

Full Length Research

"Beginnings for Understanding the 'Politics' of Public Policy in Jamaica"

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How, in what way(s), and the extent to which party politics impact on Local Government (LG) policy in Jamaica remain largely unexplored. Limited studies done on party politics in Jamaica show that it is often assumed that partisan politics is highly important for explaining public policy outcomes. Conversely, most policy studies have completely ignored party politics as an influential factor on public policy outcomes which consequently overtime has resulted in a rise in the negative politicization of LG policies that continue to worsen the economic and social fabric of the poor. This political impact on LG initiatives has significantly contributed to Jamaica's continued state of underdevelopment, unemployment, increased crime, corruption, and shattered infrastructure. The lack of Central and Local Governments' continuity, transparency and sporadic accountability with policies, programs and projects (PPPs) continue to be problematic. It is against this background the researcher conducted an empirical study to analyze the link between party politics and public policy; particularly those PPPs that were established and implemented during selected LG histories in Jamaica when Central and Local Governments were controlled by two different political parties. The collection and analysis of data surrounding various claims were informed by the constructivist grounded theory methodology.

Keywords: Party Politics; Public Policy; Jamaica; Local Government; Elite Theory; Top-Down Model; Power; Ideology; Institutions; Structure; Constructivist Grounded Theory

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INTRODUCTION

Since political independence in Jamaica (in 1962) there have been growing concerns about the continued poor handling of Local Government (LG) policies, programmes and projects (PPPs). This is further explained by the promulgation of good governance as a tool for development management where governments are being asked to become more accountable to the legislature, and to citizens. Many share the view that increased unemployment, increased corruption, pockets of poverty, the lack of community and infrastructure developments, unfair distribution of poor relief, one quarter of growth after fourteen consecutive quarters of economic decline, and frequent policy change are all effects of counter-productive partisan political behavior by elected representatives to the Jamaican Parliament and local governance systems (Lewis, 2012; Ruddock, 1992; Stone, 1980; Cox, 2011). Regarding counter-productive partisan political behavior, between 1986-1990 and 2003-2007⁸ successive central government administrations [i.e., the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), respectively] were condemned more so than any other period for: (a) their lack of support for existing PPPs, which ultimately led to their discontinuation (b) for de-emphasizing PPPs, and/ or (c) for criticizing PPPs on party and self-interest lines (Stone, 1980). Similarly at the LG echelon, operations of Local Authorities (LA)⁹ and partnered agencies¹⁰ were criticized for politicizing their functions. Some of these functions included: (a) the distribution of poor relief, (b) the construction and maintenance of parochial roads and markets, (c) the provision of civic amenities, (d) waste management, (e) community development, and (f) infrastructure development.¹¹

Furthermore there seems to be a trend with successive government administrations to use different approaches to similar policy problems. Justifications for such in various frameworks (Baumgartner et al., 2012), (c) party interest and the public's interest (Burstein & Linton, 2002), (d) demands from the governing elites (Mills, 1956), and (c) objective conditions such as natural/disasters. For instance, during the 1960s, 70s and 80s in Jamaica there were wide domains of continuities and differences in policies undertaken by successive governments. During the 1960s selected central government policy mechanisms were pursued on

capitalist lines by the JLP that saw most, if not all previous policies been either: discontinued, de-emphasized or opposed. Beginning in 1972 under the Michael Manley led PNP government, these policy were criticized by the PNP whom later (1972) rearranged these policies along socialist lines (Stone, 1980). For example, the PNP criticized the JLP's education policy as lacking in relevance and was practiced in an authoritarian atmosphere, and was geared towards reproducing the class system in the society and maintain an elitist approach. In 1972, Michael Manley¹² adopted an education plan that would (a) achieve self-reliance, (b) social and economic progress, (c) equal educational opportunity, and (d) nationalism.

