



**CIPRIANI COLLEGE**  
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

## **Understand Contemporary Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Conversation**

As the Caribbean and Latin America entered the twenty-first century facing similar challenges in a changing global and regional socio-economic and political environment, concerns including the need for common responses to migration, trade and economic relations, transnational crime, and public safety, among other issues, became concerns of mutual importance and common interest.

At the same time, the region witnessed a new wave of regional integration efforts, with multi-dimensional application and multi-actor engagement. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Latin American states became engaged collectively in the efforts to enhance regional collaboration and countries became members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) included Guyana and Suriname in its membership, some CARICOM states became members of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and both sets of As the twenty-first century moved into its second decade, states sought to diversify their international relations in the ‘spaghetti bowl’ of regional integration arrangements which were established and to seek to derive mutual benefits from new areas of collaboration.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, new and equally significant issues emerged on the agendas including the political and economic crisis in Venezuela, the impact of Venezuelan migrants on the small Caribbean states and the challenges of migration management, the increasing importance of citizen security in both sets of states and the need for collective responses to crime and violence, the increasing engagement with Cuba in areas such as climate change, disaster management, health and education, the developments in the Guiana Shield, especially as a result of recent developments in the oil and gas sectors in Guyana and Suriname, among other geopolitical and strategic issues impacting Caribbean – Latin American relations. In order to contribute to the development of scholarly literature and provide a wide audience with analyses of the shared challenges and prospects for greater collaboration between Latin America and the Caribbean, scholars and practitioners from Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Cuba have assembled a range of articles in the book “Contemporary Issues in Caribbean and Latin American Relations”. The book is published by Lexington Books, of the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group Inc.

In the chapter on the Guiana Shield, Mark Kirton assesses the new opportunities for collaboration with countries including Brazil, French Guiana, Suriname and Guyana and the potential developments related to regional energy interconnectivity, food security and increased trade in a post-pandemic environment and presents options for greater public and private sector involvement in cross-border engagement. From a small-states perspective, Marlon Anatol et al discuss the impact of Venezuelan immigrants on crime in Trinidad and Tobago and provides

recommendations including review of the island's immigration policy, and the establishment of an education and sensitization programme, among others. Similarly, Ashaki Dore, in the chapter related to the leveraging of an asylum system to overcome the challenges to immigration in small states provides policy options for the management of irregular migration options in a complex regional environment. In addressing the issues related to the geopolitical challenges of an expanded CARICOM, Kai-Ann Skeet advocates the re-engineering of the regional body's trade and external economic strategies and build new bridges of collaboration through expanded membership opportunities.

Cuba's relations with the Caribbean since 1972, its uneven progression and the potential for its enhancement have been assessed in the chapter by Jacqueline Laguardia Martinez and Milagros Martinez Reinoso who highlight the need for enhanced transport infrastructure, reduction of language barriers, reversal in US embargo restrictions which negatively impact tourism from the Caribbean, and the creation of stronger mechanisms for solidarity and cooperation. Rubén Martoredjo, in the chapter which reviews UNASUR as a socially responsive integration arrangement in South America presented the view that initiatives from that organization served to address social problems including poverty reduction and the reduction of inequalities and its programmes which were reviewed in the chapter should be replicated across the region. Clement Henry has analyzed the several dimensions of human security in the region and points to an emerging paradigm which focuses on the security of the individual, separate from the state, and as two distinct but related phenomena. This analysis also presents policy options for the design of human security actions and mechanisms for monitoring trends in the quality of human security.

An assessment of these studies indicates that the book provides timely assessments and analyses of issues that must be addresses by policymakers across Latin America and the Caribbean in a comprehensive manner. It also provides a new body of literature which will be of interest and value to a wide cross-section of the region's citizenry especially as the imperatives of geographical proximity, common social, economic and political challenges, environmental, climate change, health and increasing convergences of interests demand greater collaboration.

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