Politics, Power and Identity in the Caribbean Psyche

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Abstract: The goal of this article is to go beyond the historical political models that have been inherited by the Caribbean people and consider the emerging psyche of the people as they learned to manage their own public affairs. In the Caribbean, political beings select candidates to represent them who reflect their personality, their values and attitudes, communicate effectively, and emotionally connect with them. Eriksonian theory is used to analyze the developmental stage of those who offer themselves for public office. Findings from the most comprehensive study to date on democracies in the region are explored as they are related to psychological attitudes towards politics, power and identity in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Ultimately, governments in the region will have to identify and implement policies and strategies that will make the political process more transparent, build trust among the citizens, and empower citizens.

Keywords: Jamaica, Attitudes to Politics, Caribbean Psyche, Eriksonian development

I. INTRODUCTION

"On August 31, 1962, a country will be free, a miniature state will be established, but a society and a nation will not have been formed" (Eric Williams in Smith, 1996, p. 21).

In 1848, more than 100 years before, the Governor of Trinidad, Lord Harris, also wrote:

"As the question now stands a race has been freed but a society has not been formed" (Burn in Smith, 1996, p. 21).

Was their desire for entering politics to make a society or to build a nation? What made them believe that they could do what others had not? Why set themselves up for certain failure and public attack? The slave rebellions, which were the genesis of the Caribbean nations that exist today, reflect the desire that the African slaves and the indentured labourers had to make decisions concerning their lives and the allocation of shared resources among themselves. However, as residents in an inherited land, they had no right of order. Their legal and political structures had been lost in their translation across the Atlantic Ocean. So, the best that they could do was to squat or to settle wherever there was no contention over the space that they selected as their own. They made families and raised children. As their population grew, the world also continued to grow and came knocking on their doors for their labour and their knowledge in farming, in merchandising, and more. Hence, these former slaves and indentured servants began to have a degree of power in choosing who would represent them in negotiations with the European traders and others (Augier, Gordon, Hall, & Reckord, 1960). Eventually, the process of Independence and becoming a sovereign nation required the people to manage their own systems of law and order, land settlement, education and so on. The following statements by R. T. Smith (1996) made in 1963 not only captures the region’s association with politics but also the nature of the fragmented cultural groups that struggle to become united and sovereign nations.

“When Lord Harris wrote, he was particularly concerned with the problem of creating a society out of a population consisting of recently freed Negro slaves, their white masters, and an intermediate group of colored persons created out of the irregular unions between white men and Negro women. By the time Dr. Williams came to face the same problem, Trinidad had acquired a large population of East Indians and sizable minorities of Chinese and Portuguese. Each Caribbean territory faces something of the same problem that faces Trinidad, but national unity is further compromised by sharp differences in standard of living between rich and poor – standards that often coincide with ethnic divisions. This incoherence of the national and societal image within each unit is to some extent a reflection of the recent growth of the very idea of national independence, and of an attempt to establish an image different from that of the metropolitan countries; but Haiti and some Latin American countries show that the condition is not cured by simple political autonomy” (Smith, 1996; p. 21).

Their first years of independence in the 1960s and 1970s, were growing pains as the Caribbean people were tolerant of their new independent governments. However, as time passed and the conditions did not improve for the masses of the countries under their own people, the masses sought alternative ideologies of power and identity. The “Back to Africa” movement sprang up and obtained much support in the 1970s. Their visibility was guaranteed and energized by the sounds of Bob Marley’s reggae music which seemed to prophetically call out to the Jamaican
people with the same message that the Black Power and Civil Rights movement in the United States began to chant—“Emancipate yourself from mental slavery” (Chevannes, 1997; Edmonds, 2012; Kerr, 2016?). The questions rolled in everyone’s mind—“Have we became legally free only to return to mental enslavement?” Many said it, others thought it. The political systems that developed recorded it.

