

ABSTRACTS BY SESSION

LOCAL GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE

*Local Governance and Intergovernmental Relations in
the Caribbean: Examining the Past, Assessing the
Present and Predicting the Future*

Sir Alister McIntyre Building
University of the West Indies, Mona
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January 8-9, 2009

OPENING PLENARY – SESSION 1

Keynote Address: The Micro foundations of Governance: why psychology rather than economics could be the key to better intergovernmental relations

Gerry Stoker

Microfoundational assumptions about what drives human behaviour can have an influence on, not only the construction of social science explanations but also the development of intergovernmental relations. A microfoundational base premised on economic rationality-in particular a principal-agency framework- tends to pervade the construction of intergovernmental relations. A case study of central-local relations in the UK from 1997 to 2005 is used to illustrate the costs involved in constructing intergovernmental relations on that basis. Alternative microfoundational premises – with greater psychological insight- are introduced to offer other ways of constructing the microfoundations of intergovernmental relations. One recognizes actors behave in a boundedly rational manner and another emphasizes the role of intrinsic or moral motivation to human actors. The paper argues that these microfoundational premises can explain why intergovernmental relations can go wrong and how they could be more effectively constructed. Again the study of central-local relations in Blair's first two terms provides an illustration of the argument but in the conclusion, the broader implications of microfoundational premises for the construction of intergovernmental relations are explored.

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ISSUES INFORMING LOCAL GOVERNANCE FUTURES – SESSION 2

Multi-spatial Strategic Partnership in the UK: New forms of Organisation and Emerging Issues

Joyce Liddle

The UK Government's HM Treasury Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (July 2007) provided a framework for raising growth and prosperity across the UK. It was based on the three pillars of (i) maintaining macro-economic stability to enable businesses and individuals to plan with certainty for the long term, (ii) implementing micro-economic reforms aimed at addressing market failures in the underlying drivers of growth-competition, enterprise, innovation, skills, investment and employment, and (iii) devolving decision making to the regional and local levels as far as possible to ensure strategy and delivery are responsive to local economic conditions.

Encouraging state and non-state actors to work together to achieve multi-spatial city-regional aims continues to be an important aspect of government policy, and Strategic Partnerships are a defining characteristic of UK regional, urban and local economic development and social regeneration. With regard to the latter, since 2001, the UK Government has introduced a number of key initiatives aimed at managing neighbourhoods in all local authority areas, culminating in new forms of organisation, Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements.

Local government managers now have a 'duty to involve' citizens' and a 'duty to co-operate' with communities, state and non-state agencies to marry social and economic objectives and drive local area transformations. Within a National Performance Framework, of 198 national indicators, local areas can, through the LSP s and LAA framework agree on 35 locally determined targets. These targets are agreed through the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy agreed by all partners represented on the LSP.

Recent changes to the regional architecture have been introduced to bring further coherence to multi-spatial governance, and to avoid duplication of effort. As traditional boundaries between state and non-state agencies have become more opaque, the pursuit of citizen well-being, economic growth and productivity, new enterprise, innovation, skills, investment and employment, at al levels present new challenges and dilemmas for collaborative partnerships of local leaders and communities.

Drawing on interviews, government and other documentary source data this paper examines various strategic partnerships at neighbourhood, sub-regional and regional levels of governance in the UK to illustrate the importance of collective leadership between state, non-state agencies and communities within the policy domains of economic development and social regeneration. It presents an institutional ethnography of the main strategic partnerships, and highlights some of the emerging issues and challenges arising from these (relatively) new governance arrangements.

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Is Subsidiarity the Panacea for Local Government Problems in the Caribbean?

