 1972 the Wailers signed a contract with Island Records. This move represented a leap forward in the development of Reggae music. The event was dramatic in terms of especially internationalizing Reggae. The access to better musical technology and the treatment of the Wailers as an important group elevated the music to a higher status. This in turn paved the ground for the multifaceted Reggae to find true expression. Hence, the transformation of Reggae from place-specific to global music.

The audience of Reggae, accordingly, became a non-monolithic group. Rather it, partly because of "across the board condemnation of 'de downpressers'[oppressors]" (Jacobson, 1995: 48), attracted almost all peoples of color. All these crystallized in the first album of the Wailers, "Catch A Fire." This success was followed by an international tour to Europe, the United States, and Africa. The success of the Wailers, however, was aborted when Bob Marley because of cancer died tragically at the age of 36.

Reggae Lyrics

One of the most important contributions of Marley is writing lyrics that reflect the philosophy of Rastafarian movement. The lyrics of Reggae music are primarily characterized by social and political commentaries. Originally, Reggae reflected the socio-economic problems of "rude boys" (Boxill 1994), a group of youngsters who developed their sub-culture as a result of their dissatisfaction against the Jamaican establishment. "Jail House" was one of the songs that aptly reflected the life-world of this group of people:

Jail house keeps empty
Rudie gets healthy
Baton sticks get shorter
Rudie gets taller

Can't fight against the youth
('Cause it's wrong)
Can't fight against the youth, now
('Cause it's strong)

Them people a-going wild
Dem a rude, rude people
The message: we gonna rule this land!
"Jail House"

"I Shot the Sheriff," a song first written by Bob Marley but later made famous by Eric Clapton, is more sophisticated than the previous one. Because of the symbolism of disobedience against any form of establishment, it attracted both black as well as white

artists including Mick Jagger, John Lennon and others who identified with the counterculture movement (Campbell 1987). Reggae lyrics also tell the dehumanization process that African people experienced during slavery. The reconstruction of the days of slavery is reflected in the songs entitled "Catch a Fire" and "Redemption Song." Their lyrics read thus:

"Slave Driver, the table is turning,
Catch a fire so you can get burn...
Every time I hear the crack of the whip
My blood runs cold
I remember on the slave ship
How they brutalized my very soul.
They say that we are free
The only thing that change is poverty,
Good God I think illiteracy
Is only a machine to make money."
"Catch A Fire"

Old pirates yes they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I from the
Bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation triumphantly.
All I ever had is songs of freedom
Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom
Cause all I ever had redemption songs, redemption songs.
(Redemption Song," Uprising, Bob Marley and the Wailers)

Reggae lyrics do not merely describe what has happened in the distant past but they also tell the mechanisms by which blacks may extricate themselves from the vagaries of slavery and colonialism. "Get Up Stand Up" is one of the remarkable songs that have played an important role in the consciousness-raising process. This song motivates the oppressed peoples of the world to fight for their rights. The themes of Reggae, thus, although originating from the life-world of the Jamaican "sufferers", in accordance with the true nature of music, transcends boundary. Above all else and true to its origin, Reggae was also instrumental in defending the ethos of Rastafari under

circumstances unfavorable to the movement. When Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia died in 1974, Marley reacted to the news in his song entitled "Jah Lives":

Selasie lives! Jah Jah lives, children!
Jah lives! Jah-Jah lives!
Fools sayin' in dere heart,
Rasta yar God is dead
But I&I know ever more
Dreaded shall be dreaded and dread...
The truth is an offense but not a sin!
Is he laugh last, is he who win!
Is a foolish dog barks at a flying bird!
One sheep must learn to respect the shepherd!
Jah lives! Selasie lives, chill-drannn!
Jah lives! Jah lives!
("Jah Lives")

Reggae and Politics

This social commentary of Reggae was so powerful that the Rastafarian movement was slowly but surely gaining prominence in Jamaican society. The impact of the movement and Reggae music especially was visible on the political culture of Jamaica. The strength of the movement, in other words, resulted from the growing importance of its medium of articulation. Reggae, was transformed, so to speak, from a second class to a first class Jamaican social phenomenon. The 1972 election in Jamaica testifies this point. Michael Manley's, the leader of the People's National Party (PNP), landslide victory during this election was due to the mobilization of the people on the basis of Rastafarian ethos and music (Waters 1985). When the Rastafarians were later dissatisfied by the policies of Manley, they denounced the half-hearted commitment of the PNP leader to the cause of the people in songs like "No Joshua No":

"You took them out of bondage
And they thank you for it,
You snag them songs of love
And they tried to sing with it;
But now in the desert,
Tired, Battered and Bruised,
They think they are forsaken

They think they have been used.
Rasta is watching and blaming you,
Since you are my friend Joshua
I want you to forward and start anew."

Ragga

Reggae, despite its cultural and political impact on Jamaican society, is being complemented by another form of music. By the end of the 1980s, a new musical development, deviating from Reggae both in terms of its content as well as its form, has asserted itself. This new musical style known as "Dancehall deejay music," "Raggamafin," or shortly "Ragga." Ragga, in contrast, to Reggae tends to be more local-oriented and relies more on techno-music (Chude-Sokei 1994). Ragga, however, like Reggae has a long history although its prominence was recent. Ragga's origin dates back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when "toasting," an art form resembling rapping, was underway. Again, although this new genre is based on digital music, its style is derived from the local music of Jamaica.

Ragga, just as Reggae was originally the music of "rude boys," is the music of the new "generation of sufferers" (Manuel 1995). As Half Pint, the Ragga singer, pointed out, "Raggamuffin [is] a youth who grow up outside where him can stand the weather and no havin' no flu, him can stand a pain, him can endure" (Quoted in Manuel 1995: 174). Yet the theme of Ragga is markedly different from Reggae. With Ragga the pan-African discourse prevalent in Reggae are replaced by themes that exclusively pertain to the "specific cultural history" of Jamaica (Chude-Sokei 1994:80).

POLITICS

The politics of the Rastafari is apolitical in form. The Rastafarians are noted for the lukewarm interest they have shown towards Jamaican politics. This political stoicism emanates partly from their stance that there is no political space in Jamaica that would

allow the reinvigoration of the submerged heritage of black people. Jamaica has failed in this sense. The Rastafarians, accordingly, believe that the emancipation of black people can only be possible by going beyond Jamaican body politic, both intellectually as well as physically.

Repatriation

The Rastafarians view of politics begins with the interpretation of slavery, for the understanding of the beginning provides a solid foundation for the understanding of the present as well as the future. According to the Rastafari, slavery is not abolished. True, the chains of slavery are not immediately apparent; yet they have not become a bygone. For those of us who wonder "how?", the Rastafarians respond by saying that they are dissolved and have transformed themselves into the form of *Caesar*, the Rastafarian word for money. Now slavery goes by a new name, poverty. Those who are chained by poverty are those who lack *Caesar*, because if you do not have money you are indirectly chained by it (Yawney 1976). The Rastafarian philosophy of repatriation partly stems from this observation.

In this case the influence of Marcus Garvey (Barrett 1997: 65-67) is obvious. Yet despite the back to Africa orientation that the Rastafari inherited from Garveyism here we see a marked difference between Rastafarian politics and the political thoughts of Garvey. Although Garvey was the pioneer of repatriation, his philosophy had a room for that kind of capitalism geared towards ameliorating the economic status of blacks. Garvey "avoided offending the Brown and White minorities, and even deferred to the Anglophilia of his society by accepting as given that 'British Justice' and 'Hyde Park' were standards worthy of emulation" (Waters 1985: 39). Although, like Garvey, the Rastafarians believe in self-reliance they were vehemently opposed to "Negro capitalism" (Lewis 1993: 5). The Rastafarians are, thus, hardly interested in finding a middle ground

between black nationalism and capitalistic economic development. Capitalism is rejected in toto. Attempts to reform capitalism by means of piecemeal strategy are not of interest to the adherents of the movement. On the basis of this stance the Rastafarians refrained from participating in the 1938 workers' collective actions "for union representation and governmental regulation of labor abuses" (Lewis 1993: 5).

It was this radical stance that led to a negative reaction against the Rastafari. This negative reaction was bold in the early stages of the movement. "When the early Rasta leaders like Leonard Howell, Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley returned to Jamaica soon after the beginning of the 1929 Depression, their demands were met by disciplinary institutions, the prison and the insane asylum, as well as by a dominant pattern of perceptions which could imprison them even more effectively" (Hoenisch 1988:442). The Rastafari, however, did not find it surprising that their movement has been under heavy scrutiny by the authorities. They were convinced that their metaphysics is by all means at variance with the vested interest of the Babylonian system represented by Jamaican authorities. Accordingly, the Rastafarians consider themselves as "strangers in a strange land." For this reason the Rastafari believe that it is contradictory in terms to participate in Jamaican politics .

Once repatriation to Ethiopia/Africa is accomplished there is another task awaiting the Rastafari, for repatriation is not a one time process. Upon arrival to Ethiopia/Africa the next task to be carried out would be to reconstruct African society on the basis of the new metaphysics of the Rastafari. For, present day Africa has been affected by the intervention of Europeans. Cleansing Africa in accordance with spiritual principles will be the task set before the repatriated Rastafari in collaboration with the African people. One thing is clear about the future reconstruction of Africa. Rastafarians are not interested in setting up a "material kingdom" (Owens 1974:230). The new world

of the Rastafari will be based on the Rastafarian theocracy wherein spirituality and the ethos of livity reign supreme.

Politics by Other Means

Another important reason for the Rastafari's lack of interest in Jamaican political affairs emanates from their stance about the nature of politics itself. Politics, according to the Rastafari, is "politricks." Politics is not possible without one deciding to use tricks to maneuver the disadvantaged. To be a politician and to be righteous are at variance with one another, even if the intentions of a politician are noble. According to Rastafarians politics is nasty and has a contaminating effect. If you join the nasty-minded, the Rasta contention goes, you will be polluted by the filthy processes that the world of politics entails. What is more, politics, as the name itself suggests (poli+ticks), the Rastafari argue, is the work of those who live at the expense of the people; politicians are like ticks. The Rastafari challenge anyone who consider their disinterest in politics as a sign of apathy with the question: why would a person participate in such a frivolous act as politics? Politics is, thus, to be shunned, and not to be condoned.

Ironically, this view of politics on the part of the Rastafari is what defines the substance of their politics. True, the political stoicism of the Rastafari with respect to the politics of Jamaica gives the movement the semblance of escapism. Deep down blow, however, we see that this stance of the Rastafari is politics by other means. To reject Jamaican politics by itself is a political stance, a political stance of a radical nature, for it completely rebuffs the substance and the basis of what it rejects.

Hence, one should not be misled in classifying the movement as wholly religious because of the lack of interest in Jamaican politics that the Rastafari have shown. Even as a religious movement the Rastafari, as mentioned earlier, is a generative movement, a collective action primarily interested in uplifting the political, economic, and cultural

status of blacks in particular and the oppressed in general. Although religious imagery is used in the critique of the system the present-orientedness of the Rastafari places it within the realm of politics. Justice is not sought after life, but here in this part of the world. What we have here is the close affiliation of religion and politics in its ultimate form. Clearly, with the Rastafari religion is politics by other means.

Historical and Existential Roots

The political nature of the Rastafari becomes even much more clearer when we examine its historical and existential roots. The movement is a reaction to "the inequity of 'economic freedom,' the injustices of ethnic advantage, and the hypocrisy of symbolic democracy" (Waters 1985: 311) that has prevailed in Jamaica for many centuries. What has come out of this critique of "economic rapacity" (Edmonds 1998:26) is the stance of the Rastafari with regard to what is best to Jamaica. This stance of the Rastafari clearly shows its political dimension. Since its independence two frames of reality have been competing for dominance in the political economy of Jamaica; the view that defends subsistence economies of the localized communities on one hand, and the perspective that opts for capitalist enterprise on the other (Lewis 1993:65-73). Upholding the former perspective, the Rastafari pose a major problem to the state and its allies who saw capitalism as a way out to the problems of Jamaica. The Rastafarian frame, among other things, creates a "'micro physics' of power" (Hoenisch 1988: 446) which would place in jeopardy the venture of the state to centralize. The Rastafari are interested in an egalitarian and decentralized system creates uneasiness on the part of those groups who favor the Western way. By all intents and purposes, the Rastafarian critique of politics and economic development, thus, contradicts the efforts of the state to "modernize" Jamaica in accordance with the ethos of capitalism.

The Rastafarian conception of repatriation also contradicts the efforts of the state

to realize its national motto of "One out of many". The concept of repatriation lays bare of the contradiction in this motto. To be more exact it exposes "the myth of harmonious multiculturalism" (Waters 1985: 306). In deed had the numerical majority been in a position to possess an effective power the idea of seeking another homeland would have been superfluous. Besides the motto is premised on the fundamentals of assimilation in which the blending of all cultures is supposed to take place. But assimilation entails that one of the cultures be taken as a standard and the rest are forced to be bygones. The blending of cultures amounts to the acceptance of one standard, a standard which relegates the culture of the majority to a secondary status. Hence, the motto gives lip service to the problem rather than trying to solve it.

Political Participation

All movement intellectuals of the Rastafari have not equally shunned Jamaican politics. Some were interested in the politics of Jamaica for the purposes of altering the living standards of the subaltern. Sam Brown, a poet-politician whose mother was a Garvite, was such a person. Radically departing from the Rastafarian stance of abstaining from politics, Brown participated in the 1961 election campaign. He was the first Rastafarian to enter the realm of politics. His platform was based on his "Twenty One Points" (Barrett 1997: 148-150). The central theme of these twenty one points was to work "for the recovery of the dignity, and self-respect and Sovereignty of Black people of Jamaica". Brown was against all forms of oppression including those that come from black persons. According to him "if a man be as Black as night, his colour is in our estimation of no avail if he is an oppressor and destroyer of his people." In many respects Brown's views resemble the ideas of the Black Power Movement that later asserted itself in the United States (Barrett 1997). Despite his good intentions, however, Brown, like Garvey before him, utterly failed in his endeavor to be a member of

parliament. He received less than 100 votes. Later, on July 12, 1966 the Back-O-Wall area where Sam Brown's office was stationed was destroyed. Brown himself was arrested.

Five years after Brown failed to get a seat in the Jamaican parliament, an important event that encouraged Rastafarians to participate in Jamaican politics took place, emperor HaileSelassie's four day state visit to Jamaica, April 25-28, 1966. About hundred thousand, out of which more than ten thousand were Rastas, were assembled for the occasion. The day was marked by a heavy rain, but the Rastafarians had predicted that the rain would stop up on the arrival of their living God. And "miraculously" when the Ethiopian airlines jet carrying the emperor arrived at the Kingston international airport the rain stopped!

The ecstasy created by the occasion was so high that the emperor is reported to have cried. After the Emperor stayed in his plane for almost half an hour Martimmo Planno, a Rastafarian who visited Ethiopia in 1961 and later became "a guru of Bob Marley" (White 1994:15), calmed down the assembly to leave the way for the emperor. The day occupies an important place in Rastafarian calendar. Every year Rastafarians celebrate HaileSelassie's visit to Jamaica. The medals that the emperor handed out to members of the Rastafari are now considered as an important treasure of those who possess them and the movement at large (Barrett 1997).

HaileSelassie's visit, as some researchers have noted, was originally intended to give a final blow to the movement's claim of repatriation. In 1954 the authorities refused to invite the emperor "on the grounds that it would be a source of embarrassment to both the emperor and Jamaica" (Chevannes 1994: 91). In 1966 the invitation was extended to the emperor after it was known that he was scheduled to visit Trinidad and Tobago. The authorities expected that the emperor would disavow the divinity accorded to him by

the Rastafarians and thereby the central theme of the movement, that the emperor is the living God, would be demolished. This maneuvering, however, had unintended consequences. The Rastafarians were the beneficiaries of HaileSelassie's state visit. The visit augmented the legitimate status of the movement rather than causing a disarray among the Rastafari.

HaileSelassie's abstinence from remarking on the issue of his divinity was interpreted by the Rastafarians as a sign of humbleness on his part. For it is stated in the Bible that "He who humbleth himself ..." (Bible ...). It was after this event that the Rastafari started to exert a profound influence on the political culture of Jamaica. Following HaileSelassie's visit Senator Wilton Hill of JLP passed the motion that HaileSelassie be the king of Jamaica in the stead of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. His reasoning was based on the racial ties between Jamaica and Ethiopia and the fact that Jamaicans have shown greater respect to the emperor more than the "alien Queen" (Nettelford 1972: 64).

HaileSelassie's visit had also an impact on the political philosophy of the Rastafarian movement. During his visit the emperor is reported to have recommended that the Rastafarians should focus on Jamaica before they set their eyes on Africa. This led to a new motto: "Liberation before repatriation" (Barrett 1997: 160). This made the idea of physical repatriation to dissipate relatively, thereby increasing their participation in Jamaican politics. Some even went to extent of conferring a new meaning to the philosophy of repatriation. Repatriation was interpreted to mean mental de-colonization, freeing oneself from the mental trappings of Babylon rather than leaving Jamaica for Ethiopia.

This political development led some Rastafarians to call for "a people's government in Jamaica and Ethiopia (Campbell 1994:132). Walter Rodney, a Marxist

intellectual from Guyana who specialized in West African history, had played an important role in this respect. Rodney saw the Rastafari as a major force in the process of "re-culturing" black Jamaicans. In the six lectures entitled "The Groundings With My Brothers" that he gave in 1968, Rodney, among other things, contended that African history is very much disrupted as a result of European intervention. He was not, however, blindly glorifying African empires. He was of the opinion that the history of African people is much more important than the history of the elite. Rodney had taught in Africa for one year, he had first hand information about African life. The Jamaican authorities did not like Rodney's perspective. After attending "Black Writers Conference" in Canada he was denied entry visa to Jamaica. This decision of the government was seriously challenged by student protests.

By the 1970s the status of the Rastafari had changed. The stigmatization of the Rastafari as "psychopaths and dangerous criminals" (Simpson 1955:144) seems to lose its force. The Rastafari gained a legitimate status within the framework Jamaican society. The process was not limited to accommodation. The Rastafari started to have an impact on Jamaican body politic. Because the symbols of the Rastafari resonate with the religious assumptions of the numerical majority they were utilized for election purposes. The landslide victory of the PNP in 1971 was due to this process.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have described the different aspects of the Rastafarian movement culture. This chapter is intended to pave the ground for the theory testing undertaken in the forthcoming chapters. The study of the culture of social movements helps us to understand not only the nature of the movement but also it provides us with the opportunity to examine the reasons for the development and demise of social movements. One of the questions addressed in this study is the issue of examining the

reasons why the Rastafari has manifested itself in the manner it did and not otherwise. It is in this context that the role of religion, language, music, and politics in the development of the movement becomes clear.

The study of the Rastafari shows that in societies where legitimacy is hard to find, social movements, especially with a political mission, find an expression as religious collective actions. Here we see the interrelatedness between religion and politics. Actually with the Rastafari religion is clearly politics by other means. The Rastafari, despite its strong religious dimension, had met a stiff resistance because it was considered as a threat to the Jamaican establishment. And to show their strong opposition the Rastafari have refrained from participating in Jamaican politics. Later, however, the movement was in a position to exert its influence on the political repertoire of Jamaican society.

The study of the Rastafarian movement culture also shows that social movements need a medium through which they disseminate their ideas and create a consensus among members. The emergent language of the Rastafari, soul language, in this respect, has played an important role. The Rastafarians have been extremely successful in constructing words and expressions that resonate with the philosophy of their movement. In their counter-culture social movements create their own vernacular. Such construction allows them to articulate their definition of the situation. In their competition for symbolic dominance language plays a significant role. On the other hand Reggae music has acted as an important conduit through which the basic themes of the Rastafari are disseminated. Movement intellectuals of the Rastafari, such as Bob Marley, have played a tremendous role in increasing the status of the Rastafari both locally as well as internationally.

