

# **Experiencing Globalization: Race And Class As Mediating Factors in Two Caribbean Countries**

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This paper highlights the different reactions of two states, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, to the globalization process. The roles of race and class are emphasized. State reaction to the process of globalization depends on two major variables - the types of economic elites present and the society's racial/ethnic composition. The extent to which the elites couch their interests in nationalist terms and the extent to which race influences competition for control of the state both significantly influence societal reactions to globalization.

Two hypotheses are advanced. The first is that the more the economic elites stand to benefit from globalization, the more they urge the state to push the process along, even if the population is negatively affected. Alternatively, the more the economic elite stand to lose materially, the more they urge the state to resist globalization using a nationalistic argument. In plural societies where political parties are organized around racial lines, the negative consequences of globalization are interpreted through racial lenses. Additionally, patron-client relations are forged to control state power. Class issues are pushed into the background, thus seriously inhibiting the state's ability to address the problems of entrenched inequality that may be exacerbated by globalization.

The second hypothesis is that in a homogenous society the reaction to negative consequences of globalization would likely be in nationalistic terms, whereas in a racially plural society the reaction to globalization would likely be along lines of race. The data used is a combination of secondary data and interviews with key informants.