

ABSTRACTS

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Reconstructing Garifuna Oral History - Techniques and Methods in the Story of a Caribbean People

by Joseph O. Palacio

Despite the relatively little use of oral history in the Caribbean, this study focuses on it as the primary means of unearthing information about the Garifuna people as they were re-constituting themselves along the Caribbean coast of Central America after being displaced from their homeland, St. Vincent. A main objective of the study is to spotlight fieldwork and post-field data analysis. In both areas, the study demonstrates how the twin disciplines of history and anthropology can enhance the analytic use of oral history.

Pages: 1-24

Key words: anthropology, social structure, culture, oral tradition, ethnography.

Social Conditions in St. Lucia: Aggregate Analysis of the 1991 Census at the Quarter Level *by Robert B Potter and Justin Jacyno*

This paper serves to demonstrate the existence and nature of a clear typology of areas by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics within St. Lucia. Cartographic and statistical methods employed in this paper demonstrate that the social space of St. Lucia may be divided into three broad and clearly demarcated zones ranging from the western coastal parishes of Canaries, Soufriere and Choiseul through to the contiguous southern and eastern coastal parishes of Laborie, Vieux Forte, Micoud and Dennery.

Pages: 25-50

Key words: demographic data, census, geography, variable, urban, cartography.

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The Loyal Opposition in Caribbean Politics: the Case of Dominica

by Bert Thomas

Caribbean opposition parties are competitive and even effective primarily during political campaigns because elections are usually fair and open. But once the elected assume office, oppositions degenerate into puerile futility. In the majoritarian system of government, incumbent governments' domination of the small economy and mesmeratic leadership further stymie oppositions. To displace sitting governments, oppositions have to demonstrate that they are firmly anchored in the prevailing capitalist culture. They must also show beyond any reasonable doubt that reigning governments have been bad for the states. These are the challenges facing the NEW Dominica Labour Party as it braces itself for the 2000 elections.

Pages : 1-21

Keywords : political opposition, democracy, pluralism, personality rule, charisma.

Building a Competitive Advantage: The Case for Offshore Financial Centres in CARICOM States
by Jo-anne Tull

Since international trade in financial services has become the popular choice for many small developing states as a viable means of alleviating their economic and financial burdens, many CARICOM states have, likewise, entered the market in an effort to establish a new basis for sustained development. However, to date most CARICOM states have not been able to fully exploit their export capability as Offshore Financial Centres (OFCs) so as to create internationally competitive and sustainable engines of development.

Against this backdrop, this paper analyses the competitive potential and development capability of CARICOM OFCs. Although the issues of competitiveness and development may seem mutually exclusive, this paper contends that in formulating a competitive strategy for OFCs in small developing states, the international competitiveness of such OFCs and their role as sustained engines of development must be treated as related and mutually dependent issues. It is further argued, with the aid of a model, that a competitive strategy that fails to recognise the value of this relationship can hardly be effective in the long run. The paper concludes with a systematic framework for building internationally competitive and sustainable OFCs within CARICOM, incorporating a series of recommendations through which such a strategy can be implemented.

Pages : 22-42

Keywords: Competitiveness, financial services, trade liberalisation.

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David and Goliath: Smallness in a Global Business Environment - Suggestions for the Eastern Caribbean

by Bett- Jane Punnett

This paper examines World Bank data on small and large countries, in terms of physical size and population, and relates size to economic well-being. The results suggest that small countries are not necessarily disadvantaged, and large countries advantaged. These results are applied to the Eastern Caribbean situation to suggest ways for dealing with the constraints of smallness, and for exploiting advantages associated with smallness. The need for effective management to achieve success in the global business environment is discussed in this context.

Pages: 1-14

Key Words: Small states, global business, effective management.

Testing for Convergence and Common features in International Output: the Case of the Eastern Caribbean Countries

by Nlandu Mamingi

This paper investigates the issues of convergence in output and common features in output fluctuations in the context of the Eastern Caribbean countries (Barbados and the countries of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States). The results of the study indicate the existence of a weak output convergence as well as the absence of common business cycles between Barbados and the countries of the OECS. Weak convergence in output and lack of synchronization of short-run movements in output fluctuations are an expression of weak (macroeconomic) interdependence.