On the basis of this background information, in the next three chapters my goal

will be to examine the heuristic value of the variables of the political process model in the explanation of the Rastafarian movement endurance.

CHAPTER V

THE RASTAFARI AND CULTURAL/HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES

The political process model is premised on the notion that social movements are politics by other means, a notion which is shared by resource mobilization theory. Unlike the latter, however, the political process model contends that economic, demographic, and political processes, and not the acquisition of resources alone, are responsible for opportunities that create political leverage for collective action. The model presumes the meta-theoretical assumption that societies are dynamic entities wherein self-interest plays a decisive role in perpetuating the distinction between in-establishment and out-establishment groups.

These relationships between in and out establishment groups, however, are not characterized by permanency. Social processes cause the latter to challenge the legitimacy and status of the former ultimately leading to the expression of grievances in the forms of collective actions. From this vantage point collective actions are the result of social changes that render "existing political or economic arrangements increasingly vulnerable to challenge" (Marx and McAdam 1994: 86). Political opportunities are among the social processes that increase the vulnerability of the existing social arrangements. In the pages that follow I will examine if there is a positive correlation between political opportunities and the development of the Rastafarian movement.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CULTURAL/HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES

The history of the Rastafari shows that its development hardly related to the political opportunity offered to it by its society. The social causes such as prolonged unemployment, that would have created political opportunities were there. Yet until after

the movement gained an international recognition, political opportunities that could have augmented the position of the movement were non-existent. It is in the midst of stiff resistance by the establishment that the Rastafari developed (Campbell 1994). If there were political opportunities the Rastafari themselves were largely responsible for their existence (Waters 1987).

This evidence forces us to raise the question: what happens to social movements in the absence of political opportunities? The issue seems to be ignored by the political process model. At most the model addresses this problem by stating that in the dearth of political opportunities social movements are most likely to wane, or, lay dormant. The model, accordingly, is seriously challenged if we have social movements that have thrived without the existing social milieu offering them political space. In other words, the problem of explaining the growth of social movements under political systems that discourage the development of collective actions, or because of the substance of their radical narrative presents a problem to the establishment, is a problem that the political process model has given scant attention. Since the Rastafari as a social movement has grown in spite of political opportunities and its radical perspective and posture had placed it in a precarious situation, we have to examine whether or not the political process model utterly fails in providing us a viable explanation with regard to the development of the movement.

A closer examination of the issue shows that the answer to the problem whether we have to go beyond the political process model in explaining the endurance of the Rastafari is both in the positive as well as in the negative. On one hand, we are but left with the option of modifying the concept of political opportunities as political opportunities in the model's sense are confined to social/political occasions. These opportunities are not held out to all social movements by all societies, including the social system under

which the Rastafari has grown. Yet, the model's historical perspective allows us to examine the issue from another dimension. Since, according to the model, social movements are the product of a long historical process, we have to look at the historical, social, and cultural processes that have contributed to the development of the movement. In fact one of the merits of the model is that it allows us to go beyond an "immaculate conception" theory of social movements. Social movements, according to the political process model, do not erupt; they grow. They are, to be more exact, the result of a long historical process.

On the basis of this historical perspective, and in reaction to the limitations of the political process model, I have come up with the concept of *cultural/historical contingencies*. This concept is in a sense markedly different from the concept of political opportunity, for it directs our attention to look for opportunities of non-political sort. I am suggesting that social movements, like the Rastafari, create their own political and cultural opportunities by relying on the cultural/historical contingencies that have prevailed and currently prevail in their respective societies. One good reason why this happens is because their emergent ideology, or, their movement culture, resonates with the historical and cultural background of the group that seeks redress to perceived damage.

Cultural/historical contingencies can be defined as socio-cultural processes of a given society on the basis of which social movement participants construct their movement culture. These contingencies provide actors with, so to speak, "raw materials" which accords them the opportunity to deconstruct a version of reality considered to be defunct, and construct a new version of reality befitting the ideals of a movement. Two themes are at the center of the concept of cultural/historical contingencies. First, opportunities are not *only* made by processes that stem from the in-establishment

groups, or more exactly from the political instability of existing state structure, but from those who are denied access to existing political institutions as well. Second, the sources of political opportunities are not necessarily political; social movements can create political opportunities on the basis of existing cultural/historical resources.

The underlying assumption of the concept of cultural/historical contingencies, however, does not in principle deviate from the political process model's contention that opportunities facilitate the development of social movements. We can not explain social movements in the absence of an opportunity of some sort. The political process model, therefore, still offers us a way out if we, utilizing it's historicist approach, focus our attention on processes that are not directly related to the existing political milieu. Examining the issue under discussion beyond the concept of political opportunities, one finds the interplay between agency and non-tangible resources that emanate from cultural/historical contingencies. From this perspective social movements are not merely reactions of out-establishment groups to social problems, but they are social constructions that derive their meaning from the cycle of protest that has prevailed in their respective societies. Hence, social movement participants could be denied political space but no political power can close their access to cultural and historical resources. The ebb and proliferation of the Rastafarian movement can be explained along this line.

THE RASTAFARI AND CULTURAL/HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES

Although in Jamaica there were major social processes that could have created political opportunities for insurgent groups to come forth and develop, the Rastafari did not emerge as a result of the opening up of political opportunities. The Jamaican political system has been less tolerant to the Rastafarians, the most important reason being that their civil religion was in many ways at variance with the existing cultural and political arrangements of Jamaica. Ironically, the Rastafarian movement has not only grown in

spite of all odds, the somber challenges that it has faced, but also has made an important bearing on the political and cultural landscape of Jamaica.

The availability of cultural/historical contingencies together with the economic and political challenges that the majority of Jamaican's of African descent faced were the factors that conditioned the origin and development of the Rastafari. Rastafarians' ability to get the most out of cultural/historical contingencies available in their society has much to do with the proliferation of their movement. I will illustrate my contention in the light of the two cultural/historical contingencies that the Rastafari relied, viz, *resistance* and *repatriation*. The former refers to the general form of expressing dissatisfaction that has existed in Jamaican history, whereas the latter refers to a specific ideology that the Rastafarian movement inherited from preceding movements.

Resistance

Jamaican history is replete with the history of resistance. These forms of resistance against plantation, colonial, and neocolonial social arrangements ranged from hidden to open, armed revolts. Jamaica was the place where most of the slave revolts in the New World took place. It was this historical facet, among other things, that made Jamaica to occupy an important place in the history of plantation societies. Campbell (1994:26) notes that there "were more than 400 revolts with major confrontations in 1729-39, 1760, and 1831-32, each involving over a thousand slaves."

This historical background helps us to place the Rastafari within the cycle of protest that has prevailed throughout Jamaican history. Rastafari is part of this cycle of protest in two senses. Firstly, the Rastafarian ethos, as we shall see later, is the continuation of the themes that have been at the center of resistance. Secondly, the efforts of groups that have resisted oppression of all sorts (slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism) became resources for later generations. The Rastafarians were the

inheritors as well as beneficiaries of the non-tangible resources that came from this culture of resistance.

Hidden Transcripts: Since the history of resistance begins with slavery, the first type of resistance that deserves examination is the type of protests that slaves were engaged in. Often most historians have considered slaves as docile who, without any form of reaction, subjugated themselves to the behavior of their masters. This stereotypes were reinforced by the failure to appreciate the languages of resistance that were not immediately apparent to the observer. Sociological investigation has to dig into the innermost processes of the non-apparent forms of resistance. Scott (1991), in this regard, through his concept of "hidden transcripts", provides us with a good insight. Hidden transcripts involve underground forms of resistance on the part of those groups who are denied access to formal means of expressing their grievances.

During the plantation era hidden transcripts have manifested themselves in various ways. Of these manifestations the most interesting are those that have exhibited themselves in the form of acting. Slaves had to assume dull-wittedness in accordance with the expectations of their masters. "The majority of slaves adopted an attitude of wooden stupidity before the planters, and if asked an indifferent question, he would seldom give a prompt reply- pretending not to understand what was said, forcing a repetition of the question so that he or she could have time to consider, not what the true answer was, but what was the most expedient one to give" (Campbell 1994: 22). In this case, what we have is presentation of the self as a form of resistance. If in modern societies the self is presented to induce positive impression on the part of the audience, with Jamaican slaves (also in other parts of the world) it was used to express dissatisfaction. By so doing slaves were expressing their dissatisfactions, although the expressions were largely meaningful within the bounds of the slave community.

Hidden Transcript and the Rastafari: The connection between such forms of resistance and the Rastafari is obvious. Although the Rastafarian resistance is largely explicit, a number of its symbolic messages entail hidden transcripts. For instance, the symbolic significance of emperor Haile Selassie, as we shall see later, has partly to do with the hidden transcript of the Rastafari. The belief in a living God is both intended to show that each social group deserves its own leader. Besides, a living God with flesh and blood is more likely to be a man of substance than someone who is invisible and extramundane. The problem of those who dismiss the Rastafari as a religious movement, I believe, partly emanates from lack of understanding this and other hidden transcripts of the Rastafari.

The Maroons: Slave resistance, however, was not limited to the hidden transcripts discussed above. Open forms of resistance were also common among slaves (Lunetta 1996). To express their dissatisfaction and their yearn for their land of origin many had committed suicide. Many have also fled to places where they are free. In places where they were expected to work hard, many have exerted lesser efforts. Furthermore, to obstruct the normal flow of activities many have expressed their grievances by breaking the tools of their masters. Most importantly, however, Jamaican slaves have shunned the plantation system by participating in numerous armed revolts. In this regard, the Maroons (the name has its origin from the Spanish word, *cimarron* which means wild), a group of free Africans who maintained their own culture in the "thickly-wooded interior parts of the island" (Black 1961:83), occupy an important place. The number of the Maroons, at the time, did not exceed 2000, yet their adeptness to create havoc was proportionately great (Roberts 1955:61).

Nonetheless, the vitality of the Maroons was not limited in one direction. They have played two contradictory roles. That is, their history was not only the history of

resistance, but it was the history of collaboration, and betrayal as well (Campbell 1988). On one hand, the Maroons resisted plantation society, and later they, by extending their assistance to the British authorities, were instrumental in destroying slave revolts. On the other hand, and for the most part, they are remembered for their heroic resistance against colonizers and their strenuous efforts to reaffirm their African heritage. Despite the repeated efforts of the British colonial powers to get rid of them, the Maroons were capable of maintaining their identity. In the 76 years of irregular warfare that took place between the Maroons and the British, the latter had spent almost 250,000 pounds and passed 44 Acts (Black 1961:84).

Two factors contributed to the success of the Maroons. *Firstly*, in the stead of open confrontation they preferred guerilla warfare. Ambushing themselves within the midst of trail-less forests, the Maroons always opted to surprise the enemy. This element of surprise was often preceded by their ability to disguise themselves, often with leaves. Besides when they find out that they have failed in inflicting a defeat on the enemy they preferred to retreat rather than extend the fight, so to speak, for the benefit of heroism. The British, accordingly, as Roberts (1955:62) has aptly pointed out were "battling with ghosts." This tactic had given them an advantage over their counterparts who were not familiar with this form of warfare and the Jamaican climate. British soldiers were attacked in places where it was virtually impossible to escape. What is more, the Maroons had a warning system that protected them from any surprise attacks on the part of the British. *Abeng*, a musical instrument made from cow's horn, was used for this purpose. Using this instrument the Maroons were able to communicate between distance of 80 miles within an hour (Roberts 1955:64). Added to this was the fact that most Maroons were bound to Akan oath secrecy, according to which those who are captured were by no means to pass critical information to the enemy (Campbell 1988:5).

The *second* reason for the success of the Maroons had to do with their being safehaven for runaway slaves. Hence, as their number increased, their audacity to fight the British was also augmented. Their determination not to be slaves anymore gave the runaway slaves the courage to fight with determination. At the center of this resistance was a stocky man named Cudjoe (Kojo in short). Supported by his brothers, Accompong and Quao, in the west and east respectively, Cudjoe was in a position to fight the British relentlessly. Cudjoe knew the importance of unity while fighting the enemy. To prevent ethnic cleavages, accordingly, Cudjoe insisted that the Maroons speak English (Campbell 1988:3).

Ultimately, fearing that the struggle of the Maroons might encourage slaves to participate in mass revolts, the authorities had no option but to swallow their pride and give concessions to the Maroons. And this was for a good reason. At the time white colonists were outnumbered by a proportion of 1 to 14 (Black 1961: 86). Besides, planters and their indenture servants could hardly afford to put their work aside, and fight the Maroons endlessly. In March 1, 1738 the British were forced to sign a treaty with the Maroons. This treaty had brought a mixed result in the fight against the British. On one hand, the treaty gave the Maroons the right for self-government; they were granted 1500 acres of land; allowed to hunt wild pigs; Cudjoe was recognized as the leader of the community. At the same time, the Maroons agreed to refuse to accommodate runaway slaves, and return them to the British authorities if captured. They were rewarded three pounds sterling for every runaway slave they return. The Maroons were also expected to assist the government in arresting armed revolts and foreign invasion.

In accordance with the latter provision, the Maroons played a significant role in suppressing armed slave revolts. Tucky's rebellion, a revolt led by tribal leader named

Tucky, failed largely because of the assistance that the Maroons extended to the British colonists. Tucky's forces had created havoc by burning houses, and killing planters as they slept. As the rebellion gained momentum, many slaves deserted their masters to join the mass revolt. Tucky's rebellion met both the British Militia as well as the Maroons. After six month of resistance, the rebellion was torn asunder. Tucky himself was killed by the Maroons, and many of his followers committed suicide rather than live under the yokes of slavery again. The rebellion claimed the life of 60 whites, but the colonists showed their vengeance by killing 600 slaves (Luntta 1996:32).

Fifty years after the 1738 treaty, a disagreement again broke between the Maroons and the authorities. The disagreement was occasioned by an incident that has touched the pride of the Maroons. Two Maroons were whipped in public for stealing pigs, and the whipping was performed by the same runaway slaves that the Maroons captured and returned to the authorities. The confrontation between the two parties took place for five months. The Maroons, however, could not resist the 5000 troops deployed against them. Besides, the authorities had brought dogs from Cuba which seriously affected the warfare tactics of the Maroons. The dogs defied guerilla warfare because they were sniffing the location of the Maroons. Finally, the fighting was settled by peace settlement, according to which the Maroons were allowed to exercise regional autonomy. Later, however, violating the provisions of the settlement the British authorities sent 500 Maroons to Nova Scotia and later to Siera Leone, West Africa. These Maroons were the first New World Africans to be repatriated to Africa.

The Maroons and the Rastafari: The importance of the history of the Maroons resides in terms of the frame of resistance that it provided to latter collective actions. The militancy of Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley and others could be partly explained in the light of their socialization within the culture of resistance they were born into. Garvey was the

son of a Maroon; and Marley was born in the same place where Garvey was born. Hence, the Rastafarians were the beneficiaries of the cultural/historical contingencies created by the Maroons. We see a good deal of similarity between the forms of resistance employed by the Rastafari and the Maroons, although the latter have heavily relied on armed resistance and have at times deviated from the norm of fighting the oppressors.

One such similarity lies in the tactic the Rastafarians have employed against Babylon. Since Babylon is a formidable force it is not confronted directly. The confrontation is indirect. It is largely carried out at a symbolic level. The efforts of the Rastafarians have largely constituted in deconstructing Babylon at a cultural level. This has given the Rastafari an advantage at two levels. First, direct confrontation with Babylonian forces is avoided as a result of which casualty both in the physical and intellectual sense of the term are minimized. Second, via an indirect confrontation the metaphysical basis of Babylon is made to lay in ruins. That is, through their new narratives and movement culture (alternative perspective, life style, and language) the Rastafari believe that they have thorn asunder the symbolic foundations of Babylon.

What is more, the Rastafari, like the Maroons, have their own safehavens. Reasoning, as we shall see later, is an intellectual safehaven of the Rastafari. As such it has acted as a free space where issues are discussed openly, just as the Maroons were free to maintain their cultural identity. Even the language of the Rastafari is similar to that of Cudjoe in that it is the symbol of unity. This is clearly visible in the Rastafarian expression of "I 'n I." Most important of all, however, the Rastafari's mistrust of authorities is a lesson which they have gathered from the experiences of the Maroons (Barrett 1997). Babylonian authorities, according to the Rastafari, are the least to be trusted. That is why the Rastafari have avoided politics since it means collaborating with

the existing Babylonian system indirectly.

Sam Sharpe: Although it was hard to revolt after the Maroons lost the battle and strict laws were imposed, resistance against slavery did not cease to exist. One such resistance was lead by Sam Sharpe, a leader who on Biblical grounds challenged slave society. Thanks to his nephew who was working for a Newspaper agency, Sharpe was exposed to events that were undergoing in the United Kingdom. His nephew was supplying him with discarded newspapers sent to Jamaica from the "mother country." These discarded newspapers brought to the attention of Sharpe the position upheld by the adherents of the Abolition movement against slavery.

In his preaching Sharpe disavowed the idea of using human beings as mere objects. In accordance with his preaching, he advised slaves to withheld their labor. The time set for this purpose was December 1831. As a result over 20,000 slaves participated in the revolt. The resistance which was organized under the camouflage of nightly prayer, was intended to be peaceful. Later, however, a significant portion of the island fell under the control of Sam Sharpe's group ultimately causing the Governor to impose martial law. The battle had caused the death of more than one thousand rebels and fourteen whites. Consequently, the Commander-in-chief decided to end the battle by granting pardon to those who surrender. Tricked by this grant and by the abolition of slavery by the British Parliament many surrendered. Ironically, those who turned themselves in were severely punished. Over one thousand blacks were sentenced to death. The kangaroo court held in Montego Bay also found more than three hundred people guilty. Most of those slaves who had to flee to the mountains to escape vengeance were hunted by the Maroons. Sam Sharpe was one of those people sentenced to death. Before his execution in the square which now bears his name, Sam Sharpe is reported to have said: "I would rather die a slave upon yonder gallows than live

in slavery." The efforts of Sam Sharpe were not in vain; slavery in Jamaica was finally abolished in 1834 (Luntta 1996).

Morant Bay Rebellion: The abolition of slavery in 1834 did not give a rest to the problems of the subaltern of the Jamaican population. Both contending parties of the time, the freed slaves and the ex-masters were not thoroughly happy. On one hand, the economic and social comfort zone of the masters was disturbed. On the other, the freed slaves did not like the four apprenticeship that they will undergo before they were granted complete freedom. The uneasiness created as a result manifested itself in the Morant Bay rebellion (Black 1961)

The rebellion was lead by Paul Bogel, an energetic black Baptist preacher, who believed that he is destined to free his people. His motto was "Cleave to the black, Color for color." His determination to liberate the oppressed first manifested in the establishment of his own tribunal over and against the then court system (Black 1961:193). Another political figure who played an important role in the upcoming rebellion was George William Gordon. Gordon, a successful business mulatto and a member of the House of Assembly, was then considered by many as the "champion of the dispossessed". Although he brought to the attention of the authorities the appalling living condition of the poor his efforts were in vain. He, thus, urged the poor to express their dissatisfactions against the establishment. Despite his relentless effort to defend the poor, Gordon, however, was against a violent way of resolving problems (Roberts 1955).

The person who set himself against these revolutionaries at the time was Edward John Eyer, one of the stiff-necked Governors Jamaica has produced. His relative low salary compared to the then affluent social group, and his disdain for the native religions placed him at odds with the poor. He had a strong detest for blacks; he referred to them

as "ignorant people" (Barrett 1982:62). Gordon, accordingly, in accordance with his corrupt reasoning, was more interested in passing bills intended to punish the poor rather than trying to come up with a solution to the then problems, including unemployment and unfair taxation which were imposed on the poor. Those who steal food stuffs or fruits were flogged (Black 1961:191).

