

ABSTRACT

The Developmental Role of Export-Oriented
Industrialization in the New International Division
of Labour: The Case of CARICOM Countries

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This thesis examines the developmental efficacy of the operation of Export-Oriented Industrialization (EOI) strategies for developing countries in the New International Division of Labour (NIDL): the current phase of development in the capitalist world-economy.

The thesis involves a theoretical and historical treatment of the NIDL/EOI phenomenon. A long-wave, transnational methodology is utilized to define the nature, dynamics, logic and processes of the historic movement of the world-economy towards the NIDL and developing countries towards a new mode of peripheral specialization: EOI.

The thesis also looks at the specificity of the Caribbean in the NIDL. It involves a survey of EOI in the region, a case study of the export-oriented clothing industry in Jamaica, and an analysis of the prospects for a regional export-oriented clothing industry. The objective is to assess the virtues of the operation of Export Processing Zones and World Market Factories in the promotion of industrial development in the CARICOM region.

The findings suggest, firstly, that the current transformations in the international division of labour have historical antecedents and so are not unique or epochal. Secondly, it is evident that the phenomenon of EOI is the result of the tendency of central capital to relocate mature and declining industries from advanced and high wage areas to less advanced low wage areas during periods of systemic crisis or downturns. As such EOI should be seen as "part and parcel" of the larger transformations in the NIDL and thus cannot be understood independently. Lastly, the case study of Jamaica and the experience of other developing countries illustrate that EOI, rather than having developmental potential, augments existing inequalities and structural biases and induces new forms of dependency in peripheral countries. The thesis argues that EOI should not be seen as a development strategy per se but as a new mode of unequal specialization for peripheral countries in the continuing development of the capitalist world-system.