

Epistemic resistance and renewal: Navigating colonial legacies and Caribbean futures at fifty

By

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This paper reflects on 50 years of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, situating its establishment within the post-colonial Caribbean context. The wider University's creation during the decolonization period in 1944 followed by the College of Arts and Sciences in 1963 and then the launch of the FSS at Cave Hill in 1975 less than a decade after Barbados' independence, reflects both British influence and post-colonial state-building. The Faculty emerged as a space for critical reflection, knowledge production and cultivation of intellectuals to help solve the region's post-colonial political, economic and social challenges. This paper examines the role of Caribbean intellectuals in this context, discusses the legacies of colonial knowledge production and the tensions inherent in educating elites whose worldviews perpetuate colonial hierarchies. The work highlights the UWI as a product of colonial oversight and a site of epistemic resistance, navigating post-colonial complexities and neoliberal domination. It argues that the celebration of the golden jubilee provides a critical juncture to reflect on its historical trajectory and reimagine the role of the university in its mission of producing transformative knowledge that serves contemporary Caribbean realities.