By 1865 the island's problems became insurmountable. Small producers had a problem of acquiring land to cultivate; unemployment has soared; low wages were accompanied by heavy taxation. Besides drought had destroyed crops. The price of imported foods had increased as a result of the American civil war (Black 1961:193). All these problems finally led to protests. A number of protest meetings were held, the one in Kingston being presided over by Gordon. This meeting led to the drafting of a letter which was later sent to Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom. Her response was unsympathetic to the poor. Her letter stated that the poor have to work hard to get rid of their problems. There was a mixed feeling about the Queen's response. Most, including Gordon, thought that the queen is not properly informed about the situation. Some even thought slavery might be reinstated.

Irritated by these developments, Paul Bogle decided to settle these problems by taking over the island. The revolt begun when two hundred rebels headed by Paul Bogle decided to observe a trial dealing with two men accused of assault and trespassing. When one of the defendants was found guilty a young man who belonged to Bogle's group shouted against the decision. The police apprehended the young man but was saved by Bogle and his associates. Bogle was then accused of disorderly conduct. The police sent to arrest Bogle, but instead were beaten and set free after they sworn that they will not fight against Bogle's army. Following this event martial law was imposed seemingly intended to preserve law and order. Actually, the martial law became a

pretext to beat and kill. After thirty days, with the help of the Maroons, finally the rebellion was crushed. An estimated of more than one thousand people died. Paul Bogle after being captured by the Maroons was sentenced to death. Gordon also received the same punishment, although he was not at the scene of the incident. This was a big victory to the property owning elements who feared that Jamaica, like Haiti, would be under the governance of blacks (Roberts 1955:110). Later the governor was expelled from his office. The Morant Bay rebellion marked the emergence of a new political era. On December 22, 1865 Jamaica became a crown colony, and therewith oligarchy came to an end laying the foundation for the ensuing of black nationalism, Rastafari being one of them ((Barrett 1982:63; Luntta 1996:34).

The Rastafari and the Morant Bay Rebellion: From the aforestated brief note it is not difficult to see that the Rastafari draw non-political resources from the cultural/historical contingencies created by protests immediately preceding and following emancipation. The most apparent of these resources is the method of protesting via religion. Just as resistance among slave leaders, such as Sam Sharpe, was justified on biblical grounds, the same perspective prevails among the Rastafari. In both cases, in the absence of worldly authorization for resistance transcendental principles are sought as justifications. Besides, religion is preferred because it provides hope. The Rastafari, however, have made a dramatic move in this connection. With the Rastafari this hope is not to be realized in the world after life, but here in this physical world.

Freedom and justice are not only possible in this world, their realization demand the efforts of those who aspire to attain them. Slavery was abolished by the efforts of Sam Sharpe and his group. Oligarchy came to an end through those who participated in the Morant Bay rebellion. Likewise, the Rastafari believe that any kind of "downpression" can be abolished only through the endeavors of those people who are directly affected

by social problems. Bob Marley's hit "Get up, Stand up" emanates from this understanding. At the heart of the Rastafarian metaphysics is, therefore, the idea that emancipation is the work of those who know and have experienced oppression and exploitation. It can not be the work of the selected few, politicians for instance. It demands the efforts of all. That is why the Rastafari, through their epistemological individualism, allow every member to be an active participant rather than a passive spectator.

Finally, the Rastafari have learned from their predecessors that emancipation is not complete until it is thoroughly finalized. There is no such thing as partial emancipation. This justifies the continuity of resistance. In this regard, the Rastafarians argue that slavery is not over. Slavery, it is true, is formally abolished, but the social mechanisms that perpetuate its existence are alive as ever before. It now manifests itself in a new form. Slavery now displays itself in the form of *Caesar*, that is money (Yawney 1984). Those who lack Caesar are chained by it. And those who have economic and political power are responsible for creating this chain. The Rastafarians' mistrust of authorities emanates from this perspective as well as the specific example from history. It is to be recalled that the Queen of England has been unsympathetic to the demands of the oppressed. Justice also is not to be sought from an almighty leader. If the Rastafarians search for a King of their kind (color for color) they have historical facts to justify their reasoning.

Ideology

The second cultural/historical contingency that the Rastafarians got the most out of is the ideology of repatriation. Hence, the Rastafarians were not the first to bring the view of repatriation to the Jamaican public discourse. The "doctrine of repatriation is kindred to a lineage of ideas and forms of action four hundred years old" (Chevannes

1994:1). This does not mean that the Rastafarians are merely the inheritors of the ideology. In the hands of Rastafarians the ideology of repatriation finds a unique and refined expression.

Slaves and Repatriation: Before repatriation found an expression in the ideology of Ethiopianism, the yearn for Africa had its origin among the first slaves. This predisposition is explicitly stated in the religious practices of slaves. Slaves at the time were not allowed to practice Christianity which gave them a good reason to reassert their African identity and express their experiences in their belief-systems. Their view of death, for instance, was markedly different from that of Christianity. A popular hymn of the time among slaves testifies this point (Owens 1976):

"And before I 'll be a slave
I'll go down into my grave,
And go home to my Lord".

In so far as to die means to be liberated from the yokes of slavery, death was not considered as an awful phenomenon to be dreaded; it was rather a welcome guest treated with respect. Death was considered as a meaningful phenomenon, for it marks the return of the spirit to Africa. To slaves Africa was the here-after. Accordingly, when a person dies it was considered as a blessing. Food and rum were prepared so that the dead will not have a problem during his/her return to Africa; commemorating the event music and dancing were also performed (Campbell 1994:23-24).

Ethiopianism: Repatriation finds its vivid ideological expression in the master-frame of Ethiopianism. Ethiopianism is a "dynamic mythology" centered around the slogan "Africa for the Africans" (Clarke 1994:34). In this sense, it was the precursor of Pan-Africanism. Ethiopianism originally drew its intellectual resources from the Biblical Ethiopia, Ethiopia being synonymous with Africa below Egypt. The oft-cited biblical verse

(which is also the favorite of the Rastafari) was: "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God" (Psalm 68:31). Later, however, the Geographical Ethiopia located in Eastern Africa became emblematic of black independence. Ethiopia's ancient civilization, long history of independence were made to justify the ethos of the Ethiopian movement.

The ideology of Ethiopianism was prominent among those who have expressed their resistance against slavery and its antecedent forms in the New world, and among freedom fighters in Africa, especially in South Africa. The Independent Church movement in South Africa opposed the racist Dutch Reformed Church which justified racism on biblical grounds. There were a significant number of churches that asserted their existence independent of the European mission churches. The Ethiopian churches were by the South African authorities considered as "dangerous symbol of Black political independence" (Chidester 1992:119). These churches posed a threat to white supremacy. Interestingly enough, these churches, like the Rastafarian movement, had no "established leaders" which had made them impenetrable by the colonial state (Campbell 1994:49). It was after the establishment of the African National Congress in 1912 that the role of these churches as mediums of political resistance started to wane.

Ethiopianism became more prominent after Ethiopia defeated the Italians in 1896. The victory provided a reference-symbol to those who were opposed to all forms of racism. The Ethiopianist master frame which was based on biblical grounds now found an empirical credibility. The myth of African inferiority was torn asunder. The defeat of a major colonial power was interpreted to mean that the redemption of the African Diaspora in the New world is eminent. Then-after Ethiopia exemplified black solidarity and deliverance from all forms of colonial subjugation. Jamaica was one of the nations wherein the impact of the victory was felt. The news had a significant impact on the psyche of Jamaicans. It invigorated the interest in Ethiopia, that the Ethiopian rulers can

trace their ancestry to the Solomonic dynasty was discussed like the Jamaican Anancy stories (Campbell 1994).

Ethiopianism and the Rastafari: There is a striking similarity between the views of slaves and that of Rastafarians. The ultimate destination of repatriation in both cases is "mother Africa." With the Rastafari, however, death is not the vehicle that takes one to Africa. Altering the popular hymn of the slaves the Rastafarians express their desire to be free thus (Owens 1976):

"And before I'll be a slave
I'll skip over my grave
And go home to my lord and be free".

Hence, we see clearly a continuity in the construction of the idea of repatriation. Where a slave prefers to loose his life rather than be the victim of servitude, the Rastafarians see a way out within the perimeter of this physical world, and they are strongly committed to physically repatriate themselves to Africa. Death is to be overcome. It can not be the means by which one frees himself/herself. The Rastas, consistent with their life-celebrating theology, are against the idea of death. Their ethos does not have a place for the dichotomy between life and death. In the absence of such a distinction what reigns supreme is life only.

Again the resemblance between the ethos of the Ethiopianist movement and that of Rastafari is not hard to delineate. Ethiopia (Africa as a whole) as a symbol occupies as an important place in both movements. The slogan "Africa for Africans" holds true with the Rastafari as well. The Rastafari are more specifically interested in the historical and geographic Ethiopia. Its long standing independence and ancient civilization provide empirical credibility to the Rastafarian view of repatriation. The living God of the Rastafari, HaileSelassie, who heads this process is an Ethiopian. When Ethiopia was

invaded by Italy during World War II the Rastafarians, like other Africans in the Diaspora, were ready to extend all the support that Ethiopia needed, including the sacrifice of their lives if necessary (Campbell 1994).

Like Ethiopianism the Rastafari is international in context. Just as Ethiopianism had a nodes of connection in South Africa and the New World, the Rastafarian movement identifies itself not only with Jamaicans of African descent but with black people in general and the oppressed peoples of the world at large. The international fame that reggae music attained is related to this international dimension of the movement. Afrocentrism, privileging Africa and things African, which is at the heart of the Rastafari, is among the reasons that has attracted blacks both in Africa and the Diaspora to Reggae music and the ethos of the movement.

Marcus Garvey: The ideology of repatriation found its full-fledged expression in the political philosophy of Marcus Garvey. Garvey, the descendant of the famous Maroons, was born on August 17, 1887 in the Jamaican parish of St. Ann. Garvey was a great teacher as well a flamboyant orator. Most importantly, however, he was a man of action. Nobody has devoted much of his life as Garvey did to the materialization of the physical repatriation of the Black Diaspora to Africa.

Africa, Garvey believed, is the only continent where black people's talent could be actualized. In places where racism is rampant, the African talent will, according to him, always be aborted, or distorted at best. From a Garveyite perspective repatriation is the only way by which race conflict could be avoided. The purpose of going to Africa, nonetheless, is not to govern the natives. The future government of Africa shall be based on the mutual understanding and cooperation of blacks from all corners of the world. This program in turn is premised on the principles of African philosophy. All these ideas were disseminated to black people of the world through the weekly newspaper

founded by Garvey in 1918, *The Negro World*. The impact of this newspaper was so great that it was banned in a number of colonial territories.

Garvey's concern for blacks has been partly motivated by his wide-ranging international experience. He has been to Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, the United States, United Kingdom, and Venezuela. Although he had strong interest in Africa, he has never been to the continent. This international experience brought to his attention that the plight of blacks throughout the world is the same. He was quick to understand that the exploitation of blacks is based on the ideological justification of the inferiority of the peoples of African descent. Garvey, accordingly, decided to fight this situation both by trying to deconstruct the hitherto existing myth, as well as practically by ameliorating the condition of black workers. Garvey (1923/1969) said: "I know no national boundary where the Negro is concerned. The whole world is my province until Africa is free." This was the basis of the Garvite movement motto: "One God! One aim! One Destiny!"

To realize his goals Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Instilling African pride and belief in the God of Ethiopia, were the central provisions of the UNIA, an organization premised on the notion "that the Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa" (Garvey 1969:68). Garvey saw no difference between the emancipation of blacks outside Africa and the self-determination of African nations. It is this philosophical orientation of Garvey that exerted the greater influence among black leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, the most famous leader of Ghana. Although he later rejected Garvey's philosophy of repatriation Nkrumah stated that of all the literature that he consulted, including the works of Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and Mazzini, he was inspired by Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. Garvey had also an influence on

black American leaders such as Elijah Mohammed, the founder and Nation of Islam.

The Rastafari and Garveyism: If the Rastafari consider Marcus Garvey as one of their prophets they have a justifiable premise at their disposal. The continuity between the Garvite movement and the Rastafari is not hard to discern (Lewis 1998). The Rastafari have specifically inherited the idea of repatriation as the only means of emancipation from the Garvite movement. Like Garvey before them, the Rastafari believe that the talent of black people can manifest itself only in a social context in which it is unhindered by social factors. The differentiation of society along the lines of color, according to the Rastafari, has and will always be to the disadvantage of Blacks. Moreover, repatriation, in both the Garvite and the Rastafarian movement, is a form of resistance. Lack of interest in the existing system among the Garvites and the Rastafarians is an expression of dissatisfaction, and not one that has emanated as a result of an escapist orientation.

Nonetheless, there are issues over which the Garvite movement and the Rastafari markedly differ. Garvey has never acknowledged that Haile Selassie I was the living God. He was critical of the emperor for his ineptness to modernize his country and deserting his people during the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Yet despite this critical perspective of the emperor, Garvey's influence on the Rastafarians is obvious. It is with good reason that he is considered as the Black Moses. His role in the social construction of the Rastafarian God is immense. This was made possible in two ways. Firstly, Garvey was of the opinion that the emancipation of blacks all over the world will be headed by a king that comes from Africa. Hence, his famous statement "Look to Africa when a black king shall be crowned for the day of deliverance is near." Secondly, he was the first to clearly Africanize/Ethiopianize the concept of God. His concept of God is summarized thus:

"If the white man has the idea of a white God, let him worship his God as he desires. If the yellow man's God is of his race let him worship his God as he sees fit. We as Negroes, have found a new ideal. Whilst our God has no color, yet it is human to see everything through one's own spectacles, and since the white people have seen their God through white spectacles, we have only now started out (late though it be) to see our God through our own spectacles. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob let Him exist for the race that believes in the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the One God of all ages. That is the God in whom we believe, but we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia" (Garvey 1923/1969:44).

The Rastafari have both retained as well as enriched Garvey's concept of God. Like Garvey, the Rastafari see God "through the spectacles of Ethiopia". God is not an absolute being with blue eyes residing independent of this physical world. He is one among his people. The Rastafari take this Africanist conception of God further. God is not only black, he is also a living God. He is God with flesh and blood whose mission is to lead in the liberation of Black people. Again he is not independent of his people. He is both among them and in them.

THE RASTAFARI AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Political opportunities a la political process model were not entirely absent, although the opportunities came largely as a result of the efforts of the Rastafarians themselves. These efforts were not directly intended to have a place in the political space of Jamaica, for that is at variance with the Rastafarian's principle of abstaining from Jamaican politics. Political opportunities were thus contingent upon the mature development of the movement culture of the Rastafari. More exactly, the political opportunities offered to the Rastafari came after the movement attained legitimacy and later gained the status of what Yawney (1994: 75) called "global religion". But before political opportunities were opened up, the Rastafari had to withstand the repressive measures of the establishment.

Repression

The history of the Rastafari shows that the movement had undergone through different repressions before it was recognized as a civil religion in its own right (Campbell 1994, Davis 1990). The political stance of the movement was the most important reason that had put it in a precarious situation. Consequently, the Jamaican establishment's reaction to the movement has ranged from discrediting its public image to physically annihilating the enclaves of movement members. The Rastas were often labelled as social outcasts. One writer, for instance, in the *Daily Gleaner*, the most influential newspaper of Jamaica, describes the Rastafarians as "dirty, lazy, violent, ganja smoking, good for nothing rascals using religion as a cloak for villainy, having no regard for the law or other people's property, loud mouths and a general nuisance" (Cited in Lewis 1993:9). Embracing the Rastafarian philosophy was considered as a sign of "mental deterioration". Accordingly, the case of those who have decided to associate themselves with the movement was considered as "an urgent matter for the psychiatrist" (Nettleford 1978: 57). Such perceptions have provided the police the pretext to harass Rastas, cut their locks, indiscriminately arrest them. For these reasons even reggae music, because of its association with the Rastafari, was not allowed to be played in the radio (Waters 1989).

The outright contempt of the authorities for the adherents of the movement found its ultimate expression in the 1954 destruction of the Pinnacle commune, and Back-O-Wall in 1966. In both places the Rastafarians had secluded themselves from the rest of society. The destruction of these safehavens of the Rastafari were carried without regard for human decency. Ironically Back-O-Wall was the place where the one time leader of Jamaica, Edward Sega, got his constituency. In sum, the situation faced by the Rastafarians was, in the words of Stephen Davis (1990:95), "repressive and

unabashedly neocolonial". Hence, political opportunities were not only unavailable to the Rastafari, the existence of the Rastafari as a legitimate group (in the eyes of the establishment) was based on a shaky foundation.

The Rastafari, however, have withstood all the repressive efforts of "Babylon." On the basis of this history of the Rastafari, one is forced to reexamine the relationship between repression and its negative repercussions. Repression does not necessarily lead to the demise of a social movement. Repression can act as a "resource" in so far as movement participants interpret it in the light of the frame of reality of their collective action. The Rastafarians have always understood repression as an important dimension of the Babylonian world. This has augmented the commitment of members, since through its repressive actions the establishment was providing "empirical credibility" (Snow et al 1988) to the Rastafarian argument that the Babylonian system is unabashedly against those who are in favor of justice. For the Rastafari repression meant that the system is inherently flawed further increasing their desire for repatriation. For instance, while the destruction of the Black-O-Wall was undertaken a Rasta woman is said to have sang thus:

'Since we are squatters in Jamaica

Send us back to Ethiopia

We will be citizens there"' (Barrett 1977:157)

We see here the radicalization impact of repression. Repression, therefore, in the long run increases the political importance of a movement, especially when a movement sustains its existence in spite of the harsh treatment that it has received from the in-establishment groups.

In addition to its radicalization impact repression has also indirectly contributed to the development of the movement. In the absence of political opportunities and as a

result of the stiff resistance they have encountered the Rastafari have adopted a peaceful stance. This peaceful stance has allowed the movement in terms of creating its own opportunities. Rather than confronting the system directly the Rastafari have concentrated on developing their own movement culture. The development of a movement culture in turn paved the ground for the recruitment of new members. It also gave old members a good reason to stick to their movement.

Political Opportunities

Things took a new turn when the Rastafari started to gain recognition both nationally and internationally. The policies of the authorities, accordingly, changed. There were two reasons that prompted such actions.

Firstly, once the Rastafari gained legitimacy in different corners of the world, it was ideologically suicidal for the ruling elite to adopt the same lines of conduct hitherto pursued. In this connection, the two most important events that contributed to this development include, the University Report about the Rastafari (Nettleford, Augier, & Smith 1960) and Haile Selassie's visit in 1966. The University Report which was instigated by the Rastafarians themselves had made the conclusion, contrary to popular belief, that the Rastafarians are a peaceful group of people. As result of the Report not only were the views of the Rastafari made public, the Jamaican government also decided to work on one of the recommendations of the authors of the Report, repatriation to Africa (Nettleford 1978). The visit of emperor Haile Selassie gave further legitimacy to the movement. According to Chevannes (1998:64), the emperor's visit "remains unparalleled in Jamaican history for the extraordinary level of popular enthusiasm, the crowd size, and the degree of tolerance toward the Rastas." The police during the emperor's three day visit were tolerant of the Rastafari. Movement participants were openly using ganja as a religious sacrament. All these amounted to an indirect

legitimization of the Rastafari.

The second reason that has occasioned the opening up of political opportunities was the political importance of Rastafarian symbols. The Rastafari have never been the majority group, both in the sociological as well as numerical sense of the word, but their movement culture "served as an organizing principle for relevant social groups in the society" (Waters 1989:306). This was primarily because Rastafarian symbols resonate with the cultural tradition of Jamaicans of African descent which constitute over eighty percent of the Jamaican population. Rastafarian symbols, especially derived from the Bible, are easily understandable by the public because the majority of Jamaicans have an affiliation to the Christian religion. If, for instance, the Jamaican government is described by the Rastafari as "Sedom and Gomorrah" the public knows they mean that the government represents evil. Furthermore, the vernacular of the Rastafari, Dread Talk, has its basis in Jamaican Creole, the language of the lower classes of Jamaica. The combination of Rastafarian symbols and the new vernacular of the Rastafari made the public easily accessible to those who wanted to communicate with them. Added to this was Reggae music. The music was instrumental in bridging the gap between politicians and the public. Through Reggae music it was not hard to capture the attention of the public.