Eris Schoburgh

Local government occupies an enviable position on Caribbean policy agendas given generalised commitment to a comprehensive framework of state and governmental restructuring towards national development and in light of its strategic role in the quest for continuous improvement in public service delivery. Local government systems, where they exist in the region, continue to experience adjustments to their operations ranging from outright reform to administrative shifts, driven mostly by the governance imperatives. The lingering issues of local government autonomy; adequate financing; and the most optimal structure to facilitate direct interplay between community preferences and local policy, persist nonetheless. Lately, the principle of subsidiarity has entered the local governance debate as one that holds much promise for resolving the foregoing problems. This paper provides a less sanguine evaluation of the application of the principle of subsidiarity to local government operational reality in the Caribbean. Through institutional analysis it argues that subsidiarity offers a philosophical position and not an easily implementable practice. Rather it opens the door for a greater level of ambiguity to enter intergovernmental relations unless reformers become more definitive about the functional capacities of the different spheres of influence on local politics and policy and in particular about the competencies to be assigned between central and local governments. The overriding claim is that the principle of subsidiarity has little utility in the present context of weak political accountability and institutional capacity and where institutional incentives work against fundamental change. Among the recommendations it makes are that: (a) the transformative role of subsidiarity must be preceded by a change in attitudes, behaviours and

political and policy outlook among the primary agents – local government, central government; local communities/civil society; (b) since application of the principle of subsidiarity has implications for the shape and content of future intergovernmental relations generally and there is greater possibility for local government responsibilities to increase, the critical institutional linkages must be contemplated; and (c) the design of new institutional-related incentives has to be accorded high priority to propel reforms unto a more sustainable path.

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Local Governance and Regional Political Integration: Obsolete or Essential. A Case for the Local State

Tamara Brown

In Europe, over the past years, local government and other regional and statutory self governing institutions have seen a general shift of legislation and power structure to a higher centre. Regional political integration can also be attributed to the blurring lines of national sovereignty and to institutional dominance in policy making. The Caribbean is also attest of such, albeit, to a lesser extent than in Europe. At the same time that power is being centralized in the Caribbean, there is also a growing and renewed attention on regional and local government from theorists and policy makers alike. More and more, emphasis on local government and regional power structures is seen as a strategy to promote and deepen democracy at the local level. Indeed the interplay of supranational and even national authority on the global level and local governance structures at the community level speaks to the necessity and inevitability of the latter and a justification for the concentration of such. The paper suggests that local government initiatives and a strengthening of the core structures are answers to democratic deficit¹ that would normally arise from regional political integration (Hurell and Menon, 1996) in the Caribbean. In recognition of the changing context of governance structures in a regional political environment, the aim of the paper is to show that the interplay between local government structure and national and supranational structures affect democratic legitimization and authority. It also argues that local, national and supranational authorities need to interact and compliment each other in order for any to be efficient. The paper will use data from the Caribbean, and is based on research from the white paper, on the future of local government in England.² Additionally a comparative angle will be achieved by focusing on the work of Lidstrom (1998)³ and Tuene (2000)⁴

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¹ Democratic Deficit, Decentralisation and the Quest for Sustainable Communities: A Case Study of Peckham Community Council T.Munrat, Munir Morad in *Local Economy*, Volume 23, Issue 3 August 2008, pages 136-151

² *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, published by TSO (The Stationery Office) 26 October 2006

³ *The Comparative Study of Local Government Systems- A Research Agenda A. Lidstrom Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, Volume 1, Number 1, 1 September 1998 pp.97-115 (19) Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group

⁴ *Theoretical Foundations of the Democracy and Local Government Research Program Background Paper for the conference On Development of Democracy and Local Government in former Soviet Union and Western Democracies* Goteborg University, June 15-19, 2000

CONCURRENT SESSIONS PART 1

Panel: Alternatives in Local Governance Structure and Organisation

Paper 1: Local Governance Structures in Trinidad and Tobago: Muddling Through

Ann Marie Bissessar

(a) Aim of Research:

The major aim of this research is to assess the extent to which the structures and processes by which to deliver local government services have been modified from the pre-independence period to 2008 in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies.

(b) Research questions:

Research questions:-

- (a) The extent to which local government structures and processes have been modified from 1800s to 2008.*
- (b) The extent to which these arrangements have been dictated by:
 - (i) political considerations*
 - (ii) social and environmental considerations.**

(c) Main Findings:

The paper argues that while there may have been expansion in the number of constituencies overtime, there has been little reforms in the structures, roles and responsibilities of local government bodies. It contends that there has been relatively little change in the power arrangement between the central and local government authorities. The paper concludes by advancing a number of reasons for the lack of reform which has taken place so far. It also assesses the structures proposed by the Green Paper on Local Government reform 2008.