In this chapter we want to go beyond the historical political models that have been inherited by the Caribbean people and consider the emerging psyche of the people as they learned to manage their own public affairs.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Politics in the Caribbean has always been associated with a strong and likable community leader (Centre for Population, Community and Social Change, 1996; Manley, 1991; Stone, 1989). The person leading the chants and being able to motivate a large crowd of volunteers to turn out for a political rally is generally the one who has been seen as a community servant and is able to tap into the unmet needs of the local residents. His or her ability to articulate their needs gives them a pedestal approved by their fellow residents. It is such conditions that gave rise to leaders like Michael Manley who was influenced by the prevailing ideology at the University of the West Indies in the 1970s, and who could use his influence from the labour union movement to advance in political leadership (Stone, 1989). However, it all comes down to how they feel at the time when the national party office begins to take notice of their candidate, and if they feel that the man or the woman has the look that will represent them, even if they may not have the heart (Lovelace, 2011; Manley, 1991; Observer, 2016).

Eriksonian Development

The Eriksonian stage of development associated with political interest and identity is generatively versus stagnation. In this developmental stage of adulthood, individuals are primarily concerned with procreation and guiding the next generation. This is signaled in Jamaica by the names given to political figures such as “Moses,” “Joshua,” and “Mama P:” and the resulting parenting relationship that evolves between the leader and the nation. However, fruitfulness and increase are not restricted solely to biological offspring, but productivity and creativity in every area. A word which probably depicts this season may be flourishing (Keyes, 2002; Mitchell, 2015) which is associated with positive psychology. Individuals who positively resolve this crisis and become generative develop the ego quality of care. Care refers to the “widening concern for what has been generated by love, necessity or accident, [which] overcomes the ambivalence adhering to irreversible obligation” (Erikson in Ewen, 1998, p. 258).

Research among highly generative people show them to be well-adjusted in terms of exhibiting “less anxiety and depression; high autonomy, self-acceptance and life satisfaction. They are also more likely to experience successful marriages and close friendships” (Berk, 2010).

In contrast, people who negatively resolve this stage end up in stagnation. This is “an extreme state of self-indulgence similar to behaving as if one was one’s own special child” (p. 258). Jamaicans would describe such a person as “full of themselves.” Their self-absorption can be observed in various ways—“through lack of interest in young people (including their own children), through a focus on what they can get from others rather than what they can give, and through taking little interest in being productive at work, developing their talents, or bettering the world in other ways” (Berk, 2010, p. 533). So, politicians cannot be mean or stingy people. Even if they are motivated for personal advancement, they must be able to connect with the influential voters and inspire them with their vision.

Additional theories of lifespan development that address middle adulthood have developed since Erikson first proposed his ego psychology in the early 1960s. In 1977 Vaillant (Berk, 2010) extended Erikson’s theory. He first confirmed the stages of development and filled in gaps in Erikson’s thoughts in his Adaptation to Life theory. His work also agrees with Levinson’s (1978) Seasons of Life theory. This theory emphasizes the quality of human relationships and their increasing or decreasing significance in a particular life stage. After studying almost 250 men who were highly educated at a liberal arts college in the United States, Vaillant conducted follow-up interviews and questionnaires with the men across the lifespan at ages 47, 60 and 70, about work, family, physical and mental health. From his longitudinal study Vaillant concluded the following about men:

After a period in their twenties devoted to intimacy concerns, the men focused on career consolidation in their thirties. During their forties, they pulled back from individual achievement and became more generative—giving to and guiding others. In their fifties and sixties, they became “keepers of meaning,” or guardians of their culture, expressing concern about the values of the younger generation and the state of their society. Many felt a deep need to preserve and pass on cultural traditions by teaching others what they had learned from life experience (Vaillant & Koury, 1994). Finally in their seventies, the men became more spiritual and reflective, contemplating the meaning of life and accepting its finiteness” (Berk, 2010, p. 470).
Additionally, Levinson’s Seasons of Life Theory suggests that there are four crises that must be resolved for the midlifer. They are:

**Young-old:** finding new ways of being both young and old; giving up youthful qualities and exhibiting more mature and age appropriate behavior. Ultimately, they must find positive meaning in aging.

**Destruction-creation:** accompanied by a greater awareness of mortality, the midlifer evaluates how they may have acted to destroy life as well as the destructive habits of others. Regret for the past and hurting others such as parents, friends, children, and others, are counteracted by strong desires to participate in service activities. These activities generally promote human welfare and improves the opportunities for the next generation. Persons may even start foundations, mentor young people, create new products, and more, to establish a better legacy for their lives.

