

## ABSTRACT

### The Jamaican Political Culture: A Theoretical and Empirical Exploration

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The renaissance of political culture studies in the last decade and a half symbolises a consolidation of the pioneering research carried out in the field in the 1960s, and reflects the growing recognition that the study of political culture offers crucial new insights into the understanding of political systems and system performance. While debate and research in this area advance in other countries however, not much has been done in Jamaica or the Caribbean where the body of commentary on politics appears largely impressionistic and journalistic.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a medium to focus academic investigation on issues of political culture. The thesis is based on empirical and theoretical inquiries into the political orientations and predisposition of Jamaicans to the objective dimensions of their political life, viz. the political system, the political process, and policy output. Among the primary aims of the research was to assemble a set of baseline data on Jamaican political culture to form a basis for future research and for analysis of Jamaican political culture.

The study utilises primary data obtained from an islandwide survey designed and analysed by the author as the core material. Secondary research was used mainly for comparative purposes, and to supplement and support inferences and conclusions drawn from the primary data.

The results indicate many areas of stability and change within the Jamaican political culture, and, significantly, points to a subtle process of transformation in the foundations of political attitudes and behaviour in the society.

The study has a number of important implications, and provides proposals for the debates on constitutional and political reform, dealing mainly with issues of elite leadership and processes of facilitating public involvement in politics. Further research in the area of social capital and institutional performance is also encouraged.