

ABSTRACT

The central problematic of this dissertation is the apportionment of earnings derived from the export of orange concentrate between Belize and its largest market, the USA, and the subsequent distribution of retained earnings amongst stakeholders in Belize. This export continuum, traditionally regarded in development economics as a commodity chain, was reconceptualized as a value chain to, inter alia, dynamize a potential for enhancing the value of the finished product.

Belize's orange concentrate exports are priced by the world market. This research sought to ascertain the process of price formation, first at the global level and then at local levels within Belize. Based on its limited positioning in the value chain, world market prices are essentially exogenous for Belize as a peripheral producer.

Declining trends in these prices have forced Belize to pursue cost minimization strategies to ensure continued viability. These strategies employed have resulted in comparative stagnation in the remuneration of citrus harvesters, the most labour-intensive aspect of citrus operations, as wage rates are pushed to near reservation levels. A result has been that native Afro-Belizeans have wholly abandoned low wage occupations in the citrus industry, only to be replaced by Hispanic migrant harvesters from neighbouring countries.

Transformational options required to surmount the asymmetric income distribution realities of the orange concentrate value chain necessitate a paradigm shift to the dynamics of industrial organization. Such options may also require a hitherto unprecedented level of cooperation among regional peripheral producers.

This dissertation expands existing knowledge by its macro-dimensional focus on a value chain for orange concentrate between a peripheral and a developed country. And it contributes to new knowledge via a concomitant micro-dimensional focus on the distribution of incomes within Belize and the political economy consequences thereof.

Keywords: Philip Castillo; Belize; value chain; citrus; orange concentrate.