Another major criticism is the dichotomy between central and local governments' financial operations. Separate and apart from the fact that Parish Councils¹³ (PCs) receive funds from various rates and taxes, PCs also receive grants made by central government in situations where they are not well off and find it hard to balance their budget. (Ruddock, 1992) The concern here is the action taken by central government to increase or approaches include: (a) competing party ideologies (Stone, 1980), (b) how governments understand their role decrease budgets of PCs. Ruddock (1992) and Stone (1980) are of the view that this move was highly politicized by Ministers of local government who had the final say on grants and sign off on annual budgets for LAs during the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Since then several reform committees 14 were established to mitigate these problems. It was hoped that through the implementation of recommendations derived from these committees, there would be no latitude for any acts of PPPs being politicized. To date, many (such as Dr. Eris Schoburgh and Mr. Robert Buddan – both lecturers at the University

⁸ 1986-90 and 2003-07 were the only two periods in Jamaica's political history when central and local governments were controlled by different political parties. It was during these two periods Jamaica demonstrated pronounced elements of divides between central and local governments. During these periods the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) was in control of central government while the People's National Party (PNP) was in control of local government; and the PNP in control of central government while the JLP in control of local government, respectively.

⁹ LAs are those entities at the local level through which the Department of Local Government carries out its functions within communities; for example, the Kingston & St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC).

¹⁰ Partnered agencies are those entities that assist LAs with the development and implementation of local government PPPs. For example, the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA), Social Development Corporation (SDC), Parish Development Committee (PDC), and the Parish Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)

¹¹ Local Government Structure website, Roles and Functions of Local Government:

<http://www.localgovjamaica.gov.jm/localauthorities.aspx?c=function>

¹² Prime Minister of Jamaica between 1972 and 1980, and 1989 and 1992. He was also the leader of the PNP.

¹³ Parish Council is one of two types of LA (the other being Municipality). A PC has the power to spend money and has variable tax raising powers (Ruddock, 1992).

of the West Indies, Mona) contend that these issues still exist. Jamaica is yet to see any tangible outcome of recommendations from the reform.

Operations of LAs remain highly political and only reflect the interests of a few. Elected officials are still using their offices as either: (a) stepping stones to national politics, and or (b) to destabilize the ruling party. To these ends my study seeks to answer the following research questions: To determine the extent to which party politics influence successful local government policy implementation? To describe how and in what ways party politics influences the success of local government policy; and to develop strategies to prevent party politics from influencing local government policy?

METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes an interdisciplinary qualitative approach, which uses mainly an exploratory design typology to analyze the relationship between party politics and public policy in Jamaica. The study uses a qualitative approach because the phenomenon is new, complex, and sensitive (Creswell, 2007; Hennink *et al*, 2012).

From the standpoint that several persons have and will be interviewed, the interpretive/ social constructivist epistemology/ ontology sets the tone for collecting meaningful data that participants hold as true based on their individual experiences in the policy process. (Klenke, 2008, p. 16) Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology along with its complementary data collection methods (such as interviews, policy documents, reports from the Offices of the Auditor and Contractor Generals and minutes of meetings), strategies, sampling (theoretical and snowballing) and analytical tools (Charmaz, 2006) were used to inform the study. The CGT methodology reaffirms studying people in their natural settings. Three advantages for using CGT for this study are: (a) because of the self-correcting nature of the data collection process; (b) methods are inherently bent toward

developing theory; and (c) there is an emphasis on comparative methods. (Charmaz, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 522)

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Through the use of a conceptual framework, the study explains the analytical framework of this paper using elite theory (ET) and the top-down model (TDM). The decision to use elements of ET and TDM was based on (a) there epistemological influences¹⁵ and (b) there is no one body of knowledge that adequately explains the politics of public policy development and implementation.

The weaknesses of ET and TDM are complemented by each other's strength, which make them able to stand up to empirical scrutiny. Mills (1956), a key authority on ET, affirms ET as one of the most used public policy theory to explain why certain policies are developed. Dahl (1989) and Hunter (1953) however, contend that ET fails to explain: (a) what happens when the masses influences policy; and (b) what happens at the implementation stage. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Meter and Horn (1975), and Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979), classical authors of TDM, affirm that TDM explains issues pertaining to policy implementation. Marsh and Rhodes (1992), and Majone and Wildavsky (1995) however, criticize TDM for (a) failing to explain what happens at the development stage of a policy, and (b) for not offering any account for the role institutional forces play in policy implementation, much less the entire policy process.