A constellation of these symbolic factors were of great significance in the electoral process. Waters (1985) has thoroughly documented the role of the Rastafarian symbols and Reggae music in the electoral processes between 1967 to 1983, the first and the last elections being the time the Rastafari have exerted the least repercussion. The two parties, Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and People Labor Party (PNP), contested to get the most out of the opportunity created by the movement. This, in turn, gave the Rastafari more legitimacy than before. The parties, however, were the beneficiaries of

the situation more than the movement which has constructed the symbols. Each party tried to bolster its position by utilizing the religious imagery created by the Rastafari.

Among the two parties it was the PNP which has relied more on Rastafarian symbols. Ironically, the PNP has acted as though it is radically opposed to the system which the Rastafari also abhor while at the same time seeking political position within the same system (Waters 1985: 307). The party posed itself as the defender of the interest of the "sufferers," the lower classes of Jamaica who are predominantly of African descent. In 1972 the PNP, because it successfully utilized Rastafarian symbols, had a landslide victory.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion of the cultural/historical contingencies we can safely conclude that the Rastafari can only be understood in the light of the cycle of protest that has prevailed in Jamaica. This is not meant to deny that the Rastafari does not have its own unique features. On the contrary. The point is that the Rastafarian movement culture has much to do with the resources provided to it by the cultural/historical contingencies discussed above. These resources have, among other things, allowed the Rastafari to develop in spite of political opportunities. Hence, the advantage of movements such as the Rastafari, although they are disadvantaged because the existing system forbid them political space, resides in the existence of cultural/historical contingencies from which they can extract cultural resources. These resources in turn serve as a means to create opportunities.

We see here that cultural/historical contingencies play the same role like political opportunities. One of the contributions of political opportunities lies in providing legitimacy to social movements. Cultural/historical contingencies likewise in their own way grant legitimacy to collective actions. First, the continuity between a social

movement and its historical background is one of the ways by which it asserts itself as a legitimate way of expressing grievances. In the case of the Rastafari, despite the attempt on the part of in-establishment groups to label it as outlandish and deviant, its reliance on resources drawn from cultural/historical contingencies has created the fertile condition for legitimacy. Secondly, some of the cultural resources, such as religion, confer a social movement a means by which it can justify its cause. This is especially true in societies which hardly accommodate collective actions that challenge the existing system. The Rastafari, to justify its logic of resistance, like protest movements before it, relies on imagery and principles borrowed from the Bible.

Finally, cultural/historical contingencies create opportunities by providing the necessary resources for the very construction of a social movement culture. The status of a social movement is altered as a result of its participants ability to develop a new culture. The more a social movement has an elaborate movement culture the more it is recognized as legitimate. The Rastafari has been a successful social movement in this sense. As the history of the Rastafari shows the political parties that are part of the establishment have used Rastafarian symbols in their contest for power. Interestingly enough, in Jamaica the battle for political supremacy has been decided by an efficient use of Rasta symbols. An important lesson to be drawn from this is that cultural/historical contingencies allow movement participants to construct political opportunities. Political opportunities can be created by social movements themselves even under societies where they are originally treated with suspicion and repression. The case of the Rastafari is a classical example.

CHAPTER VI

THE RASTAFARI AND DECENTEREDNESS

The existence of strong indigenous organization is the second variable that, according to the political process model, plays an important role in the emergence and development of a social movement. The significance of an indigenous organization in strengthening a social movement lies in providing movement participants the institutional mechanism by which political opportunities are translated into social protest. This is made possible because organizations allow social movements to get the most out of four crucial resources: leadership, members, solidary incentives, and communication networks (McAdam 1982). Further emphasizing on the role of mobilizing frameworks in the later stages of collective action McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald (1994: 13) contend that for a social movement "to survive, insurgents must be able to create a more enduring organizational structure to sustain collective action."

DECENTEREDNESS

With regard to the role of organizational strength, once again, in our utilization and assessment of the political process model, we are confronted by an important challenge, for the Rastafari's strength has been in the absence of formal organization. The informal network and the organizational fluidity that characterize the movement has led me to characterize the Rastafari as a decentered movement. By a *decentered movement* I mean a collective action which, in its endeavor to attain its goals, relies less on formal organizational frameworks. The Rastafari is a decentered social movement in the sense that it has sustained its existence via strong social ties, and informal networks. Formal organization a la RM theory and the political process model has been *significantly* absent in the history of the movement.

Decenteredness and Political Process Model

The weakness of the political process model for failing to account the development of social movements without formal organization can be explained in terms of its relationship to the resource mobilization theory. The latter assumes that the challenges that social movements face once they are set in motion can only be tackled through the tactics and strategies that formal organizations formulate. It is assumed, then, that without formal organization a social movement would be in disarray and its movement participants would be far from attaining their goals. This is in line with the assumption of the theory that organizational dynamics, and not ideational or structural processes, are primarily responsible for determining the ebb and flow of collective actions.

Accordingly, resource mobilization theory is limited when it comes to the analysis of social movements in non-Western and authoritarian societies. Greater reliance on the analysis of social movements of the Western world has led to the absence of an account of the case of those societies that fail to accommodate the demands of collective actions that symbolically or objectively challenge the existing establishment. At times the legitimacy of social movements is not recognized let alone their adherents are allowed to develop formal organizations. Often these social movements are obstructed from developing formal organizations openly; informal networks or clandestine social movement organizations become the substitute (Pfaff 1996). Hence, the possibility for having social movements that are decentered is at variance with the basic premise of resource mobilization theory. It is with good reason, thus, resource mobilization theorists have not directed their attention the to study of social movements in the non-Western world.

Reasons for Decenteredness

Now why would the Rastafari rely on informal networks rather than formal organizational frameworks? The examination of the history of the movement shows that the decenteredness that features the Rastafari emanates from two sources. Firstly, the Rastafari was born in a pre-hegemonic society where the rule of consent has been wanting, and as a result of which political opposition found a harsh treatment. To be more exact, the Rastafari is an adaptation to a social situation where political decent is not accommodated. As we have seen in the discussion on Rastafari and political opportunities the movement had to withstand a stiff challenge from the establishment before it asserted itself as a legitimate collective action (Barrett 1997, Campbell 1994, Lewis 1993). Added to this was the "aggressive posture" (Chevannes 1994:13) that the Rastafari, especially during the first phase of the movement, have shown against the establishment. This posture has been to the disadvantage of the Rastafarians as the harassment that they received from the police outweighed its positive impact. The treatment of the early leaders of the movement, such as Leonard Howell, Claudius Henry and others, was among the reasons that strongly prompted the Rastafarians to be leaderless (Barrett 1977: 91).

The hostility that the Rastafari received both by the middle classes and the government in the 1950s led to a new approach. It was at this time that Rastafarians sought an investigation of their movement by the University College of the West Indies, the result of which was the famous University Report (Smith et al 1960). The Report had positive ramifications both in terms of bringing the philosophy of the Rastafari to the public and legitimizing the movement.

Secondly, the Decenteredness of the Rastafarians emanates from the political/religious stance of their movement. This stance discourages any form of formal

organization and leadership. Formal organization implies some form of negotiation with the establishment, which according to the Rastafari is unnecessary and harmful. If not negotiation with the establishment, formal organization implies again some form of interest in the existing politics. On the other hand, lack of interest in Jamaican politics makes it unnecessary to have an organization that would participate in the Jamaican political arena. Hence, since the Rastafarians posit Ethiopia as the ultimate home of black people attaining this goal through formal organization is considered as superfluous.

Moreover, the belief in a living God throws a cold water on anyone who claims leadership. The living God is not only the ultimate decision maker, but there is no distinction between him and his followers. Every member is, thus, an autonomous person whose obligation is to nothing but the convictions of his/her inner self. In this sense, the Rastafari is anti-hierarchy through and through. Every Rastafarian is a professional activist in his/her own right. Thus, it is of no avail to have a formal organization in so far as a symmetrical relationship between leaders and the led is at variance with the philosophy of the Rastafari.

LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

McAdam (1982:56) is aware of the limitations of having formal organizations. He points out that the formation of formal organizations "renders the movement increasingly vulnerable to the destructive forces of oligarchization, coaptation, and the dissolution of indigenous support." This statement is of primary importance to the understanding of the concept of decentered movements. Indeed, the Rastafari has gone beyond these "destructive forces" because of its reliance on informal networks. Let us look at each one of these forces in the light of the development of the Rastafarian movement.

Oligarchization

The dangers of oligarchization were avoided by the Rastafari mainly because of

the absence of leaders. After the 1950s the Rastafari has been characterized by the absence of leadership (Barrett 1997, Edmonds 1998, Chevanes 1994, Yawney 1984). This, odd as it may seem, has been at the expediency of the movement. In the presence of formal channel the leading group could have gradually become a semi-autonomous entity with its own vested interest as opposed to the general interest of the Rastafarian community. The alienation of the group that assumes the leadership role from movement participants, as the history of many social movements has shown, could lead to a greater tension within, and ultimately leading to the disintegration of, a social movement. Besides, greater reliance on leaders is problematic because at a time when the leading group finds a harsh treatment from social control agencies followers would be in disarray.

The absence of the distinction between the led and leaders has also saved the movement from a sharp distinction being created regarding the interpretation and definition of the situation. Two different "reading of events" that come as a result of a dichotomy that exists between movement participants and their leaders, and often leading to the split within a social movement (Tarrow 1994:123), has been virtually nonexistent among the Rastafarians. Leaders, as the social movement literature shows conclusively, are often over time interested in maintaining the status of their organization more than defending the values of their movement. The reading of events, thus, can not be the same across leaders and ordinary followers. The absence of the distinction between leaders and the rank and file has permitted the Rastafari to encounter the problems associated with the "two reading of events" minimally.

By and large, the absence of "leadership hierarchy that exercises control" (Edmonds 1998:349) had a positive impact on the development of the Rastafari. The chasm that exists between the leading and the led among political movements, and

giant religious leaders and their audience among traditional religious movements, has been nonexistent among the Rastafari. Overall, lack of formal organization that characterizes the Rastafari has marked the democratic nature of the movement. As a result the understanding of social of events has been qualitatively the same across all members of the movement. With respect to the interpretation of social issues on the basis of the perspective of the movement all members enjoy the same intellectual status. The collective efforts of everyone, in turn, has contributed to the endurance of the movement.

This, however, does not mean that the Rastafari has freed itself from all forms of oligarchization. With the Rastafari, the problem of oligarchization has manifested itself in another way. "Cultural Rastas", because of their growing success in the music industry, have become a class unto themselves. Bob Marley, for instance, by the time he died has left his family 30 million dollars worth of wealth (White 1994). This shows a marked contrast between Reggae musicians and ordinary followers who live on bare subsistence. Rastafarians have complained to the fact that Reggae singers have alienated themselves from indigenous groups because of their wealth. Accumulating wealth contradicts the philosophy of the movement, and is a subtle way of collaborating with Babylon.

Coaptation

Throughout its history the Rastafari has been anti-coaptation (Campbell 1994; Edmonds 1998; Hutton & Murrell 1998). The combination of the radical principles by which the movement is guided and its accompanying features of decenteredness has rendered coaptation difficult. The movement has always fought against coaptation since the Rastafarians have been consistently against what they perceive is the source of all evil, Babylon. Babylon is an evil empire with which one would hardly negotiate.

Negotiation, the Rastafari believe, is always to the advantage of Babylon. Such an understanding is based on the experiences of the Rastafari themselves and the history of collective actions that have prevailed in Jamaica. Hence, following their slogan of "chanting down Babylon," the Rastafari have unceasingly expressed their dissatisfaction through "political dissonance and cultural resistance" (Murrell 1998:10). A just society could only come as a result of its destruction.

This unmitigated posture is largely responsible for the Rastafari to assert itself as a decentered movement. The Rastafarians fear of the establishment that it is anti-Rastafarian through and through has occasioned the assumption that to be organized formally is to be the target of the group whose vested interest lies in destroying the movement. The Rastafarians have put this well: "wa jain kyan brok!" (what is joined together can be broken)" (Chevannes 1994: 32). Indeed, what is visibly organized is exposed to those who want to break it up. Under repressive regimes, diffuse mass movements, like the Rastafari, are most likely to protect themselves than those social movements whose formal organizations are exposed to the challenges of social control agencies. Social movements suffer when these agencies attack their formal organizations which often act as a nucleus of collective action.

Yet, despite the resolute stance of the Rastafarians, there were efforts by the establishment to coopt the movement (Yawney 1984). In some of these cases the Rastafarians themselves have willingly participated, although their case is an exception to the rule. Until recently coopting the Rastafari often involved not by recognizing the legitimacy of the movement or accommodating part of the demands of the movement. Mostly the establishment's tactics involved in redirecting the attention of members of the Rastafari from the basic premises of the movement. There are two cases worth discussing in this respect. In both cases the tactics involved deconstructing the symbolic

significance of the movement's basic assumptions.

The first has to do with the visit of the emperor in 1966. The visit was intended to redirect the attention of the Rastafari (Chevannes 1994). HaileSelassie was expected to "enlighten" his followers that he is an ordinary person. This, however, was based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the movement. The Rastafari responded to this challenge in reference to the Biblical statement that God is humble and he expects his followers to do same. Hence, if HaileSelassie does not acknowledge his divinity it is because he is true to his word. The visit, accordingly, far from deradicalizing the adherents of the movement, the Rastafari has shown a remarkable development after the emperor's visit. HaileSelassie did not speak over the issue whether he is the living God. This was considered by the Rastafari as unpretentiousness on his part, rather than a case in point that invalidates the central theme of the movement.

The second tactic has to do with the relationship between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Rastafari. According to some Rastafarians the Jamaican establishment has used the church to deradicalize the movement. On this issue one Rastafarian noted: "In some respect I see the church [Ethiopian Orthodox Church] as something to soothe the minds of men; something that blunts the militant will of the people. So I am not a church person" (Barrett 1997: 207). The Rastafari has displayed an ambivalent position towards the Ethiopian church. Some have rejected it on the ground that it is one of the varieties within the Christian religion. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not believe in the divinity of HaileSelassie. Its teachings resemble the Catholic church more than it does to the theology and ritual of the Rastafari. And any church that bear likeness to the Catholic church, from a Rastafarian perspective, is subject to suspicion. The efforts of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church were, thus, seen as part of the efforts of the establishment to deemphasize the goals and ethos of the Rastafari.

But its Ethiopic foundations, that it is one of the oldest religions in the world very much associated with the independence of the country, were tempting. After all it is this church which has crowned HaileSelassie I; and if the Bible has been originally written in an Ethiopian language, it is none but this Church that can lay claim to the possession of the original source. There are, thus, good reasons to consider the Ethiopian Orthodox church as the source of spiritual faith. The ambivalent position is resolved by some, as in the case of Bob Marley during his death bed, by becoming a member of the church (White 1994). By and large, however, the establishment of the Church has not significantly altered the nature of the movement, especially with respect to its ethos.

Indigenous Support

Given the aforementioned factors, it is not hard to imagine why the movement can not suffer from the problems of indigenous support. The Rastafari have developed their own movement culture which has acted both as a means of withstanding extraneous challenges providing an alternative way of life to members. Consequently, the culture has served as an important medium of solidary incentives. For various reasons movement participants may be attracted to be a member of the Rastafari, but it is the movement culture that has kept them within the bounds of the Rastafarian collective action.

Two interrelated reasons prevail here. First the movement culture of the Rastafari is centered around the "re-culturing" (Lee 1981:5) of Jamaicans of African descent. Although some of the themes of the Rastafari movement culture contradict the values of the mainstream culture, generally it is based on reinvigorating black consciousness. As Murrell noted (1998: 5) long before the term "Afrocentricity" entered the vernacular of Black insurgents in the United States, "Jamaican Rastafarians had embraced the concept as the most important recipe for naming their reality and

reclaiming their black heritage in the African diaspora". Secondly, and most importantly, in the process of constructing their movement culture the Rastafarians are so innovative that movement participants are able to free themselves from the inhibiting social factors that place Jamaicans of African descent at the lower end of their society. Rastafarian creativity, on the other hand, allows blacks to elevate themselves to a higher level. These processes, thus, not only encourage adherents of the Rastafari to stay within the movement but they also attract new participants.

In addition to the movement culture of the Rastafari, the decentered nature of the movement in general and epistemological individualism (Cashmore 1979) in particular were the factors that have reinforced indigenous support. Decenteredness has kept indigenous support intact because members are not constrained by rigid rules that formal organizations often entail. The absence of a dichotomy between leaders and the led, doctrinal and organizational fluidity, as we shall see later, have been the major forces of attraction. These traits grant members the opportunity to be signifying agents rather than passive participants, for both features evince the extent of the movement's unequivocal commitment to transcend existing society. This desire to go beyond what *is* thus provided a solid foundation for the reinforcement of solidary incentives.

Epistemological individualism also further augments the role of the Rastafarian as a signifying agent. Epistemological individualism is a process which allows every member to participate in interpreting the ethos of the movement in his/her own way. This interpretative approach "leads the Rastafarian insistence on radical freedom and democracy that is very resistance to centralization" (Edmonds 1998b: 352). Ironically, this aspect of the Rastafari resolved the problem of consensus formation, for on the basis of their individual understandings, the Rastafarians were enlivening the basic principles of their movement. The same intellectual status that every Rastafarian enjoys

with regard to the interpretation of the philosophy of the movement has been one of the greatest assets of the movement. By virtue of playing the role of an active advocate and defender of the movement every member has been in a position to contribute to the development of the Rastafari. Hence, epistemological individualism, as one might imagine, far from creating dissent and internal conflict, has minimized intramovement contest over the movement's definition of reality. Members could have been constrained from extending unreserved support if there were imperious rules by which they have to abide. The movement by setting its members free to think and decide unto themselves has created a condition for them to be part of the movement without any form of coercion.

By and large, the Decenteredness of the Rastafari has protected it from the deradicalizing impacts of organization and leadership. Piven and Cloward (1977) have come to the same conclusion in their study of poor people's movements. According to these researchers, formal organizations steal from powerless out-establishment groups their negative inducements, that is, their ability to suspend the establishment's engagement in mundane undertakings. Negative inducements are mitigated as a result of the social movement organizations' participation in formal politics.

STRUCTURAL AND PRECEPTUAL VERSATILITY

How does decenteredness of the Rastafari manifest itself? The literature regarding this dimension of the movement suggests that there are two features that are at the center stage of this characteristics. I have subsumed these two features under the rubric of *versatility*. The two most important features of the Rastafari in which decenteredness reveals itself include: *structural* and *preceptual versatility*.

Structural Versatility

Virtually every scholar of the Rastafari has noted that the absence of formal

organization is one of the salient features of the movement. Barrett (1982), for instance, notes that the Rastafari is an "acephalous" movement. The Rastafari, according to him, believe that the existence of a leader is detrimental to the cause of the movement. In his recent work, Chevannes observes that the Rastafari "is highly fragmented and unorganized" (1994:31). Similar conclusions have been made by Owens (1976) according to whom the rule of direct democracy in which none of the members occupies a privileged status is characteristics of the movement.

