

ABSTRACT

International Migration and Diaspora in a Changing Global Political Economy: Impact and Implications for the Caribbean

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Migration and Diasporas have become topics of widespread discussion and debate in academic and political circles. However, the phenomena are yet to be satisfactorily examined in terms of their historical links with trends in the global political economy or their ramifications for the study of international relations.

The thesis outlines a critical realist framework that extends the realm of agency within International Relations to allow for the global relations of states, civil society groups, businesses and households. It employs a genealogy as its point of departure in proving that power and position in the world economy have been related to the discourse of identity and decentring the state within the definition of diaspora. Its approach to critical realism is based on a description of theory and methodology in International Relations and Global Political Economy in terms of three major problematiques: Post-Columbian; Post/Neo-Colonial and Endemic. These related problematiques serve to confirm the value of the Caribbean in exploring the implications of international migration and diaspora for the theory and practice of international relations.

The second section of the thesis investigates the impact and contemporary value of diaspora using the balance of empirical and normative approaches afforded by critical realist ontology. Its three studies on the Caribbean and North America focus on distinct but related aspects of the global and diasporic economy, i.e. cultural industries, financial remittances, human capital and technology. These studies indicate a key mismatch between current state policy towards the Diaspora and skill and income repatriation strategies among Caribbean Diasporas, the relationship of high skill migration to identity discourses in both the Caribbean and North America and the limited current value of remittance income as a resource for state-based economic transformation. The thesis' recommendations include a multi-levelled approach to the diasporic economy and an outline of ethical choices, strategies and research priorities for the (Global) South in confronting the opportunities for change in the Global Political Economy provided by migration and diaspora.

Keywords: International Relations, Diaspora, Caribbean, Critical Realism, Migration, Development, Identity, Global South, Hyperdiaspora.