

ABSTRACT

The Economic Contribution of Education in a Post-Colonial Society: The Case of
Trinidad and Tobago 1966 to 1992

Claudette Angela Johnson

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the economic contribution of education to a Caribbean-type economy namely, Trinidad and Tobago. The motivation for this study stems from the development imperative of the future which demands a highly skilled technical labour force capable of adapting readily to the rapid technological changes occurring in the international environment. The development of the human resource to respond effectively to these changes is inescapable for dependent economies such as Trinidad and Tobago.

The study adopts a hybrid approach to modelling growth in productivity by incorporating aspects of the traditional neo-classical, endogenous and social models of growth as well as institutional factors unique to the Caribbean. The model is estimated using a Cobb-Douglas production function and fits time series data for Trinidad and Tobago for the period 1966 to 1992.

Support for this approach derives largely from the fact that labour is a heterogeneous variable and as such possesses both an economic and a social dimension. The research proceeds on the basis that to ignore the 'social factor' is to lose the very essence of what constitutes growth and more so the contribution of education to that growth.

The results indicate that human capital is a factor limiting growth in productivity in Trinidad and Tobago. It is therefore recommended that greater emphasis be placed on developing appropriate strategy to:

- i) effect the productive use of the existing stock of human capital; and
- ii) improve the level of technical skills at the tertiary level while at the same time maintaining/improving the provision of education at the primary and secondary level.