Coherence: To say that the Rastafari is a decentered movement does not mean that it is in complete disarray. Despite its acephalous nature the movement has "nodes of connection" (Barrett 1997) throughout Jamaica and other parts of the world. Recently, Edmonds (1998b) has contended that although the Rastafari do not have formal organization it does not mean that their movement is amorphous. It is rather "reticulate," that is, "constitutes a cohesive movement with identifiable structures and a shared ideological-symbolic ritual ethos (Page 349). Of course the issue of centralization is not a topic that movement participants are not allowed to deliberate over. Edmonds (1998b) notes that at numerous occasions the issue has presented itself for discussion. Yet even under these deliberations the Rastafari see centralization in the light of intensive collaboration and interaction among movement participants rather than formal organization wherein a categorical distinction is made between the leading and the led. Edmonds (1998b: 358) concludes that "with all its plurality, Rastafari is a cohesive movement. It is structured by relationships, a distinctive ideological-symbolic ethos, and routine ritual activities." Thus, structural versatility far from harming the movement has augmented solidarity among movement participants and contributed to the endurance of the movement.

Despite its structural versatility other researchers have also noted that the

Rastafari is not a chaotic movement. The existence of what the Rastafarians call "the House" (Chevannes 1994:32) gives the movement some form of coherence. The House is an informal organization to which the Rastafarians have allegiance. This informal organization is run by a seventy two "Assembly of Elders." The elders are not formally elected, but are those who are resourceful and show interest in administering "the affairs of the House, such as planning liturgical events, settling disputes, or appointing delegations as the need arises" (Page 32). The function of elders is, thus, by far less than what one would expect from leaders of a formal organization. Their role is limited. Utmost their role is "inspirational" (Barrett 1997). Since their role in the processes of maintaining as well as constructing the movement exceeds the ordinary member, the elders could be labeled as the movement facilitators of the Rastafari.

Emergent Religion: Structural versatility is also manifest in the religious dimension of the movement. The Rastafari is what a sociologist of religion call an "emergent religion" (Johnson-Hill 1995:5). The absence of formal organizations, leadership and official creeds is what differentiates emergent religions from the traditional ones. The Rastafari as an emergent religion differs from traditional religions such as Christianity. The absence of churches and leaders, and attitude with regard to the Bible is what makes the Rastafari unique. Since the Rastafarians consider each member as a church unto himself/herself the existence of a separate Rastafarian church is considered as superfluous. Prayers and other religious rituals can be conducted in any place as long as there are a group of Rastafarians.

Again with the Rastafari there are no professional staff of ministers who provide leadership and disseminate the doctrines of the movement. There are no Rastafarian priests who have received training from a specialized school. Unlike main-line religions, the Rastafari do not have an established institution that formally trains a set of religious

experts whose purpose is to disseminate the message of the movement. Even the Rastafari do not refer to the teaching of Haile Selassie as Christians and Muslims do to the teachings of Christ and Mohammed. This is simply because that Haile Selassie does not have a set of religious principles that he has set out for his followers, nor has he at any time declared himself as the leader of the movement. This could be part of the reason why the Rastafari are at liberty in interpreting the messages of the Bible.

Preceptual Versatility

Preceptual versatility I mean a quality of being less dogmatic with respect to the interpretation and alteration of the precepts of a social movement. Speaking of this versatility Breiner (1985: 37) notes that the Rastafari is "a religion of talk, and not of dogma; it comprises a community of prophets, not of priests or even preachers". Anthropologist Carole Yawney has observed that the precepts of the Rastafari are "continually evolving and open-ended propositions" (Cited in Breiner 1985 :370). It is with good reason then that the Rastafari consists of different types of groups each enjoying a relative autonomy with regard to the interpretation of the fundamental ethos of the movement. As Clarke (1994) has aptly put it, to the extent that it has become a dogma in its own right, the Rastafarians strongly believe that their movement does not have a dogma. By and large, the Rastafari do not consistently rely on a rigid set of precepts that are immune from scrutiny. Members are not expected to accede to the "truths" of the movement by faith.

Yet this does not mean that one can be a member of the Rastafari by completely abrogating the basic principles of the movement. In this sense there are fundamental creeds around which the Rastafarian discourse is centered around. Preceptual versatility, therefore, should be understood as a state of condition in which fundamental principles are subject to individual/group interpretation. One can not, for instance, deny

the importance of HaileSelassie I while at the same time claiming adherence to the movement. One, however, can go to the extent of denying divinity to the emperor in the Christian sense of the term while at the same time acknowledging the symbolic significance of the emperor as a living God.

The fluidity of the Rastafarian creed has manifested itself in the alteration in the number of themes that are at the center stage of the Rastafarian ethos (Clarke 1994:65). Some have persisted whereas others have either lost their significance or has become extensions of the most important ones. Originally there were six central themes including the belief in reincarnation, HaileSelassie as the living God, repatriation, Ethiopia is heaven, the black race is a superior race, blacks will take revenge against whites, and repatriation will be carried out under the auspice of HaileSelassie (Simpson 1955). Later, Smith and Nettleford (1960) noted that the basic assumptions were reduced to four. Finally the only two remaining basic precepts include that HaileSelassie is the living God and that salvation of black people shall be possible through repatriation (Bowen 1971). Even with the remaining assumptions we see a wide range of interpretations.

Reasoning

Primarily responsible for these changes are social circumstances and the increasing intellectual sophistication of the Rastafarians themselves; and the medium through which these interpretations have found expression is what the Rastafari call *reasoning*. Reasoning is a discourse situation in which every participant acts as a novice as well as an expert pertaining to the topic under discussion. During reasoning sessions ganja, the holy herb, is smoked for "spiritual healing and insights" (Edmonds 1998: 355).

Reasoning is to the Rastafari what Sunday schools are to Christians. Yet reasoning sessions differ from the latter in some crucial senses. Reasoning sessions are discursive conclaves among equals, no member possesses a privileged status.

Audience-preacher distinction does not have a meaning here. No member of a group is endowed with more intellectual power to set the assumptions that the rest have to follow, nor does a charismatic figure decide what is judicious or implausible for the group as a whole. This would contradict the Rastafarian dictum that the living God dwells within every member of the movement. If there is a measuring rod by which "truths" are evaluated what matters is the experience of the individual and the group as a whole, and not what a prominent figure among the Rastafari has to say. Reasoning sessions indeed show that the Rastafarians are a "community of prophets" (Breiner 1985:30). Truth then is not a sacred substance that pertains to a selected few. It is rather a dynamic theme that constantly unravels and finds its place in the minds of every Rastafari.

Another mark of reasoning sessions that set them off from Sunday schools is that they are not conducted in a specific time and place. They are carried out where members find it suitable. Moreover, attendances are not occasioned by the obligation that members owe to the movement. Participants are free to make up their minds regarding attendance; even they are free to leave a session at a time convenient for them. Often sessions are dispersed after a long hours of discourse by the time of which participants have reached a tentative consensus.

The most important mark of reasoning is that it is a "continuous process" (Yawney 1984: 110). No reasoning session is a conclave unto itself in the sense that no conclusions are made for good. Each session is a moment in which previous discussions and conclusions are reevaluated on the basis of new insights and interpretations. Basic assumptions are appraised in the light of current events. Hitherto unexamined historical facts are considered and incorporated within the framework of the Rastafarian discourse. By and large, by looking at them from a Rastafarian perspective different information are made to make sense. Each reasoning session is, thus, as

Breiner (1985) has pointed out, an occasion in which the "authoritative individuality" of every Rasta is made possible.

Preceptual Versatility in Action

This "authoritative individuality" in turn puts preceptual fluidity in action. Indeed as Owens (1972: 37) noted "the wealth of speculative genius among the brethren could never tolerate a monolithic, dogmatic faith." Overall, preceptual versatility has resulted either in a multiplicity of views on some issues, or the movement as a whole has adopted a new perspective on others. Since the inception of the Rastafari preceptual versatility has manifested itself through the interpretation of the most important themes of the movement, including the status of the emperor, the meaning of repatriation, the role of the Bible, and race/gender issues.

The Living God: The divinity of HaileSelassie I of Ethiopia is among the major themes of the movement that has sustained the blows of preceptual versatility. Yet this has never meant that all movement participants of the Rastafari have the same perspective on the issue of the living God.

On one hand, there are those groups who deny the divinity of HaileSelassie without abrogating his symbolic importance. HaileSelassie himself has neither explicitly denied nor has he acknowledged his divinity. Those who deny his divinity have strong evidences at their disposal. His devotion to the Christian religion and some of his own words indicate that he considers himself as a human being rather than a person endowed with supermundane power. For instance, in his introduction to the newly translated Bible in Amharic he said: "And I might say for myself that from early childhood I was thought to appreciate the Bible and my love for it increases with the passage of time. All through my troubles I have found it a cause of infinite comfort.". Of course, these are not the words of God. This and other facts have led some Rastafarians to

consider HaileSelassie as a person with his "weaknesses and faults" (Lee 1981 :32).

Yet that he is a symbolic figure remains true even with these group of people.

HaileSelassie as a symbolic figure in this sense provides a positive moment that bestows members to share the moments of "black spirituality".

On the other hand, there are groups who unequivocally recognize the divinity of the emperor. This group is more "*churchical*" (religious-oriented) and less "*statical*" (political-oriented) than the previous group. Among this group the emperor's "weaknesses" are defended. For instance, to Marcus Garvey and others HaileSelassie's flight from Ethiopia during the World War II have been one of the grave mistakes that the emperor has committed. To this group, however, the flight is "likened to the flight of the Christ-child from the Slaughter of innocents in Jerusalem. A man of peace avoids war" (Lee 1981: 36). Perhaps the strongest challenge that this group has faced was when the emperor died in 1974. This group have vehemently denied the death of the emperor. Instead after 1974 the idea of the "disappearance" of the living God has emerged. HaileSelassie's disappearance has augmented the myth surrounding him; hence, rather than being discouraged, his death has actually strengthened their belief in the principle of an eternal and a living God.

Repatriation: Perhaps one of the areas in which doctrinal fluidity has produced two interesting perspectives with respect to the same issue is repatriation. Although Rastafarians are tied together by the same theme of redemption, they differ with regard to their interpretation of "stepin' outa Babylon," that is, repatriation. On one end of the spectrum are those who understand this process of leaving Babylon (repatriation) in the physical sense of the term. According to this group only Africa/Ethiopia provides the avenue for the construction of a new culture in which the self-actualization of the black person is asserted. These Rastafarians "have a strong expectation of a new order of

existence in a radically new setting" (Murrell and Taylor 1998:392). Only under such setting do the wrongs perpetrated against blacks in general, and Rastafarians in particular, can be corrected. Yet this setting is not new in the sense that the Rastafarians are new arrivals, strangers in a strange land. Stepping out of Babylon, in this case, is a return to ones own, and true home.

On the other end of the spectrum are those who understand repatriation on the basis of the redefinition of the situation. This group understands repatriation as the process of deconstructing one form of consciousness for the purposes of reasserting/constructing another. The primary interest of this group lies in "mental decolonization, of returning away from the ethos, mores, and values of colonial society and a reconversion to the African view and way of life" (Clarke 1994: 51). Hence, at the center of this intellectual "stepping outa Babylon" is Afrocentricism, a belief in which things African are affirmed and adhered. The stereotype that surrounds Africa and African is surpassed by "a positive understanding of and commitment to African culture and tradition (Hutton and Murrell 1998: 37).

The difference between the two interpretations lies in the emphasis on space and place. Those who adhere to physical repatriation contend that place is a recaptured meaningful space, and all settings are not meant for this sacred goal. Some spaces especially those contaminated by the vagaries of slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism can not be free from the elements that interfere with black spirituality. With those who adhere with the second interpretation, on the other hand, the construction of Rastafarian place can not be obstructed by physicality. The spiritual dimension of the Rastafari which entails "a condition of peace and wholeness" (Forsythe 1995:110) overcomes every kind of space. As long as each adherent has transcended Babylon mentally the tranquil and noble life that the Rastafari quest can be attained.

The Bible: Even with respect to the Bible, considered as a sacred book by the Rastafarians, the approach of movement participants is flexible. Most Rastafari have what Murrell and Williams (1998: 327) call "hermeneutic suspicion" on the Bible. These Rastafarians believe that the original Bible has been written in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. Currently the Bible is a "purloined history of the African race" (Waters 1984: 47) that has, in the hands of oppressors, suffered from the "errors of commission and omission" (Forsythe 1995:46). They believe that either some truths were deliberately distorted for deceptive purposes, or most important portions of the Bible were thrust aside to defend the interests of the masters. On the other hand, there are Rastafarians who are opposed to this view. With this group of the Rastafari an African-centered Christianity, which recognizes the truth values of the Bible as it is, is condoned. A group of Rastafarians who call themselves Twelve Tribes of Israel to which Bob Marley belonged, adhere to this view. They "accept the Bible from Genesis to Revelation without any restrictions or any qualifications" (Murrell and Williams 1998:327).

In addition to the two contrasted views, what makes the Rastafarian discourse on the Bible interesting is that a number of propositions are utilized to defend two different views. This is the case with dreadlocks, for instance. The Bible in this case is used both to defend or refute the same contention. Those who emphasize the importance of dreadlocks defend their views in the light of the following Biblical statement "quote...". Whereas those who see no problem with being "combsome", that is, cut and comb ones hair, quote I Corinthians 11:14: "Doth not nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him." This group are convinced that a member should be judged by what he/she does and not by what he/she has on his/her head.

Dreadlocks and combsome Rastafarians also show flexibility with regard to their dietary rules. In both cases no movement participant is obligated to refrain from eating

animal flesh if circumstances do not provide other options. Bob Marley himself at the end of his life was forced to break the dietary rules due to illness (White 1994).

Individuals can also abstain from adhering to the Rastafarian dietary rule for intellectual reasons. This group believe, after the Bible, that it is that which comes out of and not that comes into the mouth that spoils the mind. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth" (Romans 14:3).

Race and Gender: Preceptual versatility on the part of the Rastafari has also manifested itself in connection with social issues, especially concerning the role of Rasta women and the participation of non-blacks in the Rastafarian movement.

In the early days of the Rastafari the idea that "blacks are superior to whites" was one of the central themes of the movement (Simpson 1953). Following this creed other non-Black racial groups were denied membership. Currently, however, this has changed and the movement is accommodating non-blacks as well. As one Rastafari puts it "I and I [we] don't check for the skin anymore, I and I check for the spirit" (Clarke 1994: 97). The idea of brotherly and sisterly love has replaced the superiority of blacks over other groups. This stance has allowed the movement to shed off its exclusivist orientation. As a result, we see a substantial increase in the number of nonblack Rastas, especially white Rastas.

On gender issue, the Rastafari had hitherto exhibited a contradictory position. On one hand, Rasta men, unlike their counterparts in Jamaica, actively participate in the process of rearing children. Yet, the movement has been adamant in its relegation of women to a secondary status. The justification offered thereof is religious in tone. Rasta women, although referred to as "Queens," are considered incapable of acquiring divine knowledge in their own right; their participation in rituals is drastically limited; they are not allowed to cook when they are menstruating. All these beliefs and practices have made

women to occupy a subaltern status in the world of the Rastafari.

Hence, in contrast to other West Indies and Latin American religions that are dominated by women, with the Rastafari men have the upper hand (Breiner 1982: 30).

This stance regarding women has been one of the anomalies that has contributed to the negative portrayal of the movement. The subordinate position of women in the movement is a contradiction in terms with the avant-garde cultural dynamics that the Rastafari has exhibited. Here we have a classical case of the influence of society on a movement notwithstanding the intentions of the latter to go beyond the former. The Rastafari, like any other social movement, has been caught by the trammels of social praxis. Despite its efforts to get rid of oppression and its attempt to reassert black identity, the Rastafari has for a very long time failed to extricate itself from the "patriarchal ideology" (Yawney 1994) of its society.

Against this anomalous background, recently researchers have observed "the increasing vocality of women" (Chevannes 1995:15), as a result of which the movement is altering its hitherto held assumptions about women. Because of this development some researchers have gone to the extent of setting up a distinction between the "old" and the "new" Rastafari (Turner 1994). The new Rastafari, among other things, is premised on "gender consciousness" and is against the "male deal" that has dominated the movement heretofore. In the world of the new Rastafari women have flied in the face of conventional practices such as covering their dreadlocks, and wearing only ankle-length dresses in public. Indeed longstanding assumptions about the role of women are changing. Further attesting to this new development is the emergence of Rasta women like Barbara Makeda Lee (1981), Maureen Rowe (1998), and Imani M. Tafari-Ama (1998) who brilliantly articulate the philosophy of the movement. The rise to prominence of such women signal significant changes in gender relations in the movement.

INFORMAL NETWORKS

Given the importance of organizational and perceptual versatility in the Rastafari an important question that emerges is how, without the prevalence of formal organizations, the diffusion of Rastafarian frame of reality among adherents is made possible? And if there is a medium through which the Rastafarian version of reality is diffused, how were this frame of understanding maintained among movement participants? Since the Rastafarians had no formal organization which acted as the "sponsor" of meaning, resources, and collective identity, we have to seek the answer to these questions in the informal networks available to the Rastafari.

Density

The importance of informal networks is easily apparent when we look at the fact that "a large number of Rastas remain concentrated in densely populated urban slums" (Johnson-Hill 1995:32). In some communities, which the Rastafari call, "mansions", a significant portion of Rastafarians live together over a long historical period. As a result of this historical continuity some places, such as West Kingston, have earned a "mythical aura" (Yawney 1984: 96).

Hence, movement mobilization among the Rastafarians has been rendered easy as a result of the existence of members in highly dense areas. The concentration of the Rastafarians in the same area had provided the occasion for a high degree of interaction. Constant face to face interaction between members of the movement, in turn, has allowed Rastafarian ideas to travel from person to person with less ease. The mutual trust and interdependence that came thereof has also created solidarity among movement participants. The concentration of Rastafarians in the same area sharing the same life chances has been, therefore, one of the most conducive, if not the necessary, conditions for the existence and development of the Rastafari in spite of formal

organizations.

Submerged Networks

Social movement scholars have formulated concepts of movement networks that resemble to the Rastafarian informal networks. Melluci's concept of submerged network (1989) provides us with a good deal of insight to the issue under discussion. Like Melluci's submerged networks, Rastafarian informal networks involve group processes in which the connection between everyday life and system attribution is established. Participants of the Rastafari often interpret their personal misfortunes in the light of Babylonian theory, according to which Babylon, Western civilization, is responsible for the problems that blacks are encountering all over the world.

At the center of the Rastafarian submerged network is reasoning. The examination of this Rastafarian cognitive praxis provide us with an understanding of the importance of informal networks. First, reasoning sessions provide Rastafarians the contingency to deliberate over issues pertaining to their social life. Second, it is during these reasoning sessions that Rastafarians construct collective action frames that resonate with the cultural values and norms of the social group that they claim to represent. Hence, reasoning has acted as an important medium in establishing the connection between everyday life and the Rastafarian frame of reality and reinforcing the conviction of members. The fact that members have the chance to listen to Rastafarian views repeatedly and that they themselves are allowed to express their thoughts has always been indeed to the advantage of the movement.

Reasoning is in this sense a form of theory testing, but the practice is not intended to disprove the Rastafarian perspective. In most cases available information is presented as further proof of the Rastafarian theory, or in cases where the information contradicts the theory it is presented as deliberately concocted by those who uphold

negative vibration. The most important dimension of reasoning sessions is that they, like Melucci's submerged networks, act as "cultural laboratories". Held in small groups these sessions are not only arenas in which movement ideas flowed freely, they also created the ground for the emergence of new cultural codes. The Rastafarian language, dread talk, for instance, was created in this context. It was, therefore, within the context of these informal networks that dominant cultural codes are deconstructed, and alternative cultural codes are constructed.

