

## ABSTRACT

Between Sugar And Bananas: Economic Diversification In St. Lucia 1897-1945

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Inspired by the work of the Plantation economy theorists, but primarily driven by the need to study this uncharted area of St. Lucia's economic history, this study examined the emergence of new staples in St. Lucia in the wake of the sugar crisis. In "Plantation Economy Modified", Lloyd Best and Kari Levitt theorized on the ways in which economies responded to this period of crisis. They highlighted that in cases where new staples are introduced, these would continue to exist within a plantation framework of external dependence and control.

Using historical analysis, and introducing a framework for the analysis of economic diversification – the New Staple Paradigm –, the thesis contends that the new staples continued in a pattern of external dependency which left them vulnerable and unsustainable, but at the same time, their development, opened up new opportunities for economic participation and advancement for the peasantry. Four major export crops, namely, cocoa, limes, coconuts, and bananas, received new attention and/or expanded within this period. Spearheaded by the peasantry, this diversification led to increased awareness of, and support for, the economic contribution of the peasantry who, in the wake of a sugar crisis, had taken the lead in diversifying the island's agricultural economy. The 1897 commission was

motivated by such conditions to assert that the future prosperity of the country lay in the hands of the peasantry and this resulted in corresponding policy changes.

Keywords: Louise Mathurin; plantation economy; economic diversification; St. Lucia.