According to Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework, the politics of policy development and implementation using ET and TDM adopts a top to bottom approach. The framework demonstrates that policy discussions (despite systems of government) usually begin among elites (such as, political representatives, business executives, international agencies, military leaders, church groups and civil society) instead of the masses. These policy discussions are usually as a result of (a) existing problems and or (b) opportunities for growth and development. As for the latter (i.e., policy discussions for opportunities for growth and development), policies for example can be traced back to corporate businesses board room meetings. In other words, in most cases, public policies are conceived, placed on the agenda, adopted, developed and subsequently implemented by political representatives as a result of corporate business proposals (interests) and

¹⁴ For example, the National Advisory Council on Local Government Reform (NAC), the Association of the National Advisory Council on Local Government (ALGA), and the Joint Select Committee of Parliament (JSC)

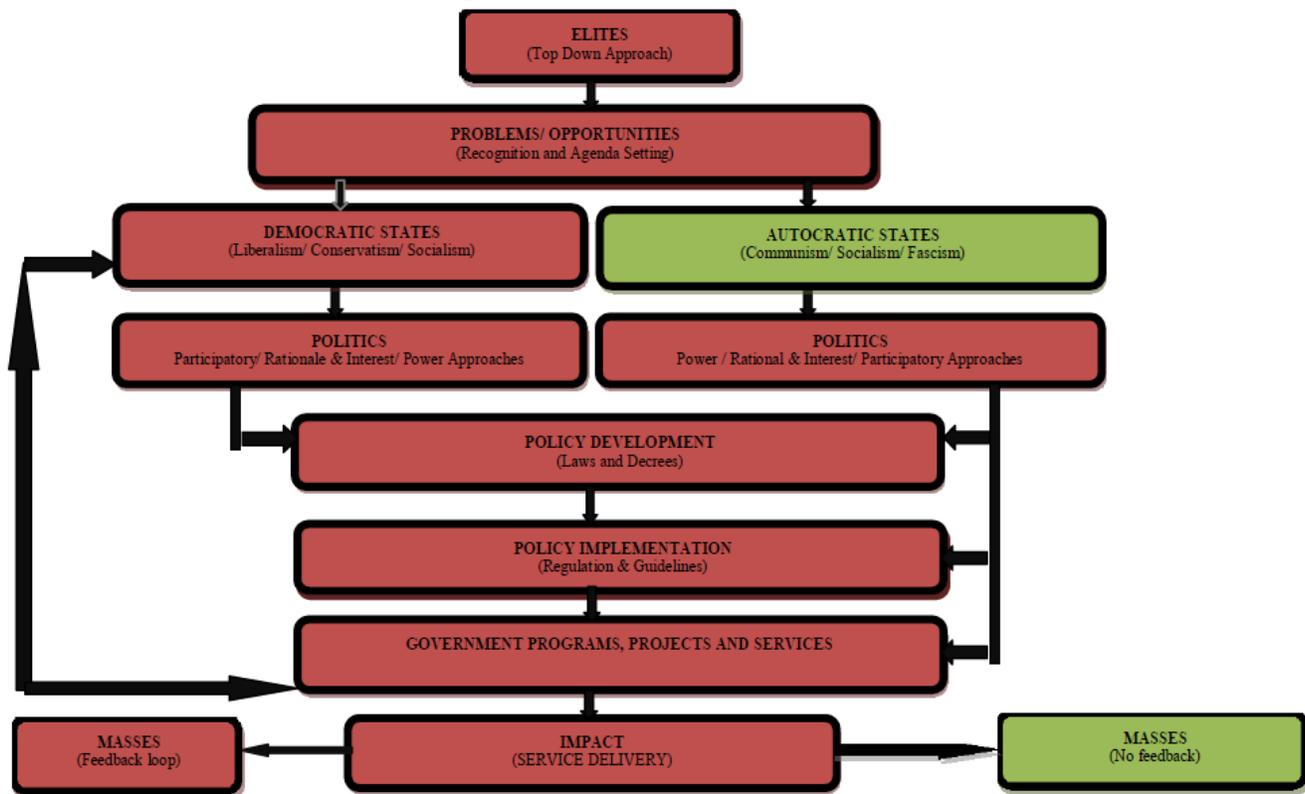
³ Creswell (2007), and Hennink, Hunter and Bailey (2012) encourage authors to use qualitative research in these circumstances.

