

ABSTRACT

Jamaica's Governance, Planning, and Economic Underperformance 1970-2000: Could Scenario Planning and Foresighting Provide a Basis for a More Sustainable Model of Development?

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Some developing countries are now rapidly emerging as major economic powers, but there are a number of 'under-developing' countries that have not yet managed to establish a process of long-term, positive economic growth. This indicates that these countries have failed to establish a durable basis for development, far less *sustainable development*. One of the most important issues in development economics today is to determine what makes this difference; why some countries are able to *develop* and *maintain* high-growth trajectories, while others fail on one or both counts. In this context, Jamaica is a particularly relevant and important case study, as Jamaica had stellar growth rates for 20 years up until the 1970s, then moved from a high-growth path to a low-growth path that has persisted to today.

Jamaica's development was analysed for the critical period 1970 – 2000 to elicit the factors that re-shaped the country's development trajectory, and to explicate the reasons why the country's systems of governance and planning were unable to reverse the transition onto a low-growth path. This involved an extensive review of documentation (journal articles, previously recorded

interviews, government policy documents and statistics, newspaper articles) and a series of semi-structured interviews with key individuals.

This analysis highlights the negative impact of extensive politicization of the policy debate, the lack of institutional strength and integrity, and the failure to use dynamic, pro-active planning processes (such as scenario planning and foresighting), a combination that effectively prevented an apt response to the serious challenges facing the nation. This analysis therefore provides a guide for future development planning in a wide range of 'under-developing' nations; those that – like Jamaica - have yet to fulfil their true potential.

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