**Masculinity-femininity:** The midlifer becomes more embracing of the masculine and the feminine parts of the self. Thus, men learn to become more nurturing and caring, deepening relationships; while females become more autonomous and assertive.

**Engagement-separateness:** After evaluating the accomplishments at work and at home, men and women make adjustments with their external world. Men may reduce involvement in a successful career to build a stronger intimate relationship. Women may feel free of child-rearing and go back to school in order to pursue the career of their dreams.

Of these four, the one which may be most relevant to why Caribbean midlifers become more involved in public service and charitable organizations is probably Destruction-creation (Berk, 2010, p. 535). Through public service, or holding an office in the Government, men and women may feel that since they have achieved all their personal goals of success that they can now give something back to their community, to their country, and also leave an inheritance for the next generation. All around the world, “older people are guardians of traditions, laws, and cultural values. … As people approach the end of middle age, they focus on longer-term, less personal goals, such as the state of human relations in their society. And they become more philosophical, accepting the fact that not all problems can be solved in their lifetime” (p. 536). For descendants of post-colonial societies, they understand that they can smile as they anticipate the future like the Proverbs 31 woman, because she knew that better days are ahead (Mitchell, 2016). Perhaps it is the attempt to resolve the four life crises and the ultimate realization that not all problems can be solved in one’s lifetime that makes people who had previously remained uninvolved socially or who had remained in the background, suddenly become willing to offer themselves for public service to do what they can until they can do it no longer. Then they must “pass the torch.”

### III. POLITICAL BEINGS

Psychologists have been interested for a long time in the political decisions that people make and also in the personality traits of presidents and other national leaders. This growing interest, and subsequently the growing number of researchers involved in the field, has led to the development of the field of Political Psychology. Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, & Preston (2004) argue that there is a political being in every individual. For some persons, political interest may remain relatively dormant until middle adulthood, when the generative adult wants to do more public service (Berk, 2010, p. 533). This may in fact be demonstrated by the political scene in Jamaica and the recent challenge for leadership in the two major political parties. Currently, the People’s National Party leader, Mrs. Portia Simpson-Miller is facing a challenge for leadership by younger members of the party who believe that it is time for a younger and more progressive generation to take the lead. Also, in 2013, prior to the 2015 general elections, Mr. Audley Shaw challenged Mr. Andrew Holness to become the next leader of the Jamaica Labour Party JLP. He believed that he had more life experience to offer the party, and subsequently the people of Jamaica, than the younger Mr. Holness. His campaign mantra was “bring back the love;” and is reflective of his season of life crisis in destruction-creation proposed by Vaillant. However, political interest begins much earlier than this period as socialization processes, extra-curricular activities, and social skills would be the training ground to operate in political positions. With the Hon. Andrew Holness as the ninth sitting Prime Minister of Jamaica (Jamaica Information Service, JIS, 2016), we see that the people were ready for a youthful image of a family man. He created history in the last general elections to become the first Prime Minister to be serving in the Parliament with his wife also as an elected Member of Parliament.

Based on the premise that we all have a political being within us, the foundation of later political involvement is based upon personal characteristics and environmental influences. To illustrate this political being, Cottam et. al. (ibid) have developed a model of the political being which is presented below. In essence, “people are driven to act by internal factors, such as personality, attitudes and self-identity; they evaluate their environment and others through cognitive processes that produce images of others; and they decide how to act when these factors are
combined. In politics, people often act as part of a group, and their behavior as part of a group can be very different from their behavior when they are alone” (p. 6).

The Political Being (Cottam et. al., 2004; p. 8)

Personality is at the core of the political being. Although people share many personality traits like conscientiousness, concern for others, needs for power, affiliation and achievement; and more, at varying degrees, personality still remains very much unique to the individual. Personality “affects other aspects of the thought process and is itself affected by life experiences, but personalities tend to be very stable in terms of amenability to change, and they influence our behavior and behavioral dispositions on an ongoing, constant basis” (p. 7). Much of the research concerning personality in political psychology has focused on the personality traits of leaders. Therefore, in a Caribbean context, personality traits associated with leaders like Bustamante, Manley, Bird, Jagan, Williams, Mitchell, the recently departed Manning, and others, would help us to understand the personality type of those who enter politics.

