

ABSTRACT

This thesis, "The Development of Social Assistance Policy in Barbados since 1875" is concerned with the documentation and analysis of the development of this area of social policy in Barbados following the Mitchinson Report on Poor Relief in 1875. It seeks to understand and explain the development of social assistance policy by seeing it as the product of the dialectical interaction of a range of forces which may be subsumed under metropolitan ideology, objective local conditions and local ideology.

Chapter I provides a historical, socio-economic and political contextualization of the study. It also examines the factors responsible for the appointment of the Mitchinson Commission and the recommendations of its Report which forms the point of departure for the study.

The embryonic state of research into social policy in Barbados has required that considerable attention be given to providing a proper empirical base. Chapters II and III therefore concern themselves with the empirical documentation of developments in social assistance since 1875 - the former dealing with statutory and the latter with voluntary social assistance.

Chapter IV focuses on the administration of social assistance policy: It examines the bureaucratic structures and the formal and informal practices involved in its implementation.

Chapter V is the synthesizing chapter. Here the issues identified in the foregoing chapters are discussed within a specifically designed theoretical framework with a view to explaining the development of policy in theoretical terms. The chapter suggests that in Barbados, social assistance policy has generally developed in response to contradictions between metropolitan-derived ideas and objective local conditions with the superstructural elements of the policy being shaped by local ideology, and that this absence of an internal dynamic has been largely responsible for the reactionary nature of developments in social assistance policy in Barbados.