(d) Methodology:

- use of historical documents;*
- reports*
- papers and consultations on local government reform*
- interviews*

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Paper 2: Local Government Reform in Trinidad, St.Lucia and St.Vincent: Propositions for Participatory Democracy and Governance or Merely Local Administrative Schemes?

Bishnu Ragoonath

Over the last ten years there has been several Green Papers, White Papers, policy positions and decisions as well as Commission reports, all of which were directed at either reforming local government systems where they exist in the Caribbean, or moving the debate forward in terms of establishing forms of local government where such systems do not currently exist. Taking a point

of departure that local government conjures the notion of people governing their local communities via participatory democracy, and thus is an integral component of facilitating good governance, this paper focuses on the cases of Trinidad, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. The paper seeks to assess and analyze the nature and level of democracy that is envisaged in these proposed reforms as well as in the policy statements emanating from central government leaders. In this regard the paper argues that the propositions to either reform or establish local government systems in these three countries, whilst laudable in advocating decentralization policies, do not adequately promote and facilitate democracy and good governance. The emphasis of these proposed reforms seem to be on local administration whilst paying, lip service to participatory democracy and good governance.

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Paper 3: Local Government Reform in Jamaica – Lessons for the Caribbean: Hope for Social and Political Transformation in the Region

Keith L. Miller

The Jamaican Local Government Reform (LGR) process plays a lead role in advancing local governance in the Caribbean, including redefining concepts of local governance/democracy and inter-governmental relations. Valuable contributions have been made by several scholars in analyzing this process and examining several dimensions of local governance reform, including its impact on key issues such as citizen/community empowerment, as well as evaluating success in realizing its targeted outcomes. A brief commentary on LGR in Jamaica will be undertaken, from the unique view-point of the author.

However, the significance of local governance reform in Jamaica, beyond its direct impact on creating a strong and vibrant system for local self-management and facilitating the active participation of civil society and communities in the governance and development processes, will be the main focus of the Paper. It will present, among other arguments, the proposition that the process through which these reforms have been pursued is at least as important as the actual reforms being undertaken.

Critical issues to be examined include the assertion that existing political culture, practice and reality in the Caribbean oftentimes see governing and opposition parties adopting positions in respect of important policy issues that are influenced more by considerations of political advantage/manoeuvring rather than the broader national interest. The claim that policy formulation and decision-making processes that involve broad participation of a range of social partners provide a more favourable environment for avoiding narrow partisan grand-standing, and is therefore more conducive to achieving far reaching political and governance reforms such as those in respect of local governance, will be explored. The relative merits of bi-partisan vs. multi-partner approaches will also be examined. The case of Jamaica, particularly the relative success achieved in this round of LGR vs. the fate that had befallen all previous such attempts, as well as experiences from other Caribbean states that have engaged in some form of local governance reform over the past 2 decades, will be drawn on to support the arguments advanced.

LGR as a powerful vehicle for social and political transformation in the region, including addressing critical issues such as constitutional reform, nation-building and defining national development in the context of a distinct Caribbean civilization, will also be explored.

The research methodology will include review of the relevant literature; undertaking secondary research to support the positions advanced in the paper; interviews of selected persons; and observations in respect of ongoing reform processes in the region.

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Round Table: Local Service Delivery and Performance-Case Study

The Manchester Parish Experience in Jamaica: Looking In and Out

Sam Miller, Sean Rowe, Phil Rodriques, Ryan Wallace, Winston Palmer

Members of the Manchester Parish Development Committee will provide empirical assessments through first-hand experience of the local development process in the parish making explicit, the opportunities and costs associated with local development efforts.

Manchester Parish Development Committee

An Analysis of Service Provision at the Local Level: A Case study of Local Government in Jamaica

Carol Archer

In Jamaica, as in other developing states, government spending on public service delivery at the local government level has seen a mercuric rise since the 1980s. Concomitant with this increase in spending, central government has increased its regulatory powers and decision-making authority has become more centralized. This is evident by the passage of various acts of parliament to centralize funding mechanisms. These acts are aimed at achieving economies of scale, eliminating duplication of services and increasing service efficiency. This research will analyse the funding allocation for services at the local and central government levels and assess the relative costs and benefits of delivering each service at the central and/or local government level. It will also review the institutional and administrative capacity of the local authorities to undertake the provision of these services and make recommendations for policy changes governing service delivery, particularly as it relates to functions and structures.