⁴ Charmaz's CGT is a revision of Strauss and Corbin's (1998), and Glaser and Strauss (1967) systematic/ classical grounded theory procedures.

⁵ NVivo is a computer-based tool that helps to analyze and manage qualitative data.

⁶ The CCM is "a method for analyzing qualitative data by combining inductive category coding with the simultaneous comparisons of all the units of meaning obtained." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

¹⁵ Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. It addresses the question: how do you know what you know? In the case of ET and TDM, it addresses the origins and usefulness of each in explaining this paper.



Source: Created by Author (2013) by using data from different studies

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

not from the public's demand. These proposals in most 8 cases do not reflect the interest of the masses.

As for the former (i.e. policy discussions arising as a result of existing problems) which under ET is uncommon, policies can be traced back to political representatives need to satisfy the public's demands but common for the prospect for re-election.

There are at least two systems of government under which public policies are developed and implemented, democracy and autocratic. Under each system of government, public policies are influenced and subsequently developed differently. Under democratic states, public policies are made on a majority basis by elected representatives while for autocratic states, power over subjects/ policy is highly concentrated in a single authority. Usually under autocratic governments, elites (such as corporate executives, NGOs, and ITBs) tend to have a greater effect on policy when compared to democratic governments; mainly because these are the same persons who occupy political offices or have had past and existing relations through university studies or the workplace. In stable democracies, particularly in extreme circumstances such

as natural disaster, the masses will have an effect on policy especially because governments are seeking re-election. Under these two systems, approaches to public policy are further explained using micro-paradigms power dynamics (namely the rationale interest approach, the participatory approach and the power approach), which essentially explain the intentions of government, their perspectives, how policies are formed, implemented and analyzed and the institutional influences.

Political ideologies have also played a key role in influencing governments policy agendas. Both systems of government have demonstrated an assortment of ideological dispositions over time that have either seen governments developing and implementing policies that the state assumes total ownership of, or shared responsibility with other sectors (namely the Private and NGO).

After policies are developed, which may take the form of laws and or decrees, implementation follows.¹⁶ Policy implementation can take the form of rules and regulations, guidelines, projects, programs, and services that are usually implemented by civil and

public servants, and partnered agencies. In the context of the Kingston & St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC), policies are implemented by at least five main departments: Town Clerk, Financial Management and Accounting, City Engineer, Community Welfare and Municipal Services and the Inspection Enforcement and Security. Unlike in authoritarian regimes, in democratic societies depending on the policy impact on the masses, the masses are able to influence policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regrettably because of the relative silence on issues surrounding the impact of party politics on democratic practices in Jamaica (Lewis, 2012), not many current local-based materials were available for use. Instead the author used a few older (and in some cases generic) texts, which made significant contributions to the existing body of work. Additionally the literature acknowledges public policy failure as often times multi-faceted and places significant weight on the role of political behaviours by elected representatives on the development and implementation of local government policies. As for the latter, an examination of the literature demonstrates that the role of institutions, ideology, structure of government, and power are key features that shape political behavior (Burstein & Linton, 2002; Funderburk & Thobaben, 1989; Heywood, 2007; Mills, 1956; Stone, 1980). The reviews were (a) presented using an inductive model¹⁷; and (b) divided into three themes.

“The dynamics of public policy focuses on its historical and ideological developmental context. The historical and ideological development context of public policy approaches in Jamaica...”.