However, there are certain dimensions of the Rastafarian networks which Melucci's concept fails to address. With Melucci cultural experimentations carried out in submerged networks are hidden. It is only when actors directly confront the state that the invisible processes of submerged networks become visible. With the Rastafari cultural experimentation is an open book; it is part of the Rastafarian discourse which is often open to the public. Some of the activities carried out in reasoning sessions, like smoking ganja, are at variance with public policy. Reasoning, therefore, is an occasion in which the frames and the political, and cultural codes of the establishment are challenged directly. This feature of the Rastafari contradicts Melucci's contention that the processes that take place in submerged networks are a prelude to collective action. With the Rastafari the processes that take place in informal networks are the arena in which collective action takes place. The processes that assert within the framework of informal networks are not a prelude to collective action, they are collective action. Reasoning, accordingly, is the Rastafarian social movement in motion. That is to say, reasoning sessions are occasions in which the system is challenged at the political, intellectual, and cultural levels.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Social movement scholars make a good deal of emphasis on the importance of

organizational strength. In order to meet the challenges of the system, to which they are opposed, and thereby to sustain their existence, social movements need robust organizational frameworks. Political process model and RM theory are premised on this notion. This contention to a large extent holds true with respect to social movements which are not completely denied political space. The matter, however, as this study shows, is different among social movements that encounter the strongest challenge. Such collective actions rely on other forms of organization other than those specified by RM theory scholars. That is why I have introduced the concept of decenteredness. According to this concept, a social movement can maintain its identity without having formal organization. Such a decenteredness allows social movements to protect themselves from the harsh treatments of the establishment. Decenteredness also acts as a shield to avoid the problems associated with formal organization.

The importance of decenteredness is clearly demonstrated by the history of the Rastafari. The Rastafari as a decentered movement had the advantage of withstanding the pitfalls that come with organizational strength. The three problems that emerge as a result of strong organization- oligarchization, cooptation, and lack of indigenous support- have been avoided by means of decenteredness. The Rastafari is characterized by the absence of the distinction between the leading and the led. This stance of the Rastafari has emanated as a result of a resolute stance of movement members against any form of social stratification. Indigenous support has been reinforced by means of the articulation of a Rastafarian movement culture. This culture has given members both a sense of empowerment and an alternative life style.

Decenteredness among the Rastafari has manifested itself by means of structural and preceptual versatility. Structural versatility has largely involved a form of informal network. Such an informal network has been important in the process of articulating the

Rastafarian ethos and soul language, the medium through which the former finds its expression. Preceptual versatility, on the other hand, has allowed members to participate in the process of self-assertion and understanding. Preceptual versatility has been centered around the interpretation of the basic themes of the movement. On the basis of the basic premises of the movement, every member is allowed to develop his/her thoughts. This fluidity has been of great importance in attracting new members and strengthening the confidence of old members. As a result of preceptual versatility some of the positions of the Rastafari on social issues have undergone transformation.

CHAPTER VII

THE RASTAFARI AND MOVEMENT CULTURE

One of the positive attributes of the political process model is that in its explanation of collective actions it takes a holistic perspective. This holistic perspective is reflected in its recognition of both structural and social psychological processes in the development of social movements. The emphasis here is that opportunities, whether cultural or political, do not directly prompt movement participants to engage in collective actions. Political opportunities and cultural/historical contingencies create the necessary condition for social movements, but in and of themselves they do not translate into collective actions. "Mediating between opportunity and action are people and the subjective meanings that attach to their situations" (McAdam 1982:48). Accordingly, the third variable which, according to the political process model, determines the ebb and flow of social movements is cognitive liberation.

BEYOND COGNITIVE LIBERATION

Cognitive liberation has played a crucial role in the development of the Rastafari. Yet despite its merit in considering ideational factors in the development of social movements, there are certain blindspots of the political process model that need to be corrected.

Reciprocal Influence

First, the political process model does not see the reciprocal influence that exists between political opportunities and cognitive liberation. The model gives a good deal of emphasis on how political opportunities could lead to cognitive liberation, but it does not look at the matter the other way round. This takes us beyond the concept of cognitive liberation as spelled out in the political process model. Cognitive liberation, as the study of the Rastafari shows, is not merely a mediating factor between opportunity and action.

It also serves as an important causal force whose influence surpasses the boundaries of a social movement. Hence, cognitive liberation can accomplish more than the role of a mediating factor.

As this study shows in the development of collective actions cognitive liberation can have three different functions. First, it facilitates in opening up political opportunities that would be in favor of the development and legitimation of a movement. Hence, social movement participants do not wait until political opportunities allow them to engage in collective actions. They could be active in their endeavor to realize their goals in spite of the non-existence of political opportunities. Political opportunities in favor of a social movement could be created through the submerged efforts of movement participants. Second, the cognitive liberation of a social movement could lead to a movement culture that has a wider repercussion on the political, social, and cultural landscape of a society. In the case of the Rastafarian movement, political forces have benefited out of the cultural opportunities created by the success of the cognitive liberation of the Rastafarians. Finally, and most important of all, in the case of social movements that have emerged without political opportunities cognitive liberation serves as the primordial variable that defines their existence and nature. The organizational and doctrinal fluidity of the Rastafari may prompt us to see it as a collective action that lacks coherence and permanency. Yet its multi-dimensional movement culture, cognitive liberation being one of them, define it as a coherent social phenomenon.

Recent Developments

Recently the emphasis on social psychological processes have found a unique expression in the framing perspective of Snow and his associates (1986). The perspective, transcending the view that movement participants are merely the "carriers of extant ideas," looks at them as "signifying agents" who are actively engaged in the social

construction of meanings. The role of social movement participants as signifying agents, however, is not limited to their active engagement in the production of meanings. They also actively participate in the politics of signification, an arena in which different versions of reality contest for symbolic dominance. Social movement frames, therefore, do not exist in an uncontested state of condition. Since in most cases they contain a new set of meanings, collective action frames have to be defended against counter-frames that either already exist, or are created to challenge them.

New social movement theory, the prominent representative of which is Alberto Melluci (1989), has also emphasized on the importance of meaning and identity in the social construction of collective action. The concept of collective identity that these theorists formulated is of great importance to the study of social movements in general and collective actions in the non-Western world in particular. Collective identity involves the "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (Taylor and Whittier 1993:105). One of the merits of New social movement theory lies in its assertion of collective identity as both the product as well as the cause of collective action. Collective identities are not only created in the midst of collective actions, the endeavor to maintain them also becomes a cause for further collective action.

MOVEMENT CULTURE

On the basis of these developments, the concept of cognitive liberation as spelled out by McAdam, and my own observations, I have come to the conclusion that the social psychological foundations of the Rastafari should be considered as a dynamic process which unfolds itself in different stages. At the center of this dynamics is the construction and defense of the Rastafarian movement culture. In the development of the Rastafarian movement culture three different stages could be delineated. First cognitive liberation

comes into being; then movement participants create their symbolic signifiers, finally these symbolic signifiers have to be defended. Hence, the three aspects of the Rastafarian movement culture discussed hereinunder include: cognitive liberation, symbolic signifiers, and politics of signification.

Cognitive liberation

Cognitive liberation is a process by which collective action participants utilize in the construction and definition of the situation from their perspective. Cognitive liberation, as noted earlier, consist of system attribution and political efficacy. In the sections that follow I will discuss these two dimensions of cognitive liberation and the Rastafari. But first I will note the relationship between cultural/historical contingencies and cognitive liberation.

Cultural/historical Contingencies and Cognitive liberation: Cultural/historical contingencies and cognitive liberation are not separate processes. This is clear in the case of the Rastafarian movement. The Rastafarians, as we have noted earlier, have not constructed their unjust frames out of nothing. The origin of the movement has much to do with the cultural/historical contingencies that were available in Jamaican society. In this sense, the Rastafarians are the inheritors of cultural meanings that are punctuated by resistance against economic and racial inequality. The Rastafarians, however, were not merely the receptacles of the past. While getting the most out of the resources created by cultural/historical contingencies, since the inception of their movement, they have been engaged in the process of construction and reconstruction of a new discourse. This discourse of the Rastafari has been first marginalized, but later became an important part of the Jamaican cultural repertoire.

One thing is clear from this development of the movement. The mere existence of cultural/historical contingencies does not ipso facto lead to the emergence of, and,

then, to the development of a social movement. A one-dimensional discussion of collective action on the basis of the concept of cultural/historical contingencies downplays the strenuous efforts that social movement participants put forth in constructing an emergent frame of reality. Our understanding of the Rastafari will be, therefore, seriously constrained if we fail to consider the active role of its adherents. That is why the concept of cognitive liberation which entails agency, "signifying work" on the part of movement participants, plays a crucial role in the explanation of the movement.

Hence, while explaining the Rastafari we should bear in mind that, although the movement is embedded in the socio-cultural history of Jamaica, its cognitive liberation has been the result of the active participation that its adherents have shown both in the creation and defense of the Rastafarian movement culture. It is a gross mistake to characterize the Rastafarian movement as an automatic reproduction of cultural texts. More exactly, the Rastafarians, utilizing existing cultural texts as data, have created their own movement culture. Their unique life-style, language, music, and religion testify to this case.

We can not, accordingly, set up a sharp distinction between cultural/historical contingencies and cognitive liberation; they rather supplement one another. Whereas the former provide cultural resources, the latter pave the ground, among other things, for the reassertion of historical/cultural meanings that have been submerged partly due to the reasons that a social movement emerges. It is the continuity of these processes that explains the social construction of a social movement. In explaining the development of the Rastafari, thus, we can not rely on one of these processes alone. The emergent behavior of the Rastafarians should be interpreted in the light of the cultural matrix that has acted as a spring board for the movement, and at the same time the active role that

the Rastafarians themselves have played should be at the center stage of one's analysis.

The following discussion is premised on this approach.

Aspects of Cognitive Liberation: System attribution and sense of political efficacy are the two dimensions of cognitive liberation discussed by McAdam (1982). System attribution refers to the process by which movement participants assign blame on social systems rather than explaining their predicament in terms of psychological factors or predispositions; political efficacy, in contrast, involves a practical orientation that motivates them to change existing reality. The impact of system attribution and political efficacy as dimensions of cognitive liberation is more pronounced under conditions wherein social integration is strong (McAdam 1982:50). This is because strong social cohesion provides the occasion for the free movement of ideas among members, and the maintenance of participant solidarity and commitment.

System Attribution: One of the distinctive features of the Rastafarian movement is that its members consistently explain the source of their predicament in terms of a system which is perceived to be the primordial author of everything evil. They call the fountainhead of all this abominable existence, Babylon. Here we have a biblical term finding a new meaning in the philosophy of the Rastafari. According to the Rastafari, Babylon "constitutes a symbolic delegitimation of those Western values and institutions that historically have exercised control over the masses of the African diaspora" (Edmonds 1998a: 24).

The Rastafarian theory of Babylon is thus an emergent ideology that provides an alternative explanation for social problems. Babylon, according to this perspective, is a negative space the "chanting down" (destruction) of which can only pave the ground for the emergence of a better social existence. The detest for Babylon is reflected in references made to it in terms such as "shit-em," a Rasta word for system. Shit-em does

two things. It denotes that the level of diagnostic framing that the Rastafari rely on is broad enough that it is capable of explaining past, current, as well as forthcoming events. Secondly, the subject to which responsibility is assigned is deconstructed linguistically. The deconstruction/reconstruction of language is an important aspect of the Rastafarian collective action. The Rastafari, in addition to other symbolic signifiers, use their language to shield themselves against the Babylonian system until it is wholly destroyed (Wivliet 1985:115).

The imagery of Babylon, although borrowed from the Bible, is derived from the actual experiences of the Rastafari. In this sense, no single individual can claim that he/she has discovered it. The ultimate source of the perspective is the life world of the Rastafari. The life world of the Rastafari has been one of frustration and alienation. The legacy of slavery, followed by the processes of colonialization and neo-colonialization are what has occasioned the Babylonian theory. As one Rastafarian put it the imagery of Babylon "is the psychic image sustained by real life experiences, busted hopes, broken dreams, the blues of broken homes and disjointed tribes of people trapped by history" (Forsythe 1995:100). Babylonian theory, more exactly, is an alternative frame of the Rastafari which significantly contradicts the ideology that has entrenched itself throughout Jamaican society.

Consequently, the Rasta perspective that Babylon is accountable to the sorry plight that Jamaica and the world at large face designates a break from the traditional way of explaining social problems. The individual Jamaican is not held answerable to the social problems that Jamaica faces. The Rastafari are against any view that directly or indirectly suggests that individuals who belong to the subaltern classes of Jamaica are amenable to their problems. Victims are not to blame, their felt grievances are explained in relation to a structural force which has imposed itself for a significant number of years.

In this sense the Rastafarian movement is not based on a "psycho-salvational" (Snow & Benford 1993) orientation, although as we shall see later a Rastafarian is marked by his/her unique style of life. To solve the problems of society what is required is not only that the individual frees himself/herself mentally, but a radical restructuring of society is also required. Consistent with this perspective, the Rastafari contend that Jamaicans of African descent have been barred from participating in the process of history making, not because of their individual ideocentricities, but because of the organized practice of Babylonians. From a Babylonian perspective blacks are perceived as the object of and not the subject of history.

Interestingly enough, the Rastafarians do not limit Babylon to Jamaican "shit-em" (Johnson-Hill 1995). Babylon manifests itself both locally as well as internationally. Locally, Babylon mainly encompasses the concerted efforts of different agencies representing social groups who have the greater share of what is available in Jamaican society, be it wealth or power. One of the most important characteristics of this group is that it emulates Western culture to the extent of relegating the culture of the oppressed to a second class status. Western culture is considered as the measuring rod to demarcate that which is lofty or perverted. The Rastafarians interpret the challenges often posed against them in the light of this misguided orientation of Jamaican Babylon. Hence, the relationship between the Rastafari and the establishment has been one of the arenas that has provided the former important direction in the interpretation of the definition of the situation. The reactions of the establishment to the Rastafari is taken to mean that Babylon is at all costs against any kind of effort meant to bring justice. Each challenge posed against the movement is understood as a manifestation of Babylon. These manifestations, in turn, provide cognitive cues that the Babylonian "shit-em" is flawed beyond repair. Each step that Babylon takes against the Rastafari is considered as a

point in history that marks the demise of Babylon.

Outside Jamaica, Babylon cuts across the East as well as the West. The criticism of Babylon does not limit itself to capitalistic forms of existence, other social systems including communist regimes are subjected to Rasta critique. All are considered as "Anancy regimes" (Forsythe 1995). More specifically, however, international Babylon is represented by industrialized nations superheaded by the United States, and religious institutions at the center of which is the Vatican. This being its current manifestation, international Babylon has a long history. According to the Rastafari, world history has been the history of the succession of oppressive eras. Persian, Greek, Roman, British, and American oppressive regimes have each dominated world history. All these regimes were inspired by the activities of "Nebuchadnezzar, the infamous king of the Biblical Babylon" (Johnson-Hill 1995:30). It is within this overall historical context that the Rastafarians' experience and ultimate mission, i.e., the overcoming of the oppression they are subjected to, is explained.

By and large, the Rastafarian theory of Babylon assumes the role of what Snow and his associates (1986) call "articulation". That is to say, the theory acts as a "signaling and collating device" by which different categories of thought of the movement are aligned together. These categories of thought finding an expression in a relatively organized discourse of the Rastafari serve as a mechanism by which social reality in its present, past, and future form is interpreted. Consequently, the Rastafarian frame of Babylon serves as an ideational framework to deconstruct conventional definition of the situation and construct a new version of reality intended to be both a way of understanding existing reality and providing blue-print for the future society.

Thus, the attribution of Babylon as a formidable negative force has acted as a powerful force that has reinforced the movement. The Rastafarian cognitive liberation

was more than a reaction to the Jamaican establishment. It also acted as a causal force that strengthened member commitment. That Babylon is seen as a system that has historically evolved marks the level of sophistication of the Rastafarian system attribution. Cognitive liberation is triggered by the actual and perceived injustices that the Rastafarians have experienced. Once cognitive liberation is set up it becomes a frame through which events are interpreted. The ready-made explanations that the frame provides, in turn, becomes the force that fosters movement participation. Hence, the significance of cognitive liberation in the movement endurance of the Rastafari.

Political Efficacy: At first glance, because of the religious dimension of the movement one would conclude that the Rastafari is otherworldly, and as such does not have a place for political efficacy. Some have even went to the extent of defining the Rastafari as an "escapist movement" (Laternari 1963). In this case the Rastafari is considered as a collective action that evades social and political reality. Further augmenting to this attribution of the Rastafari as an escapist movement is the strong interest that adherents of the movement have shown in the idea of repatriation, and their abnegation to participate in Jamaican politics.

A closer look at the Rastafari, however, shows that the religious dimension of the movement is nothing but a manifestation of politics by other means. The dichotomy set up between Babylon and Ethiopia, and the strong interest that the Rastafarians show in repatriation, entail a political diagnosis of their society accompanied by political prognosis. What gives the movement the semblance of escapism is, so to speak, the garments of religious outlook that cover its ideas. Defining the Rastafari as a political-religious movement is, therefore, more appropriate than reducing it to an escapist movement.

That the Rastafari is not an escapist movement is reflected, in part, in the respect

that the adherents show to Jamaica. Although Jamaica is believed to be a temporary home of the Rastafari, they think highly of it by acknowledging that it is here that their movement is born and cultivated. The Rastafarian word "Jah-make-ya" for Jamaica, which means God has made you, is intended to reflect this respect. As one Rastafarian put it "Since Jamaica is the only place where people have followed the prophecies of Garvey, this shows Rastafari that Jamaica is an important centre of the world with a unique destiny to fulfill, according to God's purpose" (Lee 1981: 31). Indeed, the Rastafarians have strong vindications to acknowledge the historical importance of Jamaica. Prominent figures like Marcus Garvey were produced in Jamaica. The ideology of respecting motherland Africa is no where stronger than in Jamaica.

Further attesting to the political efficacy of the Rastafari is the marked difference that exists between their view of heaven and that of the traditional Christian contention. The latter unequivocally states that heaven is a transcendental reality existing beyond the limits of the physical world. With the Rastafari, on the other hand, heaven is on earth, more specifically in Africa/Ethiopia. What is more, the Rastafarians are against the view that heaven is a reality to be experienced after life. The difference between the two religions, although they both have the Bible as their sacred book, is then between what I call a *vertical* and a *horizontal* conception of heaven. Whereas, the former looks up, the latter limits itself to this world; more exactly, finds heaven in this world.

The Rastafarian solution to the predicament of human existence is based on a horizontal view of heaven for a good reason. To think of heaven as a metaphysical entity is, from this perspective, the highest form of folly, for there is no way we can get access to this reality. This horizontal view of heaven motivates the Rastafarians to seek social change within the bounds of this physical world, although religious ideas are entertained in the explanation of this development. The here-in-the-world view of heaven of the

Rastafari, therefore, shows the political commitment of its movement participants. In this sense, the Rastafari is more political than any religion that encourages its adherents to look for their problems resolved in a trance-mundane realm. The Rastafarian frame gives its followers ample justification that their efforts are worthwhile, and their vision is not a demand for castle in the air. A vertical view of heaven, on the other hand, makes adherents to adopt an acquiescent perspective towards the source of their grievances. Existing reality is accepted rather than the ways to change it are sought.

The determination of the Rastafarians for social change (in accordance with their horizontal view of heaven) is also manifest in their view of death. With the Rastafari death does not "exist" save for the wicked. The religion of the Rastafari is the religion of life. The Rastafari is often contrasted against Christianity by the Rastafarians themselves which, in their opinion, is a "death worshipping" religion. The implication of this assertion in the light of the topic under discussion is interesting. Their philosophical conquest of death implies that they have liberated themselves in thought. Once again, we see here a marked difference between the Christian and the Rastafarian frames of the good life. Where the latter gives hope in the Father's warm thereby suggesting suffering and misery as part of human life on earth, the former expresses a resolute determination to get rid of the forces of evil within the realm of this world. The Rastafari is, to be more precise, a life-celebrating civil religion.