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OPENING PLENARY – SESSION 1

Competition, Networks and Partnerships in Local Governance: Bold Jamaican Programme, Cautionary Tales

Edwin Jones

There is a Government of Jamaica agenda for the modernization and improvement/reform of the Local Government system. Among other things, the implementation strategy engages other institutions/agencies in developing collaborations, partnerships and networks and institutionalizing new governance ideas and structures. However, the scope of this agenda, the patterns of reform intervention, and the related tasks of innovation-building portend management implications that seem little understood. Further, the process appears to ignore certain domestic political and cultural determinants that normally ensure effective reform. Within this framework, ongoing patterns of implementation have apparently remained halting, 'stumbling' towards the 'Promised Land'. This landscape indicates an absence of managerial coherence and sure-footedness.

Thus, this article provides a description and functional analysis of the role of collaborations, partnerships and networks in the Jamaican Local Government reform strategy. It emphasises how contextual factors and contingent management arrangements influence how these innovations work. It draws on domestic experience to identify programme successes and risks, proposing 'solutions'. The paper draws principally on secondary research data on the domestic Local Government system and a relevant theoretical literature to distil meaning, draw implications about managing legislative change, institutional reorganization and managerial professionalization etc., in a resource constrained, highly politicized environment with 'deformed' cultural traits.

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The Community Leadership Model and Country Ownership of Local Development in Jamaica

Philip D. Osei

In this paper, the author attempts to build a theory of community leadership and country ownership in local development from evidence emerging from development practice and theoretical developments in the analysis of organisational relationships, which are purported to optimise developmental benefits from local development. In particular, it builds on the four-point categorisation of Nongovernmental Organisations, based on the evolution of organisational form and strategy, that was propounded by David Korten in 1990, as well as partnership and theories of collaboration that have been developed by scholars of local governance and development. The paper argues that Korten's categories are still useful, but a new dimension needs to be posited; one which recognises the changing organisational and development thought. As such, the paper further argues that a fifth category has been developing since the early 2000s based on aid relationships and partnerships in a multi-level governance arrangement between the state, international development partners (IDPs) and local

communities, in which the state has increasingly taken a residual role and communities have been placed in the driving seat in the context of co-production of public infrastructural services. It is within this fifth iteration that a community leadership model of local development is being posited here in this paper. This model is centred on the corporatisation and hybridisation based on the foundation of community development councils, assisted by the central government intermediary agencies the Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the Social Development Commission. Through the corporatisation process the community development councils are metamorphosed into Benevolent Societies (BS) which have legal personality, and can therefore sue and be sued. The JSIF (from aid resources) and SDC provide financial and organisational support to the BS respectively, while the IDPs provide the initial funding to the BS through the instrumentalities of the JSIF. This paper intends to examine the nature of these new organisational relationships and arrangements for local development, the sustainability of the developmental outcomes achieved through this model, and also argue that the elusive concept of country ownership in aid relationships could be palpably realised in local development practice when anchored in the community leadership model.

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CONCURRENT SESSIONS PART 2

Panel: Managing Competition, Partnerships and Networks in Local Governance

Paper 1: Assessing the Sustainability of Municipal Councils: A Case Study of the Portmore Municipal Council in Jamaica

Nishka Waite

Local Government reform has been on the national agenda for years, seeing the numerous governments proposing several frameworks from regionalism to bottom up models. Some of the proponents however contradict the purpose of local governance systems. The systems used in Jamaica are that of Local authorities (commonly known as Parish Councils in the case of Portmore-Municipal Councils) for which fourteen (14) exists.

This paper proposes to assess the local governance system in Jamaica and its impact on viability and sustainability of Municipalities. Several models pertaining to local governance structures looking at human resources, strategic planning, financing and decision-making process for those variables whether they have direct or indirect impact will be examined. A case study will be analysed specifically, the Portmore Municipal model being the first of its kind in Jamaica drawing broad comparisons against other existing Local Authorities/Parish Councils as well as other countries that utilise either a similar model and/or has a model that could inform the locally adopted model. This would then guide the discussion and interviews with various managers and policy makers to gather their opinion relating to sustainability of municipal government systems.

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Paper 2: The Evolving Role of Community-based Organisations in Jamaica: “A Means for Local Governance, Community Empowerment, and Redevelopment?”

Victor J.N. Cummings

Jamaica and the world itself are rapidly changing. These changes are forcing us to adopt new strategies for community and national development. Innovative methods will have to be developed which move us towards a future of redevelopment, empowerment, and governance for our local communities. In this context the role of Community-based Organizations (CBOs) is extremely important. These organizations will have many problems confronting them. Their effectiveness will depend on how they overcome the skepticism of policy makers and community residents and how they actively implement projects that recognize our changing environment. In the end, it is at the local community level where the actions occur and where the development agenda must be set.

The central concern of this research is the question of legitimacy of CBOs in Jamaican politics. The quickly expanding literature on CBOs has addressed the question of legitimacy only in recent times and often in terms of financial accountability and effectiveness rather than focusing on the role of CBOs in community development and governance. As a consequence this paper is inspired by my own experience in CBO advocacy. It argues that CBOs can play a pivotal role in for community development and governance in Jamaica.

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Paper 3: Revisiting the Parish Development Committee: Implications for Improved Local Governance and Development

Tameca N. Brown

The Government of Jamaica introduced the Local Government Reform Program in 1990, with an expressed commitment to reform local government by strengthening local authorities and improving governance processes at the parish level. The program was detailed in a Ministry Policy Paper (No: 8/93) and later Ministry Paper (No: 7/03). This paper is aimed at examining how governance is conducted at the parish levels amidst broader efforts of the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP). The paper will confine itself to one of the governance mechanism operating at parish level- the Parish Development Committee (PDC). The proposed PDC is a multi-stakeholder; inter-agency system (comprising local authorities with other state agencies, the private sector, civil society, national utility service providers, and community based organizations) established in all parishes across the country. The PDC structure has been singled out for focus because it represents one of the key mechanisms through which ideas about good governance and improved local governance promulgated in Local Government Reform Program could be enhanced. This paper will examine the proposed PDC structure, terms of reference, operations, achievements to date, relations with existing governance structure, challenges experienced and advance recommendation for how the PDC model can be consolidated and used to improve quality governance and development at the parish levels. In so doing, the PDC's of Manchester will be used as a case study.

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Panel: Organisational Change

Paper 1: Exploring the Significance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector

Sandra O'Meally

Aim of Research:

To determine the relative importance of Strategic/Corporate/Operational Planning & Integrated Budgeting, Performance Management Appraisal Systems and Human Resource Planning in the Public Sector.

Research Questions:

- 1. Why is Strategic Corporate Planning and Integrated Budgeting used in the public sector?*
- 2. How important is the Strategic/Corporate Planning and Integrated Budgeting to the public sector? Stakeholders involved?*
- 3. Is there congruency between human capital and organizational needs?*
- 4. Is there an alignment between Strategic/Corporate Planning/Budgeting, human resource and PMAS?*
- 5. What is the importance of Unit/Individual/Work Plans to the process?*

Methodologies:

Observation, focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, surveys and evaluation of training seminars are the main methodologies.

Main Findings:

Most public sector staff is unfamiliar with the Strategic/Corporate Planning process, unaware of the existence of the plan(s), were never invited to a meeting nor trained. Most senior managers view the process as tedious/unnecessary and are too busy to attend scheduled meetings.

Recommendations

- Top-down approach to dissemination of Strategic/Operational/Budgeting process*
- Sensitization meetings with all levels of staff to establish buy-in and commitment.*
- Training sessions/workshops conducted throughout all public sector entities*
- Regular mandatory meetings conducted with persons held accountable and responsible for achievements of the Strategic/Corporate Planning and integrated budgeting process.*
- The mandatory utilization of the Strategic/Corporate Planning and integrated Budgeting document*
- The Performance Management System must be objective and used in conjunction with Strategic/Corporate/Operational/Unit/Individual Plan(s)*
- Culture change to the behaviour and approach to management public sector organizational design*

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Paper 2: Organisational Change and Human Resource Planning – An Investigation into Local Government Reform in Trinidad

Wendy Quamena-Yorke

Trinidad and Tobago inherited its local government system from its colonial masters, more so the Spanish and the British. Since then there have been several attempts to modernize the system and make it more appropriate for the development of Trinidad and Tobago. Incremental changes have been made. However, over the last twenty (20) years, there have been concerted efforts towards local government reform in Trinidad and Tobago. This has resulted in revised legislation to give the Municipal Corporation more autonomy. Further reform initiatives are suggested in the Ministry's Green and White Papers which are in tandem with the policy agenda of the Government to achieve developed country status by 2020.

This paper proposes to conduct an inquiry into the issue of Organisational Change in the context of Local Government Reform and its relationship to effective Human Resource Planning in the Ministry of local Government.

The major argument suggested is that the Local Government Reform initiatives, as a significant aspect of organizational change, has not been in alignment with effective human resource planning strategies and techniques which is critical for facilitating successful execution of the mandate of the Ministry of Local Government.

It is suggested that the Human Resource is the most valuable resource of any organization. Human Resource Planning aims to ensure that the organization has the right people in the right place at the right time in order to achieve its strategic objectives effectively and efficiently. Thus, the absence of the alignment of the reform initiatives with the Human Resource Planning strategies, programmes and activities is likely to have a negative impact on the accomplishment of the Ministry's reform objectives.

This investigation is to explore the factors involved and make recommendations to create that synergy between Local Government Reform and Human Resource planning.

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Paper 3: Local Service Delivery and Performance

William Fong

Aims of Research:

- 1. To investigate the reasons for the bottleneck in the development approval process*
- 2. To assess the credibility of the assertion that LAs are responsible for the inefficiency in the development approval process*
- 3. To develop evidence base recommendations to address the bottleneck in the process*

Research Foci:

- a. *Internal efficiency of LAs in processing development applications*
- b. *How efficient are central government agencies in processing applications submitted by LAs?*
- c. *List of central government agencies involved in the approval process*
- a. *Revenue earned by LAs from this service*
- b. *Economic benefit to communities from this service*

Methodology

Quarterly Reports of the LAs between January and August 2002 were used as a convenience sample for this research. Categorical variables were used to analyse the reasons applications outstanding, and interval-ratio variables used to measure processing efficiency. Cross tabulation were used to analyse efficiency levels. The budgets of LAs were examined to determine the revenue contribution, while multiplier analysis used to determine economic impact on local jurisdiction.

Main Findings

1. *Internal and external backlog existed, but external backlog were greater*
2. *LAs had a greater level of processing efficiency than referral agencies*
3. *The multiplier effect can stimulate increase employment and income to local jurisdiction*

Recommendations

1. *Strategic intervention should reflect variations in cause associated with individual LAs*
2. *Replicate best practice interagency collaboration throughout LAs*
3. *Application of e-governance and process re-engineering to improve internal efficiency, transparency and accountability*
4. *Application of performance measurement to improve output and accountability*

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Paper 4: A Critical Evaluation of the Institutional Arrangements Governing Human Resource Management (HRM) in Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Jamaica: In search of a “goodness of fit” model

Tanzia Saunders

This qualitative study provides a critical analysis of the efficacy of the institutional arrangements that govern the management of human resources in Local Government Authorities in Jamaica. The evaluation was done against Goodin's (1996) 'goodness of fit model' and in light of key contemporary HRM practices.

The study found that the ongoing reform of Local Government in Jamaica promised equity and autonomy to Local Government Authorities leading to the delivery of 21st Century services and ultimately Development. Factors such as culturally institutionalized norms (for example political tribalism and political interference), the country's fiscal deficit and lack of resources negatively impacted HRM in LGAs. Additionally, it was found that managers within the LGAs were not as privileged as their counterparts in Executive Agencies and selected Ministries within Central Government who were

delegated the authority to make critical HR decisions in the wave of specific New Public Management (NPM) reforms, taking place over the last decade.

The paper puts forward a provisional ‘goodness of fit’ model for adoption by LGAs in Jamaica and ends with several recommendations for the reform of the IAs governing HRM practices in Local Government Authorities.

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CONCURRENT SESSIONS PART 3

Panel: Local Democracy and Local Development

Paper 1: The Conversation on Gender in the Local Government Reform Process: 1998-2008

Linnette Vassell

The National Advisory Council (NAC) on Local Government Reform which was reconstituted in 2004 was challenged to wrestle with issues of gender in context of the discourse on democracy, participation and good governance which was one of the clusters around which its work was organized.

Among the central ideas governing the work of this cluster was that good governance is concerned and directed “ to build a culture of multi-level political partnerships, changes of purpose, creating conditions of change, solve complex community problems, optimally use leadership sectors and interest those who have been excluded in the past and provide for a more informed, intelligent and involved community”.⁵

This perspective, which from all indications was widely shared among NAC members, clearly opened the space for conversations on gender in the reform process, beginning with issues of women’s participation in elected representation in Local Government Councils. Data had shown that there was a 7 per cent decline in female from 24 per cent in 1998 to 17 per cent in 2003.

The paper will trace the flow of this conversation including the findings of the study on gender and local government which was commissioned by the NAC and bring to the fore some of the challenges of moving from rhetoric to action. It will invite inputs from participants on how to secure action to deepen democracy within our structures of governance to secure the basis for sustainable human development in our communities and nation.

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⁵ Report of the National Advisory Council on Local Government Reform, August 2006, p.11

Paper 2: Progress towards Gender Equality in Political Leadership in the Caribbean: The Case of Local versus Central Government in Jamaica, 1944-2007

Mark Figueroa and Natasha Mortley

When Jamaica attained Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944 only one woman was elected to the 32 member House of Representatives. There were no women appointed to the Legislative Council or the Executive Council. In 1947, six of the 191 local government counsellors elected were female. Thus, women accounted, at that time, for three percent of the representatives elected at both the central and local levels. In the six decades that have followed, a woman has been elected to the office of Prime Minister and prior to this mayor of the capital city. Despite these developments men continue to dominate the top levels of political leadership in both central and local government. This paper compares the relative progress made towards gender equality at the central and local levels; contrasting the extent to which participation varies in political, governmental and administrative roles.

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Paper 3: Participatory Democracy - does it work in practice?

Paul Ward

The cry for participation in governance is the very essence of democracy and as such it has a very long history. In many developing countries, however, attempts at rapid economic and social development from the 1950s onwards relied instead on a top-down approach but by the 1970s, it was clear that the developmental outcomes were limited. The imposition of unpopular conditionalities by multi-lateral agencies from the 1980s helped to further discredit the top-down approach. But even as participation became the vogue, epitomised by Robert Chamber's phrase 'putting the last first', doubts began to emerge. How do we measure its effectiveness? Are 'simple' measures of efficiency applicable, or should we judge participation instead in terms of efficacy? Should participation be seen as an end in itself, almost regardless of the outcomes?

Participatory development cannot stand alone – it often requires external resources which demands an engagement with the existing power structures. Participation should not be seen as a complement, rather than an alternative to formal government, or even to top-down approaches. And yet it can become an excuse by governments to escape responsibilities.

It is also important to see communities for what they are. Not the natural, consensual, non-conflictual entities of folk-lore, but heterogeneous mini-societies striven by differing interests. And when they do engage with outside agencies, who is really in control?

These issues are illustrated by three 'community' initiatives in Jamaica. In every case, the level of community engagement was limited and the outcomes far from what was envisaged at the start.

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Panel : Local Government and National Development

Paper 1 : Poverty Reduction by 2015: The Role of Local Government Institutions in Trinidad and Tobago: the Case of Tobago

Gloria Davis-Cooper

At the Millennium Summit of 2000, World leaders of 189 United Nations Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration. Signatories to the Declaration agreed to work together to achieve eight (8) Millennium Development Goals, one of which is the eradication of poverty by the year 2015. Poverty is an unacceptable human condition. It is fundamentally the lack of essential human capabilities, notably literacy and nutrition and insufficient income to meet minimum comforts. Since then governments worldwide have been searching for 'approaches' to reduce poverty. The Central Government of Trinidad and Tobago has therefore identified the "Tourism Industry" as one area where an 'approach' could be found to assist in the reduction of poverty and with respect to Tobago; has delegated this responsibility to the local government arm – the Tobago House of Assembly.

In Tobago, Tourism is the largest employer and represents significant opportunities for revenue, entrepreneurship, investment, foreign exchange earnings, new export markets and employment. According to a 1997 Survey of 'Living Conditions conducted in Tobago the Island's poverty rate was 26.2% with a 5.6 % of all households considered destitute. The 2000 Development Plan for Tobago highlighted the Tobago House of Assembly's intention to develop and sustain the tourism product through programmes and projects that will assist in the socio-economic development of the Country. In spite of this Plan in 2003, 24% of the population was classified as poor and the unemployment rate was 8%. In 2007 the Tourism Industry employed approximately 60% of the island's workforce, and while the unemployment rate dropped to 3.5%, there was still an illiteracy and poverty rate of 9.6 % and 16.5 % respectively. The big question is – Can governments reduce poverty through 'tourism'?

This research is basically qualitative and comparative in nature – based on a review of the literature on Local Government practices in Tobago from 2000 to 2007. The paper will present the findings from an analysis of Tobago's tourism development reports and policy documents; Statistical Digests; Surveys of Living conditions; and Tobago's Comprehensive Development Plan 2000/2006. Particular emphasis is placed on the contribution of tourism management to reduction in poverty levels and unemployment trends; and job distribution and income generation and disbursement in manual jobs from 2000 to 2007. The Consumer Price Index was used to calculate Tobago's Inflation Rate and the real income of employees. Interviews were conducted with selected personnel with responsibility for tourism management from the Division of Tourism and Tobago House of Assembly. The conclusion is drawn that while 'tourism' is Tobago's main industry and the Island's main employer – it can assist in the reduction of poverty, however, the Industry is quite young and if it is negatively impacted by external shocks, can seriously negate the positive outcomes.

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Paper 2 : Local Government's Capacity and Communities Vulnerability to Hazards in Jamaica

Amani Ishemo

Much of the incapacity problems experienced by the local governments in Jamaica is a by product of increasing urbanisation without the complement of improved urban economy. Consequently, settlements built in high risk areas are widespread, to the extent that both the central and the local governments are incapable of providing appropriate and effective solutions to the vulnerability problems. Ironically, the local governments operate with minimal financial capital and ill equipped and minimal resource expertise. But they are responsible for much of the processes of building approvals, sites and building inspection in addition to the costly constant tasks of cleaning drains, building and maintenance of parochial roads in the country. Spatially, Jamaica is a small country. Thus localized hazards can affect other areas of the island in a relatively short time span. Therefore, the vulnerability problems of one area are related to a broader spatial context of human activities on the natural environment. It is for this reason that the local governments ought to be equipped with the appropriate resources to deal with the area level problems. This paper argues that community vulnerability to hazards is partly the result of the incapacity of the local governments to deal with the highly skilled and increasingly demanding tasks of physical development. On the other hand, the central government bears the responsibility of such a systemic problem for not having a sustainable human settlements policy.

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Paper 3: Local Government As the Engine of Development: towards a theory of a Local Government Development Model (LGDM); A review of the literature

Nyan Whittingham

The conception of a Local Government Development Model represents both a novel and an interesting idea and one which I intend to explore as the fundamental research question for my master's thesis. Though the discourse on local governance associates local government with development, especially in theory than in practice, the idea that local government could be the engine of development has not entered the fray. The aim of my research is to expand the notion of a bottom up approach to development by placing local government at the centre of analysis. As a consequence, this presentation is a first step towards formulating a theory of local government development model (LGDM) and will be concerned with the essential values that give sufficiency to this position.

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Paper 4 : Good Governance and Planning – Can Foresighting and Scenario Planning offer a more robust platform for establishing Sustainable Development Strategies in Jamaica?

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Jamaica despite being one of the leading developing countries post independence, 50years later has failed to establish a durable dynamic for development worse yet sustainable development. The emerging question is what has led to this untenable situation. A number of factors, some endogenous others exogenous tend to impact on the development trajectory of a country including the governance and planning techniques employed. Over this period various governments has employed different governance and planning techniques. This paper examines the nature of these techniques, their impact and adequacy in supporting a robust development strategy for Jamaica which now operates in an open dynamic global system. It then examines whether alternative approaches to governance and planning will contribute to more positive outcomes in the country's development and reviews the nature and purpose, as well as the costs and benefits of these approaches.

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