Theme one: The dynamics of public policy

The dynamics of public policy focuses on its historical and ideological developmental context. The historical and ideological development context of public policy approaches in Jamaica is best understood as an adopted Westminster-Whitehall Model (WWM) from Britain. Before and after political independence in Jamaica from Britain, Jamaica's public policy practices have solely been influenced by Britain's political structure and practices; hence the need to acknowledge the genesis and context of public policy in Jamaica as a borrowed model from Britain and how social and public policy emerged in Britain.

The emergence of formal public policies dates back to the nineteenth century in Britain where poor social and economic conditions of the masses led to the development of a formal welfare state.

Organizations, institutions and individuals all played important roles in this establishment either through: voluntary gestures, funding research to arrive at mitigation strategies, or by articulating their views through various media: books, political platforms, newspaper, TV, radio and movies. Social intervention by then was described as the responsibility of state. This responsibility later shifted to local government after the reform of the 1601 Poor Law, followed by ongoing debates surrounding how policies are created and who are the persons responsible for creating and implementing them (Lavalette & Pratt, 2006). Today, public policy development is viewed as a reflection of the values and preferences of elite groups such as business groups, the military and international donor agencies instead of the masses. In fact, agenda-setting usually begins informally in corporate boardrooms then enacted and implemented by government.

There is an ongoing debate about whether local government is a place for policy making independent of central government. On one side, local government is at the mercy of central government. The mere fact that local government powers are derived from central government and central government funds local government budget, make it difficult for local government to act independent of central government (Dillon, as cited in Berman, 2003, p. 4; Miller, 2002). On the other side, reform exercises have recommended that local government be entrenched in the constitution, which will allow local government autonomy over its own affairs.

At the implementation level, local government policy is usually a collaborative effort with partnered agencies. It is at this stage too that counter-productive political behaviours tend to surface, for example, during contract proceedings, project delays and project terminations.

Theme two: Why different administrations and their approach to similar policy problems?

Successive government administrations over different periods have tended to use different approaches to similar policy problems. Some of these rationales include: competing party ideologies (Stone, 1980), how governments understand their role in various frameworks (Baumgartner et al., 2012), party interest and the public's interest (Burstein & Linton, 2002), demands from the governing elites (Mills, 1956) and objective conditions such as disasters. In the case of Jamaica, different approaches to similar policy problems have been rationalized by most, if not all of the aforementioned reasons, which had consequently impacted on the livelihood of the masses.

Table 1, extracted from Stones (1980, pp. 249–259),

highlights the wide domains of continuities and differences in policy. It outlines selected central policy mechanisms pursued by the JLP between 1962 and 1972 and the extent to which these have been either: discontinued, de-emphasized or opposed, under the PNP government that came to power in 1972. It also sets out policies initiated by the PNP which are outside of the policy instruments and directions pursued by the JLP in the 1980s (Stone, 1980).

According to Stone (1980): Both party governments have promoted subsidies, small farmer credit, state marketing of domestic agriculture, government land acquisition and redistribution to small farmers, the discouraging of idle land holdings, the importance of traditional agricultural exports such as sugar and bananas, and attempts at diversifying local production to promote important substitution. Both party governments have promoted import substitution via the local manufacturing sector, heavy reliance on North American loan financing for infrastructural development and public expenditure, government ownership of utilities and some productive enterprises, economic integration with the eastern Caribbean states, government attempts to monitor the financial system, and fiscal initiatives designed to redistribute income to the poorer classes. Both have emphasized primary and secondary level educational expansion of adult literacy programmes, social welfare expansion, low income government funded housing, special employment projects by government expenditure in Local Government and public works, price controls, law and order and a massive build up of the local machinery of security and crime control and youth skill training and community development programmes (p. 117).

As for education, ideological differences between the JLP and PNP approach to education surfaced during the 1960s and 70s. Prior to the 1970s (i.e., 1962-72), Jamaica was governed by the JLP whose education, economic and social institutions/ policies were organized on capitalist lines. These institutions were attacked by the PNP whom later (1972) rearranged these policies along socialist lines.