The Rastafarians argument that they are eternal, not in the Christian sense of the word, clearly shows their keen interest in this world and the objective mechanisms of solving its problems. The Rastafari, accordingly, are determined to put up with the difficulties that they face while in Babylon, and the resolution of their problems is perceived as eminent. Babylon, accordingly, is a space where the Rastafarians exist, whereas Ethiopia is the place where they truly belong. This is not the result of blind faith,

but something that they have discovered: "The truth which the Rastafarians know- not just 'believe'- has been discovered by each of them after personal searching of their own experience, examination of scriptural prophesies, prolonged reasoning sessions with other brethren, and endless hours of meditation under the stimulus of the sacred herbs" (Owens 1976:90). All these processes involved in the process of discovering truth clearly demand an active participation on the part of each participant. This collective effort ultimately contributes to the endurance of the movement. The political efficacy of the movement is, thus, among the most important reasons that have contributed to its development.

Symbolic Signifiers

The construction of symbolic signifiers, as the history of the Rastafari shows, is a dynamic process. It needed the active participation of movement participants not only in the process of constructing it, but also in the process of maintaining/defending it as well. The data on the symbolic signifiers of the Rastafari shows that there are what I have called *conspicuous* and *intellectual* marks. These signifiers are symbolic demarcations by which movement participants of the Rastafari maintain their boundary structure from the rest of society. Conspicuous marks are visible and easily accessible to outsiders. By looking at those marks movement participants can be identified with a minimum effort. Intellectual marks, by contrast, although easily noticeable, are invisible and are not effortlessly permeable. The internalization of their features demand more than a superficial attachment of the actor to the movement.

Conspicuous Marks: Dreadlocks, long thatched hair, are one of the most important conspicuous markers by which the Rastafari identify themselves. There are conflicting evidences regarding the origin of dreadlocks (Chevannes 1994). Here I will focus on their symbolic significance. Dreadlocks have dual purposes. On one hand,

they demarcate in-group and out-group distinctions. Symbolizing African heritage and a Samsonian power to overcome difficulties, dreadlocks are part of the Rastafarians' external appearance that typify the boundaries of group membership. The Rastafarians are, however, quick to remark that "fashion dread" (Lee 1981:28) or "'fraudulent' Rastas" (Roberts 1993: 36) can pass for Rastafarian because of their appearance (especially their hair style), but fail as genuine Rastafarian due to lack of commitment that they show to the ethos of the movement. Hence the Rastafarian expression "Him have locks on head but not in heart" (Davis & Simon 1977:75).

On the other hand, dreadlocks have a latent function. Complementing their demarcating role is the fact that they reflect the defiance of the Rastafari against the establishment. By adopting a hair style which is unconventional, Rastafarians express a critique of the prevailing social arrangement. In a country where hair is an "index of social differences" (Barrett 1982: 138) the symbolic importance of dreadlocks is self-explanatory. By wearing dreadlocks a Rastafarian is defying the contention that natural, kinky, African hair is the mark of inferiority. To act otherwise is considered "symptomatic of alienation from a sense of ... African beauty" (Edmonds 1998a: 32). Consequently, via their dreadlocks Rastafarians send the message of self-respect to any Jamaican of African descent who imitates the hair style of other groups, because by so acting one is defying black identity both aesthetically as well as culturally. Imitation is low self-esteem in its covert form.

However, Dreadlocks are not limited within the framework of an aesthetic realm. The Rastafarian logic regarding dreadlocks is consistent with the overall philosophy of the movement. One of the basic tents of the Rastafari is that interference with the courses of nature is partly to blame for the social problems in the current world. The positive rejection of the values of the dominant order is reflected in both letting the hair

follow its natural course of development and refusing to use a chemical of any kind. The Rastafari take care of their dreadlocks by using water and natural herbs only. As Sam Brown, one of the movement intellectuals of the Rastafari, put it: "The quint curls of the Rastafarian, ... is ... but the wooly hair of the African, only washed with pure water and left undisturbed by comb, etc, it will curl to the consistency of the locks of its own volition" (Barrett 1982: 139). By so acting the Rastafarians are both reasserting black identity and rejecting the values of the dominant order.

Accompanying the dreadlocks, another important conspicuous mark of the Rastafari is their dress style. The Rastafarians could easily be identified by their colorful dresses and the knitted tam they wear. These conspicuous marks have the Ethiopian colors of green, gold, and red. To these the black color is added. The colors symbolize different significations. Red represents the blood of the ancestors of black people who suffered under the yoke of slavery, the martyrs who fought against any form of oppression, and the Rastafarian brethren who are in defiance of the "shitstem." The holy herb, ganja, and heaven on earth (Ethiopia/Africa) are epitomized by the color green. The color gold stands for Rastafarian "theology" and Jah-make-ya (Jamaica). Finally, black represents the skin of African descendants; it also denotes purity.

Intellectual Marks: Although not as visible as the dreadlocks, the soul language of the Rastafarians is the most distinguishing intellectual mark of the movement. One could safely say that the degree of commitment of a Rastafarian is measured by the mastery of the soul language, for internalization of the language is a reflection of ones strict adherence to the creed of the movement. Hence, active participation in the movement culture of the Rastafari, at least in part, presupposes the understanding of its language. This is because the Rastafarian language is loaded with Rastafarian conceptions of life, politics, nature etc.

What is more, the creativity entailed in the making of soul language allowed the movement to further solidify the boundaries that sets it off from the rest of society. The hair and dress styles of the Rastafari can be emulated with less effort, and the Rastafarian group boundary could be easily disturbed; but the subjective boundary that the movement has drawn by means of its language keeps unwelcome guests at bay. Language is, thus, the most important badge by which non-Rastafarians are excluded and committed members are encouraged to stay within the framework of the Rastafarian world.

The vernacular of the Rastafari, however, serves more than the role of an in-group language. Soul language is deliberately concocted by the Rastafarians to express the philosophy of their movement and "contest traditional constructions of identity" (Pulis 1993:286). This emergent language of the Rastafari clearly shows how a revolutionary group creates a linguistic form congruent with its frame of reality. The deconstruction of reality, thus, takes place both in the realm of substance as well as form. In the stead of old linguistic categories, new ones that reflect the spirit of the movement are constructed. These processes reflect the Rastafarians interest in, to use their expression, "to destroy powers and principalities not with gun and bayonet, but wordically [by means of words]". The abolition of Babylon is therefore preceded by a symbolic deconstruction in which language is at the center stage.

Examining existing language the Rastafarians have found it to be both limited as well as inherently inconsistent. Its inconsistency resides in some of its phonetic and morphological aspects wherein the mismatch between the signifier and the signified is manifest. The word banana, for instance, contains the signifier (the sound) *ban* (a negative word signifying preclusion) which contradicts with the exact nature of the fruit. Hence, the word banana is altered into "freeana," "ban" is replaced by "free". Words like

banana do not only fail to convey the true meaning of things, but they also limit the speaker's understanding of the world. The inconsistency and limit of a language, thus, become the inconsistency of one's worldview. A new worldview requires a new language. This is the driving force behind the emergent vernacular of the Rastafari.

In addition to being consistent with its world view, the emergent vernacular of the Rastafari is an exercise in "performative utterances." With performative utterances a person is not just saying something, but is also actually doing something as when a person says "I do". The area where performative utterances find their fullest expression is in the I-words of the Rastafari. First, the Rastafarians by using I-words are, so to speak, constantly renewing their membership, or their commitment to the causes of the movement. Second, the Rastafarian is affirming adherence to one of the themes of the movement, viz, reassertion of the lost self. By using the word "I" a Rasta is affirming that s/he is an active subject of history as opposed to an individual who has lost his/her personhood.

"I words" also allow the Rastafari to participate in what Malinowski ([1923] 1956) calls a "phatic communion". That is, I words have the function of reinforcing social ties among the Rastafarians. Hence, when a Rasta uses I words sh/e is not merely using them for purposes of communication alone, but sh/e is "doing" social movement participation as well. "I 'n I", the expression Rastafarians use to refer to themselves, clearly shows its role in the phatic communion of the Rastafari. It means you and me belong to the same group. I-words, thus, play an important role in maintaining the collective identity, the "we-relation" among the members of the movement.

Soul language is also an instrument of defiance ((Nettleford 1978). This is especially vivid in the case of Rasta speech. Roberts (1993: 41-43) reports that soul language differs not only in its alteration of linguistic categories but also in its speech

form. Unlike the conventional form of speech, Rasta speech is characterized by strong pronunciation, conversational, and sentence expressions. These expressions are so strong that those who are least acquainted with them may think that they are intended to shock rather than serve as a medium of communication. Moreover, Rasta speech is also unique because of the speaker's "deep voice." Deep voice is used both to show that the hypocrisy of polite English, and to emphasize that phrases associated with soft voice are the reflections of subservience rather than civility. Hence intonation as an instrument of defiance.

Another attribute of intellectual mark that defines the Rastafari is their rituals. Rituals of the Rastafari are of two kinds, viz, "reasoning" and "nyabinghi" (Chevannes 1994:17). Reasoning is a session held to discuss issues ranging from the life world of individual members to international issues. The Rastafari, in this sense, as Homiak (1994:17) pointed out, are "a collective of individuals who speak of each other, about each other, and about themselves and their experiences". What makes reasoning an important dimension of the Rastafari is that it is an occasion in which "epistemological individualism" is exercised. Epistemological individualism which allows every member to speak his/her mind provides the fertile ground for a diagnostic and prognostic analysis of social reality. "Where lies the flaw of the 'shit-em'?" "What should be done?" are issues that find their way via the free flow of ideas. Reasoning, therefore, is not only meant as an exercise of democratic expression, but it is also a moment in which members think in unison while each movement participant being at center stage. Every member is at the center stage of the movement because all adherents are allowed in having a self-understanding of the tenets of the movement and participate in the analytic examination of the movement's diagnostic and prognostic frames. These processes, in turn, reinforce the collective identity of the movement at large.

Niyabinghi is a musical festive held on special occasions. The birthdays of HaileSelassie and Marcus Garvey, HaileSelassie's visit to Jamaica, Emancipation from slavery are among the most important days that call for the occasion of Niabinghi. The importance of Niabinghi in reinforcing collective identity is enormous. It creates a unity of mind among the Rastafarian community. Dancing and chanting and the rituals that accompany them strengthen both the faith of the individual member and the solidarity of the Rastafari as a whole.

By and large, the symbolic signifiers of the Rastafari provide an alternative culture that reinforces the sense of collective identity among movement participants. Their dress, hairstyle, language, and rituals all serve to differentiate the Rastafarians from the rest of society. But more importantly, symbolic signifiers have served as instruments of defiance that help participants to strengthen their commitment to the political/religious principles of the movement. Indeed the deconstruction of the old, and the construction of the new order is at the very heart of Rastafarian collective identity. This process is further clearly visible in the active engagement that the Rastafari have carried out with their surrounding social environment.

The Politics of Signification

Active involvement in the politics of signification is an important dimension of the Rastafari. Just as movement participants of the Rastafari have vigorously participated in the social construction of their movement culture, they have also acted as "signifying agents" who defended their version of reality against those that are opposed to it. Politics of signification takes place at the level of interaction between negative and positive vibrations. "Positive vibration" is the new frame of reality of the Rastafari counterpoised against both existing and emergent counter-frames that work to vilify the assertions of the movement. "Negative vibrations", on the other hand, involve ideas

disseminated by the media "and those who have used the symbols and the music to distort and dilute the true essence of our [Rastafarian] Philosophy" (Lee 1981:5).

It does not take deep intuition to understand why the Rastafari have to actively participate in the politics of signification. Historically, the Rastafari have come under attack in Jamaican society because of the new set of meanings that represent a threat to the established order. As Clarke noted (1994:50) "Extremely critical of the established churches, as well as of the government, the bureaucracy, the professional classes, and the police, the Rastafarians came to be seen as a serious threat to existing forms of authority." As a result, since the movement asserted itself as a political/religious movement, participation in the politics of signification has been an inseparable dimension of the Rastafarian movement culture.

Negative vibration has been, to a large extent, centered around the Rastafarian theme of HaileSelassie as the living God. In this connection, among the challenges posed against the Rastafari include that HaileSelassie has been an authoritarian ruler. How, the oft-presented question goes, could a leader who let his people down qualify as the living God? The question, among other things, refers to the 1972 famine that has claimed the lives of more than one hundred thousand Ethiopians. The Rastafarians respond to this anomaly uncharacteristically. Blame is shifted away from the emperor. The problem, according to the Rastafarians could not have occurred had the Ethiopian people strictly followed the dictates of the living God. The living God who foresees the future has warned the Ethiopian people that famine would come, but they were not ready for it or did not listen.

In this regard the Rastafarians are even against their intellectual predecessor: Marcus Garvey. Although revered by the Rastafari as a great prophet, Garvey was highly critical of the emperor (Chevannes 1991). Garvey was strongly disappointed when

HaileSelassie left Ethiopia for England at a time when his country was invaded by Italy in 1935. Garvey called him "a cowardly lion" for deserting his own people. According to Garvey the Emperor should have stayed in Ethiopia and fought the Italian Fascists. To the Rastafari, however, HaileSelassie's decision was logical. His flight is "likened to the flight of the Christ-child from the Slaughter of Innocents in Jerusalem" (Lee 1984:37). The emperor's way is peaceful. The mercifulness of the living God after the Italians were defeated was in accordance with this peacefulness.

More than the forgoing point, however, what posed the greatest challenge against the Rastafari was the death of HaileSelassie in 1975. Social movement scholars contend that social movements, especially religious movements, are immensely affected as a result of the death of their leaders. The death of a charismatic leader is followed by "a period that leads to major disruption and fatal consequences for the group" (Melton 1991:1). Rochford (1989), for instance, documents how the death of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prahupada, the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in 1977 precipitated factionalism, group defection, and schism within the Los Angeles Hare Krishna community. After the death of HaileSelassie, one would expect the same thing to happen to the Rastafarian movement. This expectation is understandable as the emperor's death would, at least theoretically, give a serious blow to the basic tenets of the movement, for HaileSelassie is considered by the Rastafari as the alpha and omega of existence.

Rastafarians, accordingly, were ridiculed as a result of the death of the emperor. "Rasta your God is dead" was the catchword that many non-Rastafarians used against the adherents of the movement. From a non-Rastafarian perspective, of course, the emperor is mortal, and attributing divine powers is fatally wrong. Ironically, HaileSelassie's death has not brought a volcanic political shift in the belief of the

Rastafarians. Explanations for this could be offered both from a sociological as well as Rastafarian perspectives. The Rastafarians, consistent with their characteristics as signifying agents, and not merely passive carries of the beliefs of the movement, interpreted the news in the light of "Babylonian conspiracy theory" (Cashmore 1979). The news of HaileSelassie's death was considered as a deliberate fabrication by the media to disavow both the Emperor as well as the movement. After all, the Rastafarians contend, HaileSelassie's corpse was not found nor was he given state funeral (McPherson 1991:82). The absence of facts such as this gave the Rastafari a sound reason to challenge the claim regarding HaileSelassie's death. The Rastafari, accordingly, speak of HaileSelassie's "disappearance" rather than his demise.

More importantly, however, the death of HaileSelassie is incongruent with the movement's philosophy that every Rastafarian, let alone the living God, is ever-living. Death, the Rastafarians argue, is conquered. "You can't kill God" said Bob Marley in one of the songs he wrote as a reaction to the news. God can't die since he lives in every Rastafari. To acknowledge his death means then that the movement is dead. As one Rastafarian put it: "He [the living God] lives in I and I. Selasie-I is living because I'm living, both physically and spiritually. The rest of the world accepted news of his death, but they were deceived by the media. They had no choice in the matter. Rasta knows the truth because he lives in I and I constantly" (Plumer 1978: 61). The philosophy of I and I is not merely an ideology of the movement but a practical consciousness. As a practical consciousness the philosophy acts as a glue that holds the Rastafari together, and at the center stage of this cohesion is the living God. God, in this case, is not an "other", a being which resides outside the realm of the visible, it is within every member. The Rastafarians, therefore, can't afford to doff the cup to the death of the living God.

Sociologically, the proliferation of the Rastafari in spite of the death of

HaileSelassie is understandable because the social processes that have caused the movement have remained in tact. A social movement can pass through different cycles of protest, but it does not die as long as the social problems that have given its birth are alive as ever before. Presentday Jamaica is full of social problems. These problems greatly and directly affect the constituency that the Rastafari relates itself. Rampant unemployment, for instance, is one of the most serious problems that Jamaica currently faces. In the late 1970s, the time when the Rastafari grew significantly, the unemployment rate was estimated between 30-40%. The bauxite industry and tourism that assumed prominent roles in the economy since the 1950s are too narrow to solve Jamaica's underlying economic problems (Source 1999). Emigration by Jamaicans to other parts of the world is still heavy, the major flow being to the United States. The Rastafari, thus, will continue to pose itself as a collective action as long as Jamaicans of African descent remain at the lower end of the existing social stratification.

Besides, HaileSelassie's divinity is not only an article of faith but a symbol of resistance against racial discrimination as well as a symbol of a life style that the Rastafarians veer. "For the Rastas, the belief in the divinity of the Ethiopian emperor represented more than a religion; he also symbolized their cooperative work effort, their respect for life, their opposition to abortion and birth control, and their allegiance to a large extended family of 'Israelites'" (Lewis 1993:14). Unless something outlandish that demolishes the status of the signifier comes into being, HaileSelassie as a symbol of black resistance will remain intact. In short, the symbol which has been socially constructed in different phases can not be deconstructed by a single stroke of historical "evidence," death, which according to the Rastafari, is "allegedly" attributed to HaileSelassie I.

Hence, the history of the Rastafari clearly shows that for a social movement to

endure it must defend its frame of reality against existing or emergent counter frames. That is why the politics of signification is of central importance for understanding social movement endurance. The frames created by social movements cannot be static. In order to withstand challenges and accommodate new changes the frames of a social movement have to be fluid. Collective action frames have to be constantly negotiated and defended for a social movement to endure. It was with good reason that the Rastafari have defended their view that Haile Selassie is the living God. In particular, the frame had to be defended and renegotiated after his reported death.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The political process model, unlike previous perspectives, emphasizes on the importance of ideational factors in the development of social movements. According to this model, the relation between political opportunity and collective action is mediated by cognitive liberation. The study of the Rastafari shows the importance of this variable in the endurance of social movements. Yet, this study has also shown that cognitive liberation should not be merely considered as a mediating factor. Rather it is an important causal force which plays an important role in the development of social movements. The relevance of cognitive liberation is especially clearly visible among social movements which are denied political opportunity and whose organizational strength is limited. Moreover, cognitive liberation should be seen as one of the most important stages in the unfolding of a movement culture rather than considering it unto itself. The three aspects of movement culture include cognitive liberation, symbolic signifiers and the politics of signification.

The Rastafarian movement culture has played an important role in the endurance of the movement. This culture is not merely intended to defend the life-world of Rastafarians, but is premised on the revolutionization of political, economic, and social

institutions. The Rastafarian movement culture is thus both the result as well as the cause of collective action. The culture is the product of the reaction of the Rastafari against what they perceive to be an oppressive system. Yet the same culture which is the product of their struggle has provided them with symbolic resources by means of which member commitment is reinforced. Movement culture in this case has dual purposes: it is both a boundary demarcator as well as one of the ways which serves as the language of resistance. Thus, the Rastafarian collective action could be described as a process of constructing and reconstructing movement culture.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study began with a set of questions that I have entertained after having a preliminary reading about the Rastafari. At the center stage of these set of questions was the question: "Why would a group of people in their right mind believe in the divinity of HaileSelassie I, considered by some of us as a despot?" Up on closer examination I find out that the Rastafarian concept of the "living God" is much more important than the person HaileSelassie. The living God is a symbolic figure which, among other things, represents the unity of the movement. Seen in the context of Jamaican history, especially the history of resistance, the Rastafarian conception of the living God is rich and meaningful. Extracted out of this context, however, one is most likely to misunderstand the nature of the Rastafarian movement. As I continued my investigation what I found sociologically fascinating is the multifaceted nature of the movement and its endurance over an extended period of time. Although the first one is worth inquiring at a wider scope, for the benefit of time and space I have dealt with it briefly. It is the latter that has been the primordial issue with which I was concerned in this work.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT ENDURANCE

What are the causes of social movements? Why do they endure? And what are the reasons for their demise? These three interrelated problems are at the center stage of social movement research. In this research my interest has been in the reasons for endurance. In deed what differentiates social movements, like the Rastafari, from other forms of collective behavior, such as fads and crowds, is that they exist with an extended tempo of contiguity. Social movements are not "fly-by-night phenomena that are here today and gone tomorrow" (McAdam & Snow 1997: xxii). Social movements have to

persist since their goals are much more broader than other genres of collective action. This temporal contiguity is reflected in the fact that they pass through different stages-- origin, coalescence, bureaucratization, and demise. In these different phases of development organizational factors, symbolic processes, political opportunities are considered as the most important factors that condition the duration of social movements. Hence, social movement contiguity is relative to a host of social factors. Some have a long duration, others die soon as a result of internal processes within, and external processes surrounding, a social movement.