At the next level of the political being are values and attitudes. These reflect “deeply held beliefs about what is right and wrong (values) and a deeply held sense of who a person is (identity). Values often include a strong emotional component” (p. 7) For example, those who believe in the use of violence to settle disputes may be more inclined to select a political party and a leader who has expressed their willingness to go to war to protect their freedom. However, if someone is a pacifist they may be more desirous of a leader who is religious and publicly affirms the religious value of peacemaking. In the Caribbean, many of the voters have some form of religious affiliation in the society. Therefore, political candidates will often appeal to God, attend worship services and seek to identify with the deep religious heritage of their constituencies during the campaign season. This holds true even if they have been mostly irreligious in the previous season of their lives. Another difference in values and attitudes could be reflected in political ideology between a socialist government, a democratic government or a communist government. The development of the political process resulted from a change in the values of the people and their desire for a leader who would embody these. According to Professor Carl Stone (1989), the two political parties in Jamaica, the PNP and the JLP, merged in the late 1930s and early 1940s as part of a national political movement for change. The movement championed the cause of the black majority and sought to democratize a political system dominated by white and light-skinned planters and merchants. The black majority traces its roots back to Africa, slavery and the old sugar plantation system. They had been effectively excluded from channels of political participation and influence” (Stone, 1989).
It should be noted that the ideology of the ruling party will oftentimes reflect the values and identities most important to a majority of the nation. In recent times, with closely contested elections with a one seat majority, as is the case in Jamaica, the results may reflect increasing voter apathy and a lack of trust in politicians, which may also be trending globally (Observer, 2016; Powell, Lewis, & Seligson, 2011).

According to Cottam et al. (ibid), the next component of the political being is attitudes. Attitudes can be seen as a linking variable between values and identity, as attitudes express values through the identities that one selects. Attitudes are “units of thought composed of some cognitive component (i.e., knowledge) and an emotional response to it (like, dislike, etc.). Many important political attitudes are acquired through socialization” (p. 7). For example, a voter in the city may consider education more important than a voter who lives in a rural environment. Voters in the city may want their political party and leader to spend increasingly more on public education each year, while farmers in the rural villages may want their political leader and party to spend more on agriculture and the road network in order to facilitate them getting their produce to market. Children being raised in these environments therefore learn the preferences of their parents and see what will benefit their community the most. Consequently, they will assume similar attitudes of their family members and their neighbours. In some countries freedom of speech is not allowed. So, for those who value free speech, they will look for and align themselves with political affiliations that will work for and protect freedom of speech for all citizens.

Cottam and her colleagues (ibid) have been very strategic in allowing emotions to float freely in the mind of the political being as politics is a very emotionally charged matter. “Emotions affect all aspects, and are affected by all aspects of the Political Being’s mind.” For example, if the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson Miller, “Mama P” as she is affectionately called, went to visit a grieving mother whose son was brutally murdered by the police because he was suspected of criminal activity, there would be as many responses to her actions as there would be political beings present in the nation. All the grieving mothers would cheer for “Mama P” and commiserate with this grieving mother who lost her son to violence. On the other hand, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the administrative branch of the police force, may feel betrayed by her willingness to be seen with those who support and protect criminals in the society and become enraged at her decision. The Media would be excited because of the controversy created around the event, and all the opportunities for interviews and news stories on the issue as was the case in the Tivoli incursion in Jamaica in May 2010. The fact that it took 6 years for a Commissioner’s Inquiry to be completed provided sufficient encouragement for the Media watchdogs to keep reporting about questionable conduct amongst political affiliates. What of the debacle over the PNP’s Mr. Azan, who is was forced to defend his decision for a market to be constructed in Spaldings, Clarendon? Many residents of the parish were outraged while the investors in the project were happy that it was completed before coming to the public’s attention. Perhaps timed to be too late to do anything more than offer a monetary settlement to compensate for any rights infringed upon in the process. During political campaigns, people experience emotional hijacking where all rational thought disappears and horrific acts of violence are carried out in the desire to see their political candidate win the seat in the elections. The following case illustrates such an episode in Jamaica’s political history.

