

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Naturally, any assessment of the impact of Venezuela's activity in the Caribbean stage remains guarded since it is not clear whether or not the impact of these states to affect the integration of the Caribbean, and the influence of these states on the Caribbean system.

This thesis attempts to examine the impact and implications of Venezuela's interest and initiatives in a subregion where the member states are striving to consolidate subsystemic relations. For the purposes of this study, the term "Venezuelan interest" is used to mean the expressed predisposition of the country's leadership, business interests, academics and diplomatic personnel, to promote closer relations with members of the Commonwealth Caribbean, in the spheres of commerce, politics, and culture. The term "Initiatives" refers to the manifest efforts at operationalizing this interest through the granting of economic and technical assistance, the signing of joint economic and cultural agreements, the paying of visits, and discussing of plans for functional cooperation.

Since attempts at stimulating horizontal interaction with those islands were not peculiar to the Perez administration, the study will explore the reasons for which Venezuela's initiatives during his presidency were perceived in some quarters, as crucial to the process of system consolidation. Venezuela/Commonwealth Caribbean relations before and after the start of the "Energy Crisis" will be examined, contrasting the initiatives, their scope, and the regional context in which they were carried out.

Naturally, any assessment of the impact of Venezuela's activity in the area, must at this stage remain guarded since it is somewhat premature to determine whether or not the impact if any, has been significant enough to affect the integration movement in any way. This work may therefore be regarded as a precursor to further research into the factors which influence Venezuela's interest in the Anglophone Caribbean, and the possible effects of this on the efforts of these states to strengthen regional subsystemic relations.

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