

ABSTRACT

**Caribbean-European International Economic Relations: The Case of the
Windward Islands Banana Industry**

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Keywords : Bananas, Single European Market, Windward Islands;

This research examined the international economic relationship between the Caribbean and Europe using the case study of the Windward Islands and the United Kingdom. The research focuses on economic change in the Windward Islands and examines how the Islands have adjusted and restructured their economy to global transformations such as mercantilism, free trade imperialism, neo-protectionism and free enterprise transnationalism.

The main issues discussed in this research are the future of the Windward Islands' banana industry, the implications of an erosion of its market share in a liberalised EU banana market; challenges to the EU banana regime under the GATT and the WTO; diversification of the banana industry and the search for alternatives and lastly, the issue of the Windward Islands' continued commodity dependence on Europe.

This research had several findings : the Caribbean produced and exported to the metropole products which were required by the dominant economies; the Caribbean underwent little structural change in the 400 years of its existence due to its extroverted character of production and consumption process; the successful introduction of the banana industry was as a result of the rising demand for bananas, improvements in transport and technology and the provision of a stable organisational structure.; challenges by multinationals to the legality of the EU's new banana regime was more concerned with the multinational losing market share and preserving national self interest rather than free and fair trade; in the short term the Windward Islands' will have to negotiate for the retention of some level of preferences while they restructure their banana industry in the long term to survive in a liberated EU banana market.

The WI banana problem has several non-commercial aspects such as the nature of the product, the self fulfilling prophecy of small size, the psycho-cultural scar of marginalisation and the lack of a vibrant local private sector; lastly this research concluded that the WI dependency has been a manifestation of their integration into a system of global capitalism when the metropolitan economies dominated the international economic system and conditioned the economic structures of their economies.

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The thesis employed a plantation economy model and world system approach to offer an explanation of the evolution of the Windward Islands' economic development problematique. The two approaches were effective in providing the necessary structure to look at the modalities of the Caribbean-European international economic relationship and the Caribbean development problematique within a framework that encompassed the background to its evolution and an analysis of its socio-historical component.

Keywords : Bananas; Single European Market; Windward Islands; International Trade; European Union.

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