

# **C. Wright Mills Sociological Imagination and the 1973 Oil Embargo in Jamaica: An Exploration of Economic and Sociocultural Consequences**

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In this paper, I plan to utilize C. Wright Mills' concept of sociological imagination to investigate the impact of the 1973 oil embargo on Jamaica over 5 decades. The sociological imagination consists of being able to link oneself and personal experiences to larger social issues and using a broad perspective to explain certain phenomena. In 1973, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) initiated an embargo that tripled the price of oil, triggering inflation, price hikes, and spiking unemployment rates in Jamaica. The economic and sociocultural repercussions can still be felt today. Using the sociological imagination, I will explore the "latent functions" of this event, which include a rapid increase in crime, population shifts to urban ghettos, and the emergence of one of the biggest genres of music: dancehall.

I plan to use a qualitative research design, which will include structured interviews with a small sample of Jamaicans across several generations. We plan to ask questions such as, Do you know about the Oil Embargo of 1973 or any major political/economic/social events in Jamaica from the 70s to around the early 2000s? We want to ask this question to draw out any information that someone would have based on Jamaican history, whether that be first-hand observation or passed through family. This project exists to connect ourselves back to the history of Jamaica, and how a major world event shaped the lives of many. Based on what we briefly discussed about this embargo, do you think that this event could have led to events that eventually led to the mass migration of Jamaicans and the overall conditions/stigmas we see about the island today? This question would be asked after a very brief synopsis of the effects that the embargo had on inflation, social issues, employment, and the shift in government that took place soon after. What do you think could help fix the overall conditions of what we see today in Jamaica? This question will allow me to see how other Jamaicans view current conditions and any potential solutions that could help other Caribbean countries that face the same socioeconomic pressures. The goal of my research is to get a picture of the full sociocultural impact of the embargo, and its lasting effects.

By capturing diverse perspectives, I hope to construct a "first-hand" narrative of the sociocultural impact of the embargo and its enduring legacy, and what we can do to fix the impact it had on our country as well as the rest of the Caribbean. Ultimately, the research I am continuing to do with Dr. Swift seeks to shed light on the profound and lasting effects of global economic crises on local communities.