Two reasons have made the study of movement endurance and the Rastafari sociologically worthwhile. The first reason has to do with the radical posture of the movement. Justifying its cause on the basis of transcendental principles, mostly drawn from the Bible, the Rastafari radically reinterpret the socio-political condition of the world at large, and Jamaica in particular. This radical posture gave reasons to the establishment to deny legitimacy to the movement. Secondly, the movement has been consistently perceived as a threat to the cultural and political well being of Jamaica. Accordingly, since its emergence in the 1930s the Rastafari has received stiff resistance from the Jamaican establishment. All the same, despite these two factors that could have facilitated its demise, the movement has prevailed for more than sixty years.

WORKING PROPOSITIONS

While inquiring into the issue of why the Rastafarian movement has endured in spite of all odds, I have relied on a set of working propositions that I have derived from the political process model. The model was selected because it is a perspective which takes a holistic approach to the study of social movements.

Propositions: The working propositions that I have used include: 1) The more political opportunities are extended to social movements, the more their development is

positively affected. 2) The more social movements are organizationally strong, the more they stand the challenges posed against them, and thereby the more they endure. 3) The more social movements have developed their cognitive liberation, the more their survival in the face of ideological challenges is guaranteed. By and large, the tempo of social movement endurance is positively correlated with the political opportunities offered to social movements, and the organizational strength and the cognitive liberation that they have developed.

In the case of the Rastafari, this study has testified that the two factors (political opportunities and organizational strength) were virtually non-existent. The Rastafari had to rely on non-political resources and informal networks in their struggle for the endurance of their movement. The study has shown the importance of cognitive liberation, especially when it is considered as an aspect of movement culture. The conclusions of this study with respect to these propositions can be summarized thus:

Proposition 1: The Rastafari has endured in spite of political opportunities. The Rastafari were not offered political opportunity, except at one point, for their metaphysics contradicted the political philosophy of the Jamaican establishment. Two points have come out of this finding. First, when social movements are radically denied access to political space they depend on non-political resources. Social movement participants search non-political means before they decide to give up their causes. Second, to the extent that they can create political opportunities for themselves, social movement participants can be active and their symbols politically significant. Hence, political opportunities do not always come from the processes that emanate from the establishment. Social movements, in their own right, can create political opportunities.

Proposition 2: This study has clearly shown that in the development of their movement, the Rastafari have relied less on organizational strength. The structural

framework of the Rastafari were different from the one social movement scholars in the area of resource mobilization theory and political process have pointed out. From this we understand movement mobilization structures are determined by the respective social environment within which social movements exist. Some take a formal shape, while with others informal structures become the best possible means to survive and develop. Social movement organization, thus, is social context dependent.

Proposition 3: In the case of the third proposition I have mixed results. In the absence of political opportunities and formal organizational networks, cognitive liberation plays an important role. Yet cognitive liberation is, unlike McAdam's contention, more than an "intervening variable". It has acted as a causal force that has immensely contributed to the development of the Rastafari. Besides, the importance of cognitive liberation is more appreciated when it is aligned with other social psychological processes that make up a movement culture. It was as a result of its ability to construct and sustain its own movement culture that the Rastafari was capable of enduring for more than six decades. This conclusion is organically connected to the previous two findings, the absence of formal organizational frameworks and political opportunities.

CONSTELLATION OF MULTIPLE DETERMINANTS

Since in this study I found that two of the working propositions were dis-confirmed and one of them was partially dis-confirmed, I had to coin concepts appropriate to the study. In the case of the third hypothesis I had to rely on a concept which is wider in scope, viz., movement culture. Cultural/historical contingencies and decentered movement are the ones that I have constructed. By and large, it is the constellation of these three determinants that caused the Rastafarian social movement endurance.

Cultural/historical contingencies

The study of the Rastafari has shown that all collective actions are not offered

political opportunities by their respective societies. Since some social movements receive unswerving resistance than others, the reasons for their origin as well as development must be sought in non-political opportunities. The latter provide "cultural materials" that are important in the construction and deconstruction of social movements. Hence, an establishment can deny legitimacy and political opportunities to movement participants, but it can not deny them access to resources that come from cultural/historical contingencies. In this sense the concept of cultural/historical contingencies alerts our attention to understand why movements arise and develop in social contexts where they are least accommodated. Even in receptive environments cultural/historical contingencies provide a good deal of resources for the survival of a social movement.

Advantages: By and large, there are two advantages that follow from utilizing the concept of cultural/historical contingencies. First, the importance of this concept lies in conferring an active role to social movement participants. More exactly, the success of social movements has much to do with the active role played on the part of movement participants than the availability of opportunities; for, opportunities, either political or non-political, must be perceived and acted upon for movements to succeed. Movement participants do not have to wait for political opportunities to unclosethemselves. Political opportunities can open up as a result of the efforts of movement participants themselves. Hence social movement participants are active, even more than the theorists of the political process model acknowledge.

The development of the Rastafarian movement, among other things, has much to do with the ability of its adherents to use resources that have come from the cultural/historical contingencies of their society. These resources have provided the Rastafarians the opportunity to construct their frame of reality, maintain solidarity among

themselves, and thereby challenge the Jamaican establishment. Although these resources in and of themselves did not create the frame of reality of the Rastafari, their role in furnishing the background to a new definition of the situation that the adherents of the movement espoused has been enormous.

Hence, the mere availability of cultural/historical contingencies does not suffice for the very existence of a social movement. The resources available from these contingencies must be "discovered" by movement participants. These resources has to be "discovered," because the group that needs them has to, not only adapt them to its needs, but also it should realize that it needs them. For those groups that do not see the importance of these resources they are "unreal". Their "reality" is very much associated with the social group that gets the most out of them. Hence, for resources available through cultural/historical contingencies to be worthy of the salt there has to be both a group of movement participants which is active as well as a social situation that occasions the existence of a collective action. Most important of all, as we have seen in this study, the interpretation of these resources plays a paramount role in the development of social movements.

Second, the concept of cultural/historical contingencies allows us to understand the diagnostic and prognostic frames that social movements propose. Social movement frames are not concocted out of nothing. They are rather end-products in the making of which resources that emanate from cultural/historical contingencies have an important place. Compare the Rastafarian movement with the Iranian Revolution, for both resemble in their assertion in spite of political opportunities. As Kurzman (1996) notes, movement participants of the Iranian Revolution perceived the success of their collective action in spite of objective opportunities. On the basis of their realization that the opposition against the Shah was powerful enough to overturn his regime, the Iranians

perceived the materialization of the Revolution despite the political system remaining intact. Accordingly, the solution that movement participants of the revolution sought was within the framework of Iran. Like Iranians, the Rastafarians saw that the door of political opportunity has been closed, but at the same time they were able to see a way out, thereby transcending a pessimistic orientation with regard to their position. Unlike Iranians, however, they felt that the solution to their predicament lay outside their society.

Decenteredness

The Rastafari has not only sustained its existence in spite of political opportunities, but it has been a social movement without organizational strength a la resource mobilization theory and political process model. This dimension of the Rastafari is important because it reminds us that social movements should be examined in the light of the social and political structures within which they are embedded. If all collective actions are not equally offered similar political opportunities the same also holds good with regard to the receptiveness of the existing establishment to social movement organizations. Social movement participants may be forced to rely on non-organizational structures to guarantee their survival.

This point is a departure from the political process model. With respect to the issue of the role of organizational strength the political process model shares a common view with RM theory. According to the political process model, since the kind of challenge that social movement participants face is much more different from the emergent phase of a movement, it becomes of crucial importance that they have solid social movement organizations. "For the movement to survive, insurgents must be able to create enduring organizational structure to sustain collective action" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1994: 13). In the absence of formal organizations, therefore, social movements are most likely to wane. This study has shown that this is not always the

case. As the history of the Rastafari shows there are ways of keeping intact collective action other than through formal organizational frameworks.

Thus, with respect to the relationship of social movement organizations and existing political structures two extreme scenarios could be delineated. On one end are those societies which disallow every form of organization whether a social movement has a reformist or radical posture. On the other end are those societies that, as Tilly (1978) has noted, facilitate social movement mobilization by, for instance, reducing the costs of collective action. In places where collective actions meet a strong challenge social movement participants are forced to go underground or rely on informal social networks. In this case, we have to think in terms of informal networks or "social movement communities" (Beuchler 1990) rather than formal social movement organizations. The Rastafari belong to the second group. The Rastafarian movement has endured, among other things, as a result of its decenteredness. By relying on informal networks the Rastafari were in a position to protect themselves from being vulnerable to the attacks of the establishment.

In addition to their adaptation to their respective societies some social movements could be against the very idea of organizational frameworks. By doing so social movements express their total rejection of the system against which they stand. Unlike most movements which seek to change an aspect of the existing social system utilizing organizational frameworks, the Rastafari has decided to be decentered for a very good reason. The Rastafari resist hierarchy both at societal and movement level, because they are consistently against any form of social stratification. The separation that exists between the rank and file members and leaders among social movement organizations does not exist with this group. A selected group of movement participants are not conferred with the task of articulating the definition of the situation. Every

member enjoys the same intellectual status.

Lack of formal organization has not negatively affected the movement. On the contrary. The Rastafari have benefited out of decenteredness. Its informal networks has allowed members to establish primary relationships among themselves. Besides these informal networks have provided a conducive atmosphere for reasoning. Reasoning, as we have seen, acts as the Rastafarian freespace in which different cultural codes are constructed and deconstructed. Organizational versatility of the movement has compensated for the side effects of formal organizational frameworks, including coaptation, oligarchization and problems of indigenous support. Perceptual versatility has allowed the free movement of ideas. They have also made every member to be an active participant of the movement. In deed all these factors associated with decenteredness were important in maintaining the endurance of the movement at large and the collective action of the Rastafari in particular.

Movement Culture

This study has shown that the concepts of political opportunity and organizational strength play a lesser role in the explanation of Rastafarian movement endurance. The matter, however, is slightly different with its notion of cognitive liberation. As this study has shown cognitive liberation has played a decisive role in the survival of the Rastafari. Cognitive liberation is with the Rastafari truly a *collective process*. Each member, by virtue of the epistemological individualism undercurrent in the movement, actively participates in the articulation and defense of the movement. And to that degree cognitive liberation has been important for the endurance of the Rastafari.

However, this study has also demonstrated that cognitive liberation should not be considered merely as a mediating factor. With the political process model the role of cognitive liberation is limited. Cognitive liberation can only act as an intervening variable

between political opportunities and collective action. This idea may hold true in societies where social movements heavily rely on organizational strength and political opportunities. The picture seems to be different with collective actions that are denied political space and formal organization. Under such conditions social movements are forced to depend on cognitive liberation and other factors for their survival. In the case of social movements, like the Rastafari, cognitive liberation is, accordingly, so important that it acts as a causal force in sustaining collective actions.

Taking cognitive liberation as an important aspect within the dynamics of a social movement culture rather than considering it unto itself allows us to have a better understanding of the reasons for the sustenance of collective actions. In this study cognitive liberation is considered as one of the three dimensions of movement culture, the other two being symbolic signifiers and politics of signification. These three phases involve ways by which social movement actors formulate their version of reality, construct alternative culture, and defend their philosophy when attacked by outgroup members. In the formation of the Rastafarian movement culture what emerged first is cognitive liberation. In the articulation of this cognitive liberation the cultural materials derived from cultural/historical contingencies had an important place. Although cognitive liberation posed a serious challenge against the established patterns of Jamaican society it was not enough. Hence, in the second stage constructing symbolic boundaries of the movement became of great import. Indeed the construction of these symbolic signifiers became one of the motive forces for the very existence of the Rastafari. Finally, the Rastafari had to defend their movement culture. Thus, the history of the Rastafari can be described as the history of the construction and reconstruction of their movement culture. This research has demonstrated the importance of these dimensions for the endurance of the Rastafari.

Cognitive liberation: The significance of cognitive liberation lies in providing members a relatively coherent theory that both acted as a schemata for interpreting past realities as well as predicting the future. The Rastafarian theory of Babylon in this respect had a positive consequence in the development of the movement. The theory afforded members with cogent explanations why the subject of their critique is flawed beyond repair. The theory again provided members with sound reasons why it is worthwhile to stay within the bounds of the movement. What we have seen in this dimension is the synthesis of religion and politics. These two aspects of the theory of Babylon have been important in encouraging participants to be lifetime members. The religious dimension proffered a transcendental reason to defend the cause of the movement. Politically, the theory shows that solutions are possible in this physical reality. Hence, far from being an escapist movement, the political/religious nature of the Rastafari has been an important feature that has allowed it to deal with objective social issues.

Symbolic Signifiers: The symbolic signifiers of the Rastafari have been important in providing participants an alternative life style that has found its way through manner of dressing, hairstyle, language, and rituals. These manifestations of the movement vividly demonstrate that to make members stay in a social movement articulating grievances in a coherent theoretical form alone does not suffice. To accomplish this task a social movement must be capable of creating its own symbols that define its peculiarity and thereby set it off from the rest of society. Stating grievances coherently does indeed serve as a wake-up call for future adherents. Nonetheless, in order for participants to stick to the causes of a movement they need more than the articulation of grievances. The creation of a movement culture decisively puts members in a new social position. They not only have an alternative culture to rely on, but they

also acquire a different position within the framework of the new culture. The mainstream culture that has hitherto marginalizes them, at least theoretically, loses power. A movement culture is, thus, more than a means of making a distinction between in-groups and out-groups. The dynamics involved within a social movement is much more important than merely challenging "others" by means of conspicuous marks. That is why the intellectual marks of the Rastafari, such as its language, have been of consequence in making a distinction between "true" and "false" Rastas.

Politics of Signification: Perhaps the advantage of creating an alternative culture for the endurance of a social movement is much more clearer in the politics of signification. This rigorous engagement with the surrounding social environment decides whether or not a social movement is strong enough to withstand the challenges that it faces. In this sense the Rastafari has been a successful social movement, or more exactly, a dynamic collective action. In the development of the Rastafari politics of signification occupies an important place because the movement has been considered as a threat to the cultural and political well being of Jamaican society. No wonder then if the Rastafarians were active in defending themselves since the inception of their movement in the 1930s. We can safely conclude from this that the participation of a social movement is positively correlated with its orientation. The more it is radically oriented the higher the challenge it meets, and the more intense its participation in the politics of signification.

Hence, social movements, like the Rastafari, with a radical posture face the greatest challenge. Defending their central themes, then, becomes of pivotal significance for their survival. Since these themes of a social movement are, so to speak, part of its nervous system, its inability to defend them results in its demise. With the Rastafari politics of signification has largely involved in vindicating one of its prime

dictums, that Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the living God. The Rastafari, as a result, have been vilified as misguided citizens of Jamaica who worship a despot. The Rastafari, however, withstood all these challenges through their language as well as their music.

Especially, after the death of the emperor, this engagement intensified.

Prominent Rasta figures, such as Bob Marley, have been at pains in defending why their living God cannot die. Interestingly enough, although often social movements fall apart with the death of their charismatic leaders, the Rastafari has prospered even after the death of their "living God". If the movement has not died after the death of the emperor it is because, as we have seen in this study, there is an ingrained relationship between the movement and this theme. The living God is more than a leader. He symbolizes unity and the empowerment of the oppressed. Hence, historical facts, such as the death of a charismatic figure, as the history of the Rastafari has shown, do not necessarily lead to the demise of a social movement. Only the disappearance of the social causes that have given birth to a collective action occasion its decline.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Once research is completed one of the things that comes to mind is whether there are other better ways of doing it. In connection with study I answer this challenge in two ways. First the method of historical analysis utilized in this study appropriately fits the nature of the problem. The issue of social movement endurance could only be dealt with by examining information across an extended period of time. The origin, genesis, and demise of a social movement could only be captured through the examination of different studies. On the other hand, I think that the method utilized in this study could have been supported by other methods as well. In depth interviews with longtime members of the movement, for instance, could have brought some important features to the attention of the researcher or could serve as further corroboration to the conclusions

of this work.

The second limitation of this study has to do with the generalizability of the conclusions of this study. In this study we have found some unique features of the Rastafarian movement. The Rastafari, as we have seen, endured in spite of formal organizational frameworks and political opportunities. Rarely do we find these features in other social movements. Whether or not social movement endurance is possible in a manner similar to that of the Rastafari is a matter of future research. The conclusions are not, therefore, necessarily generalizable. However, this study has proven that the case of each collective action deserves to be studied with utmost caution. Theories should not be forced to adjust to facts or the vice versa. Be that as it may, concepts such as cultural historical contingencies are important at least to a limited degree even to the social movements of the Western world. Also, collective actions in spite of formal organizations are possible in places where formal organizations are not accommodated.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In terms of perfecting this study by other means *three* possible investigations could be delineated. These investigations deal with the origin, the present status of the Rastafari, and its impact on the political and cultural repertoire of Jamaican and other societies. I believe that carrying out research on these issues can significantly expand and substantiate the conclusions that we have arrived in this work.

Inquiring further into the origins of the Rastafari gives us a wider understanding of the movement. In this study we have focussed on the reasons for the endurance of the Rastafarian movement. The structural processes that have given birth to the movement are given scant attention. This issue deserves a thorough analysis because, among other things, it could augment our understanding of cultural/historical contingencies, for the latter are the result of the interaction between structural processes and human

agencies. Cultural/historical contingencies exist over an extended period of time especially when structural problems remain intact.

Inquiring into the present status of the movement allows us to examine whether or not the reasons that have permitted the Rastafari to endure over an extended period of time are still under operation. In this case two interrelated investigations could be carried out . The first has to do with the present social political condition of Jamaica. Such a study paves the ground to understand the impact of the present state of condition in Jamaica on the current development of the Rastafari. In juxtaposition to this study, and in the light of considering the whereto-from-here of the Rastafari, we can examine the newly emerging characteristics of the movement, if there are any; for instance, whether or not formal organizations are being created. By and large, inquiring into the present status of the Rastafari would contribute to our understanding of the correlation that exists between the present Jamaican society and the development of the movement.

The impact of the Rastafari on Jamaican society and the world at large is an area that needs a thorough examination. In this study I have argued that the movement has extensively relied on cultural/historical contingencies. This conclusion can also be complemented by examining the contribution of the Rastafarians to these contingencies.

The role of social movements is not limited in constructing their movement culture, but these movement cultures also, directly or indirectly, exert influence on the political and cultural landscape of their respective societies. This is clear in the case of the Rastafari.

By and large, the study of the impact of the movement on the political and cultural repertoire of the Jamaican society is sociologically worthwhile, because such a study expands our understanding of the interaction between social movements and their respective societies.

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VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

**Thesis: THE ROLE OF CULTURAL/HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES,
DECENTEREDNESS, AND MOVEMENT CULTURE IN THE ENDURANCE
OF THE RASTAFARI**

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