For example, the PNP criticized the JLP's education policy as lacking in relevance and was practiced in an authoritarian atmosphere, and was geared towards reproducing the class system in the society and maintain an elitist approach. In 1972, Michael Manley (Stone, 1980) adopted an education plan that would (a) achieve self-reliance, (b) social and economic progress, (c) equal educational opportunity, and (d) nationalism. According to Manley "at this stage of Jamaica's development, education must help to unify society, aid economic development, and prepare individuals to accept the responsibility of independence... that the traditional aims of the Jamaican educational system, although effective under colonial administration, were inadequate to

transform the plans for educational reform, into a structure through which individuals could become self-reliant, self-fulfilled,...and significant contributions on a large scale to the social and economic development of the nation."

Theme three: Factors affecting public policy

Power and public policy

Bardrach and Baratz (1970), Foucault (1979), Hobbes (1661), Machiavelli (1958/ 1970), Lasswell (1968), and Lukes (1974) have devoted a large part of their work to understand the relationship between politics and power (Clegg, 1989). In fact for many they are labeled as the greatest ever precursors of power. Importantly, though they have slight to significant variations in their conceptions of power, they all believe power is a central issue in politics and the study of political science.

However, for this study Lasswell's (1968) elucidation came closest in explaining all the facets of political behaviour, hence will be the basis for understanding power. Lasswell conception focuses on the relationship between power and policy. He identified various forms of influence (which he often times use synonymously for power) that consequently shape policy. For example, he spoke about power on the basis of culture, economic position, control over instruments of violence and power based on skills, all of which are based in institutional

Structures of government and public policy

The exercise of power is largely based on the structure of a government. How governments are structured, determine how policies are developed and implemented. Broadly speaking, there are at least two understandings of structure among two-party Third World political systems: the Westminster-Whitehall Model and the Presidential System. Under the former (for e.g., Jamaica), the Prime Minister and her cabinet are responsible for legislatures or policies that are made for the public (JIS, 2013). Under the Presidential System (for e.g., the US), the President is the principal agent for policy.²⁰

These two structures of government are more often used to explain the pros and cons of unitary and divided government. Usually Westminster-Whitehall Models are referred to as unitary states because only a single political party wields power, while for the Presidential Model, in some cases, the Presidency and congress are controlled by different political parties, hence the term divided government.

Both conceptions have been praised for developing and implementing healthy long-term public policies and

Table 1. Different approaches to similar policy problems by the JLP and PNP

	JLP 1962 - 1972	PNP's RESPONSE 1972 - 1980	PNP 1972 - 1980	JLP's RESPONSE 1980 - 1989
Agriculture	Developed land authority system to monitor and develop domestic agricultural production.	...Discontinued by the PNP	Agricultural cooperatives in the sugar industry.	...Criticized implementation
			Established government food farms	...Criticized inefficient implementation
Economy	Promoted new industries by incentive legislation.	...De-emphasized by the PNP	Established state trading corporation to import food, drugs and other vital commodities.	...Criticized by ideological antagonism to state expansion at expense of private sector.
			Import licensing and foreign exchange control.	...criticized excesses of state bureaucracy.
			Control of wage increases	...criticized as unworkable
Education & Welfare			Established Pioneer Corps of Youth organized for building infrastructure and learning skills.	...Criticized as waste of public funds for political pay-offs.
			Established Housing Trust Fund to finance housing development by mandatory contributions from employee/ employer	Criticized as robbing funds from private sector
Foreign Policy			Established close links with Cuba and Cuban communist party and government.	...Opposed on ideological grounds
			Established anti-imperialist diplomatic stance, aligning more closely with the Third World and insisting on nonalignment in contrast to pro-Western alignments under the JLP	...Tactics and strategies criticized and opposition voiced to close relations with Communists countries

for yielding higher levels of production of important laws (Baumgartner et al, 2012). Both have also been criticized for being less productive. For example, the rate of growth of real capita federal spending is usually significantly low (Niskanen, 2007).