Pages: 15-40

Keywords : Cointegration, convergence, common features, Barbados, Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States.

Measuring The Comparative Economic Vulnerability of the Eastern Caribbean

by Tom Crowards and Wendy Coulter

The economies of some countries may be inherently more susceptible to external shocks than others, putting their development performance at risk. This issue is of particular concern to small island developing states (SIDS), such as those of the Eastern Caribbean, whose small size, relative isolation, and exposure to natural disasters might be expected to increase their vulnerability.

With the loss of preferential trade arrangements, the system of trade which supported the export-oriented economies of the Eastern Caribbean is being dismantled. It is the reliance on exports that opens up economies to external shocks, which is an underlying source of economic vulnerability for many SIDS. Concentration of exports on a few goods or services, and the convergence of exports on a limited number of destinations, are therefore included as parameters within an overall index of vulnerability. In addition, reliance upon external sources of finance; the degree to which an economy is peripheral or inaccessible; and dependence upon imports to satisfy energy requirements, are also considered.

This essay demonstrates that economic vulnerability bears no apparent relation to income levels achieved in a country, but is found to be inversely related to population size, suggesting that smaller countries tend to be more vulnerable. This is particularly so for very small countries, island states and land-locked countries, while the Eastern Caribbean is found to be especially vulnerable. The results, considered in terms of such broad categories of countries, are found to be relatively insensitive to altering the weights attributed to key variables. The results are also found to be similar across the two methodologies employed for applying weights. Even within the relatively small Eastern Caribbean sub-sample, made up exclusively of very small island states, the trend of higher economic vulnerability being associated with the smallest economies is borne out.

Pages: 41-80

Keywords: Vulnerability, small island states, variables, methodology, sample.

A Survey of the Literature on the Growth Potential of Trade among Developing Countries: Insights for CARICOM

by Denny Lewis

Efforts to reap the benefit of free trade through improved access to the global marketplace has in recent times changed the global landscape. Several mega trading blocs have emerged with the attendant increase in world trade and global interdependence. In the context of this globalisation Caribbean economies need to consider the appropriateness of their existing trade strategy. An examination of the trade and development literature reveals strong support for regional trading arrangements among countries that are in geographical proximity. There are also strong arguments in favour of such arrangements among LDCs, like CARICOM, based on potential dynamic gains.

Pages: 81-97

Keywords: Free trade, south-south cooperation, regionalism.

Race, Ethnicity and Social Stratification in Three Windward Islands

by Klaus de Albuquerque and Jerome L. McElroy

This study examines 1991 census data in three majority African-Caribbean societies: Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It concludes that traditional stratification models based on race/colour and colonial privilege are outdated. Education explains most inter-group income and occupational differences. After two decades of political independence and economic modernization, the top tier of the hierarchy comprises of an educated elite of black professionals, politicians and businessmen. With the possible exception of the Carib Indians at the bottom, minority groups are very small with limited socio-economic impact.

Pages: 1-29

Keywords: social hierarchy, class, race/colour, pluralism, ethnicity, stratification.

The Failed OECS Political Union Initiative: Lessons for Regional Integration in the Commonwealth Caribbean

by Patsy Lewis

The article locates the attempt, between 1986 and 1992, to forge a political union, first among the member states of the OECS, and subsequently among the Windward Islands, both within the context of theoretical debates on federal and functional forms of integration, as well the experience of the failed West Indies Federation. It seeks to identify the factors contributing to interest in such a political union and why it ultimately failed. The article concludes that while Barbados' recent interest provides a fillip to the initiative, its ultimate realisation lies in the extent to which developments in the international community, specifically negotiations for a post- Lome relationship and the regional Free Trade Area of the Americas, further marginalise their separate existence. It also argues that political union among some, if not all members of the Anglophone Caribbean, remains relevant as long as there continues to exist seemingly 'non-viable' units locked into dependent relationships with the US and Europe.

Pages: 30-54

Keywords: Political integration, confederation, sovereignty, small states, federal arrangements.