# The Transition of Authoritarian to Democracy in Jamaica

## Domestic society

### Economic development

Despite the democracy state witnessed in the political system in Jamaica, the same situation does not reflect on its economic system. The free economic system in the Caribbean island has seen slow development. Despite the openness of the economic system of the island, there has been little competition in the most significant economic sectors. In the past years, competition has been dominated by oligopolies of influential families and clans in the form of cross membership in the board of firms and companies (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). However, with World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations and the establishment of the fair trading commission, the island currently witnesses fair competition in the different economic sectors.

### Economic performance-ex. crisis, depression

The economic performance of Jamaica is yet to be good, for instance, it is highly indebted with debts that go as much as US$19 billion (Clegg, 2013). The economic growth experienced in the country has not been rapid but rather very sluggish. As stated earlier, there is still a high rate of unemployment and poverty levels. In addition, the great depression had a significant impact on the Jamaican economy, which caused sugar prices to drop. The country experienced uprisings in the sugar estates, and the living conditions continued to deteriorate.

### Class coalitions/Alliances

The establishment of trade commission and the existence of market regulations have continued to ensure fair competition resulting in growth of the island economy. Organizations such the World Bank have played a significant role in improving the market system in the island as well as stabilizing major economic programs.

## Domestic politics

### Old regimes political structures

The Caribbean island since the last decade has gone through leadership transformations from autocratic rule to attaining democracy (Petras, & Fitzgerald, 1988). The political system in Jamaica in the 17th century was ruled by the British colonies, which created an autocratic administration that saw a lack of representation of predominately Black slaves from Africa. After abolished of slavery, political parties and labor unions initiated movements to fight for democracy process, which saw social unrest in 1930's (Meeks, 2014). The movement saw the rise of two political parties the People National Party (PNL) led by Norman Manley with the party's central mandate to seek independence. Alexander Bustamante founded the other dominant party, Jamaican Labor Party (JPL) in 1938. The first general election in Jamaica was held in 1944, which saw Alexander Bustamante become the first prime minister of the Caribbean island. Jamaica achieved full sovereignty in 1962 after an extended period of self-government.

### Elite choices

To make elite choices about domestic politics in Jamaica, the key dimensions to be considered include rule of law and the elections of the country (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). Other dimensions include the civil society that takes care of human rights and local government. Therefore, all stakeholders should be involved to come up with elite choices to improve the domestic politics

## Intermestic (Domestic/International)

### Stateness problem

The use of force in the Caribbean island is widely enforced except in some urban towns and constituencies. Political parties continue to operate criminal gang’s networks in some districts of Jamaica. Major political parties used different garrison communities between 1960's and 1980's as centers for violence. Though the violence declined significantly in 1990's, a number of the garrison communities are still used as centers for drug trafficking and criminal activities.

## International

### Foreign economic influences-ex. World economic crisis

Jamaica has been collaborating with other countries and organizations to boost its economic growth. With the major organizations including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the European Union, and the Organization of American states. Structural adjustments and stabilization of programs are coordinated by the World Bank and IMF. The Caribbean government abides by the terms and conditions under the two organizations. The primary purpose of the different organization is to strengthen and reform the market systems in Jamaica.

### Foreign political influences-ex. International war

International wars such as the ‘Invasion of Grenada’ in 1983 affected Jamaica since the country is her neighbor. The war, led by the US, established order and peace, thus making the country stable. Jamaica was forced into the war to assist her neighbor to maintain good correlation and trading deals.

### Superpower policies-ex. Cold war

Jamaica decision to have a good relationship with Western nations, made it adapt their models of governorship and way of life. Even though Michael Manley tried to introduce socialism in the country during his term, it led to instability and high rate of violence. Later, Edward Seaga came in and restored the relationship with Western nations.

## References

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