Political ideologies and public policy

Policy decisions by government are also usually shaped by political ideologies, which in most cases, account for difference in policy approach despite similar policy

problems. According to Funderburk and Thobaben (1989), key authorities on political ideologies, "Ideology embraces nearly everything relevant to political conditions." (p. 1) Funderburk and Thobaben further asserted that whether left (liberalism) or right (conservatism), elements of each have for decades shape public policy despite government structures. For example, Jamaica's two major political parties (i.e., the PNP and the JLP) since their inception have aligned themselves to left and right ideologies, respectively. These alignments have over the years reflected in the kind of policies successive governments pursue (Stone, 1980). For Stone (1980), "The underlying difference between the two main parties lies in the JLP's pragmatism and conservatism and PNP's liberalism and belief in Leftist social engineering" (p. 114).

There are two theories surrounding the relationship between political ideologies and public policy in postcolonial Jamaica. For some, ideological dispositions still continue to influence public policy, while for others, political ideologies no longer play that role. As for the former, Robinson-Walcott (2010), argued that since independence, Jamaica has been "grappling with the socio-political legacies of colonialism" (p.1). Jamaica has "struggled with different ideologies in its effort to forge a new national path" (p. 1). More pronounced than any other period, the 1970s and 80s demonstrated a sharp difference with the PNP under the leadership of Michael Manley (1972-80) and the JLP under Edward Seaga. Michael Manley adopted a democratic socialist approach (i.e., welfare approach) where the state assumed ownership of the economy, which was a response to the burgeoning social pressures, closer relations with Cuba and other communist and socialist countries, and the JLP under the leadership of Edward Seaga espoused policies of economic liberalization and privatization.

Conversely, many are of the view that political ideologies no longer play a pivotal role in shaping public policy. In fact many describe this as dead compared to the late 1930s to the 1980s (Unknown source). Political parties in Jamaica have demonstrated in recent years, (a) a common neoliberal framework in their policy agenda in an attempt to achieve worthwhile goals. Both political parties accepted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) neoliberal framework, and (b) common beliefs areas such as freedom of thought for individuals, limitations on power, the rule of law, and transparent government. Many have promulgated this transition as a result of postmodern ideologies, which have also advocated that institutions such as politics and religion, no longer anchors their existence of dogmas, but on existential philosophical hybrids. "The absolute global propositions of neo-Marxian and liberal ideologies have been replaced by fragmented but poignant ideas on building capacity for local and global market" (Unknown source).

Institutions and public policy

Also in this chapter, a number of institutions were analyzed concerning their influence on public policy. Some of these institutions include: political parties/ organizations, interest groups, the military, public opinion, international donor agencies, the church and social movement organizations.

According to Burstein and Linton (2002):

It is these organizations that define public problems, propose solutions, aggregate citizens' policy preferences, mobilize voters, make demands of elected officials, communicate information about government action to their supporters and the larger public and makes relatively coherent legislative action possible (pp. 2-3).

Various institutions have affected policy to the extent that their activities provided elected officials with information and resources (for e.g., numbers of members, and size budget) relevant to election campaigns, and organizational activities such as strikes, and lobbying on issues (Burstein & Linton, 2002). According to an article entitled Nongovernmental Organization and Institutions that Influence Public Policy (2008) from the U.S. Department of State publication, How the United States is governed, institutions influence public policy in many ways. Some of these include: (1) by educating the public about effects of policy proposals, (2) conducting various campaigns and public relation initiatives supporting their agenda, and (3) encouraging members and the wider public to support their cause through voting.

There are two broad discussions surrounding the impact of various institutions on public policy. These are (a) positive impacts, and (b) bad impacts. For latter, some institutions, particularly government, are seen as bureaucratic and inefficient because of their political conflicts. Also the role of institutions in the policy cycle facilitates room for winners (elites) to force their interests over the losers (masses). On the other hand [i.e., (a)], some institutions are lauded for their contribution to managing public policies. The role(s) various institutions play in the policy cycle is/ are viewed as important for building consensus and commitment among members.

Other factors affecting public policy

Despite the analytical framework of this thesis, public policy failure (especially for developing countries that are

²⁰ However, under a divided government system, policies or legislatures can only be passed if there is cooperation from the opposition party

more vulnerable because of their economic and political conditions) is often times described as multi-dimensional.

Other factors affecting public policy development and implementation include: institutional weaknesses, a lack of sufficient funds, insufficient and unreliable data, the use of inappropriate methodologies, corruption, the impact of changing circumstances, excessive policy demands, the vagaries of implementation, nepotism, external influences, conflict among policy stakeholders, over ambitious timescales or resources not being available when required, roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, no organizational support, external environment, and resistance to change (Birkland, 2011; Daley, 2009; Dunn, 2004; Haynes, 2001; Kraft & Furlong, 2010).

CONCLUSION

In this paper the author addressed briefly four chapters (i.e. the methodology, introduction, theoretical perspectives and literature review) on the "politics" of public policy in Jamaica. Essentially the paper highlights selected issues related to the continued poor handling of local government policies and there theoretical explanations. Chief among these issues is the role that counter-productive partisan political behavior by elected representatives plays on policies during selected local government history (Ruddock, 1992; Stone, 1980). A conceptual framework using a juxtaposition of elements from Mills "(1956) elite theory and Pressman and Wildavasky's (1973) et al top-down model was used to explain this and other issues. An inductive examination of the literature demonstrates that there are at least three themes necessary for understanding the politics of public policy. These include: (1) the dynamics of public policy, (2) factors affecting public policy; and (3) a history of Jamaica's policy agenda. Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory methodology was used to gain an understanding of all the issues involved in the study.

The political dimension of public policy failure is a shared phenomenon around the world. Particularly in many postcolonial states, the adverse effects of politics on policy development and implementation is a topically issue. Broadly speaking, the few works that have been done on this area addresses the issue as a nation building approach which involves the promotion of citizen engagement program (for example in Vanuatu), and the restructuring LG autonomy and funding; though are yet to "bear fruit" (for example in Jamaica). Based on preliminary data, it raises the question: Is the problem politics per se or is it the lack of citizen voices in the political system? If so how do we get the voices of the people to be heard by the ruling (political) elites? So perhaps the real problem lies in the lack of access to the

political processes - which is certainly the core of the problem in Jamaica that for so long has been typified by "big-man" patronage politics.

The study adopts a political economy perspective. An assessment of the interaction among the political, economic, social and cultural structural features, informal and formal institutions, and actors (both individual and organizations) better helps to understand the unique public policy dynamics in Jamaica. These interactions explain service delivery and the wider connections between state and the people - without casting assessment of whether these are right or wrong. They simply are and need to be understood to understand why ruling classes make the decisions they do. Only armed with this understanding and increasing public demand can there be the necessary political reform. But that will take considerable time - generations to emerge.

Jamaica's situation speaks to an emerging global understanding of political and governance issues affecting state building, and particularly issues of service delivery. Jamaica is not alone in suffering from these problems: they are common to many developing countries.

These matter for two reasons. First, where connections between citizens and the state are extremely weak, particularly in rural areas, citizens' links to wider society are through community, local government and only then to the nation. This makes it hard for politicians (or indeed anyone) to conceive of what a national debate might look like on the sorts of issues that affect everyone – health, jobs, transport, education, climate change, etc.

There is no coherent political vision to drive substantive change in service delivery, which means that people rely a great deal on informal and local relationships to provide what they need. A variety of non-state actors such as churches, NGOs or CSOs provide various services such as health and education; but outside the main urban areas the state is able to provide little in the way of employment, transport and other economic institutions that generate local and national development. This is not necessarily a bad thing and some argue that effective service delivery at local level needs to involve the non-state institutions that are already in place, including churches and NGOs. But as Wild et al (2012) point out this can give rise to three main challenges: poor access to services, poor quality of services, and inequity or marginalization of some groups. The second reason this dislocation between politics and citizens matters is because of the generational shift in political thinking that is happening across the Caribbean and other parts of the world, especially with the younger generation impatient to see change happening.

So the study addresses much of what developing countries are witnessing. The study seeks to contribute to informed national discussions on making political processes more inclusive. So this begs the question

about how to effect reforms that are relevant to Jamaica?

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