On 16 May 1949 Norman Washington Manley and Alexander Bustamante both signed the first of many leaders appealed to the Jamaican people, and particularly to their own supporters

Not to use force in political campaigning and to remember that, regardless of their political views, it is in the interest of everyone to comply with this appeal so as to secure the preservation of law and order, the right of free speech and the right of everyone to exercise his privileges as a voter. (Daily Gleaner, 18 May 1949)

This led to a front-page editorial in the Gleaner, somewhat optimistically claiming that “Jamaica can now move forward politically, socially and spiritually without the specter of brutality haunting its dreams and making nightmares of its hopes ...” (Daily Gleaner, 18 May 1949).

Two months later, on 6 July to be precise, Benjamin Taylor, aged 57, of Tamarind Tree, St. Andrew, was stoned, beaten and eventually stabbed to death in his yard. The attack was a political one, and was the culmination of a series of clashes between supporters of the rival parties, which had been occurring at political meetings over the preceding few days. The context for the murder was a by-election for the Kingston and St. Andrew Council seat of Eastern St. Andrew No. 2 Division, located in the Gordon Town area. The main candidates were Leo McDonald for the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and Allan Isaacs for the People’s National Party (PNP). McDonald got 2,176 votes and Isaacs 2,134 votes, so it was a very close election.

... the inquiry began on 9 July and ended on 29 July. Blame for the incident was firmly apportioned. In his report Hearne wrote, “The organization and instigation of violence must be placed at the door of the PNP” (Daily Gleaner, 6 August 1949). Norman Manley, in response, argued that the report was “intemperate and unbalanced” (Daily Gleaner, 9 August 1949).
... While the violence of the 1940s was not as dramatic in its forms or outcomes as that of the later period, partly because sticks and stones were used rather than semi-automatic weapons, a strong sense of party loyalty and affiliation was in evidence (Sives in Harriott, 2003, pp. 49-51).

While we can explore the characteristics of the party leaders, Bustamante and Manley, and their attitudes towards the place for violence, we cannot separate the emotionally charged environment of the political being in the Caribbean context. Everyone involved in the preceding case responded to the situation based on the emotions they had been experiencing at the time. Much rational thought was over-ridden in the face of threats to reputation, loyalty and the need to defend one’s position. Thus, emotions are considered to be pervasive in every aspect of the political being’s internal and external environment.

The next component of the political being is the rational component— the cognitive processes. Cognitive processes refer to how information is gathered, coded, stored and recalled for later use. According to Cottam et. al. (ibid.), the cognitive system in our brain helps us to understand the environment that we live in without paying close attention to it. Through the use of schemas, heuristics and other mental processes we are able to process large amounts of data and sift from it what we need for use. With regard to political decision-making, “we tend to accept information that is consistent with our preexisting ideas, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about the environment we live in” (p. 9). In Jamaica, as in other countries of the region such as Trinidad, we see the relationship between cognition and emotions in political decisions when a leader has died. This is because the people may rejoice or mourn at their passing, as they give an evaluation of their time of service to the nation. For example, the former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Patrick Manning died suddenly, less than 24 hours after being diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. He served Trinidad as a politician for almost 40 years. As soon as the news was released, tributes began pouring in. Among some of the most notable are from the current Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who said, “Manning will be remembered as a visionary, a patriot and a Caribbean man who always strived for excellence” (CMC in The Gleaner, 2016, p. D9). Dominica’s Prime Minister, Roosevelt Skerrit said, “He was a sincere advocate for regional integration. As a young man, I was very fortunate to have worked with him” (The Gleaner, ibid.). Former Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister, Baldwin Spencer, said, “He was a good leader for his country and his party, and he was really a genuine Caribbean man. He believed in the ideals and the necessity and importance of us as a (Caribbean) people to be able to come together and really and truly create the Caribbean civilisation” (p. D9). The Caribbean Court of Justice, based in Trinidad, called him “one of our region’s greatest leaders” (op. cit., D9).

