

ABSTRACT

The Politics of Public Policy in Jamaica: An Analysis of the Implications of a Change of Government on the Sustainability of Local Government Efficiency

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Whether, how and why a change of government impact on Local Government efficiency in Jamaica remain largely unexplored. It is against these backgrounds I conducted an interdisciplinary qualitative study, which utilizes an exploratory research design to analyse the impact of a change of government on the sustainability of Local Government operations in Jamaica. This was accomplished by exploring the use of party politics, particularly by new governments to influence Local Government operations over the last five decades.

A conceptual framework featuring elements of Mills' Elite Theory and Pressman & Wildavsky's Top-down Model was used to explain the politics of Local Government policy development and implementation processes in Jamaica.

Through the use of Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory methodology, it was established from the data that arguably a change of government continues to impact on the sustainability of Local Government operations in Jamaica. Some of these impacts include increases in: acts of political victimization; award of contracts based on nepotism; the discontinuation, delay or scale-down of policies; the selective regularization and enforcement of informal commercial businesses and collection of taxes; and the constant changing of Local Government functions. Among the core reasons for these impacts include: limited Local Government autonomy; the structure of Jamaica's political system; inadequate institutional support systems; and the nature of Jamaica's political landscape.

The entrenchment of a Local Government framework in the Jamaican Constitution holds the key to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, the adverse effects party politics and by extension a change of government has on Local Government operations, autonomy and financing.

Keywords: Gavin Leon Kirkpatrick Daley; Change of Government; Party Politics; Local Government Efficiency; Jamaica; Mills' Elite Theory; Pressman and Wildavsky's Top-down Model; Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology.