

ABSTRACT

Public Policy and Management for Culture and the Arts
in Post-independence Trinidad and Tobago: A Crisis of Concept, Value
and Incremental Indifference

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Trinidad and Tobago, a multi-cultural twin-island country located at the southernmost end of the Caribbean chain of islands, is noted for the diversity and uniqueness of its indigenous cultural manifestations such as the steelpan, calypso, chutney music and colourful festivals inclusive of the annual pre-Lenten Carnival. The country gained political independence from Britain in 1962. Against the background of emerging theories on Cultural Policies for Development and generally accepted notions of “best practice” in Arts and Culture Management, this dissertation examines the role played by successive Trinidad and Tobago Governments during the forty-eight years since Independence, in initiating and encouraging support for the arts and culture through the design and implementation of effective Public Policies for Culture and the Arts. On the basis of the personal histories and public documents collected, the study concludes that ill-informed concepts of culture held by successive governments since 1962 resulted in an under-valuing of the role to be played by culture in the country’s development, which, in turn resulted in the culture sector in general – the arts,

artists, indigenous festivals, cultural education, culture workers, cultural industries – being treated, from the Public Policy standpoint, with increasing disrespect and indifference. A single-case design is adopted for the study, which employs “replication,” a technique usually applied in multiple-case study designs, for testing the hypothesis

Keywords: Lester Efebo Wilkinson; Public Policy; Cultural Policy in the Caribbean; Political History; Governance in Trinidad and Tobago; Policy for the Arts.