So, the internal environment of the Political Being is comprised of personality, values and identity, attitudes, emotions and cognitive processes. However, the Political Being must negotiate all these in relation to the broader social and political environment. In the age of globalization and mobile devices that keep people informed about the issues that matter to them, the Political Being is also determining his or her position in an ever-changing geo-political space. Political Beings choose to belong to groups which they believe most resemble their personal characteristics. These groups form the US category of the Political Being’s environment, whereas groups that are different or dissimilar will be placed in the THEM category. The US and the THEM categories, can further be understood in terms of social identities. Similar to the collective identity in the Social Affirmation Framework (Branche& Morgan, 2011; Mitchell, Elias & Branche, 2015), social identities are “derived from membership in social groups, such as nationality, gender, age, race, ethnicity, occupation, and other kinds of group membership” (Cottam et. al., p.9). In light of the Political Being, therefore, the groups that we belong to represent our “in-groups;” whereas, the groups that we do not belong to represent our “out-groups.” The following case of British Guiana demonstrates the importance of group membership and social identities very clearly. As a result of increasing ideological and racial tensions, violence exploded in British Guiana in the 1960s.

In 1953 the then colony of British Guiana had its first elections under a new constitution intended as a first step toward independence. A socialist party, the People’s Progressive Party, led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan, an Indian dentist, and Forbes Burnham, an African barrister, won handily and took office. One hundred and thirty-three days later the British Government announced that the constitution was suspended because of “communist subversion.” In 1955 the party split into two factions, and in 1957 Mr. Burnham formed the People’s National Congress, leaving Dr. Jagan as the leader of a depleted People’s Progressive Party. After 1957 the contest between these two parties was increasingly couched in terms of a struggle between Africans, represented by Mr. Burnham and the P.N.C., and Indians, represented by Dr. Jagan and the P.P.P. This was the background to the “racial violence” to which I referred earlier. From December 1964 to October of 1992, Guyana was governed by the People’s National Congress as a virtual, and occasionally as a nominal, one-party state, effectively containing, but not eradicating, the conflicts and resentments that had been expressed during those years of violent confrontation between Indians and Africans.
Now that the People’s Progressive Party is back in office after the first reasonable free elections in twenty-eight years the configuration of forces appears to be remarkbly similar to that in the 1960s.

The People’s Progressive Party continues to find its main electoral support among Indo-Guyanese voters, and the People’s National Congress is still regarded as the vehicle of Afro-Guyanese interests (Smith, 1996, p. 166).

It is obvious that for the successive years after the scare of communism, ideological tensions existed in the country and every would-be candidate for office had to be extremely careful of what they would say on the campaign trail. When the two parties split, the Indians remained with Dr. Jagan while the Africans moved on with Mr. Burnham. This split between the two men of two different ethnic groups became the axis of division in Guyanese politics for decades. Similar attitudes and events were demonstrated in the elections of 2016 (Chabrol, 2016). The Indians must have felt cheated of power for the twenty-eight years which Mr. Burnham’s party ruled the country, believing that as a man of African descent he could not understand the plight of the Indian in Guyana. The violence that was used to contain any threat of defeat also became entrenched in the political system which made the voters decide who to eliminate by political and ethnic in-group or out-group. Thus, when the People’s Progressive Party retained victory in what was considered to be the first reasonably free election in twenty-eight years, the Africans felt like they had lost all opportunity for progress.

IV. POLITICS, POWER AND IDENTITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

As we have explored the issue of politics, power and identity in the Caribbean psyche, it has become clear that individuals view their politicians as extensions of themselves, just a grander, public version of themselves. As political beings (Cottam et. al., 2004), citizens select candidates to represent them who reflect their personality, their values and attitudes, communicate effectively, and emotionally connect with them. The research continues to show that once individuals positively resolve the crisis of generativity versus stagnation, and desire to give themselves for public office, they are socialized into the political process, and empowered to exercise political agency. This is true for governance as well as in other types of organizations.

Eriksonian theory, along with Levinson’s Seasons of Life, helped us to understand the relationship that those holding political office, in particular men in the Caribbean, have with wanting to create a new world, a better world for themselves and their children in the destruction-creation dimension. However, there are challenges. In the most comprehensive study to date on democracies in the region (Powell, Lewis, &Seligson, 2011), it was concluded that Jamaicans perceive themselves to be relatively powerless in the political process. Correlations were also found between the low level of trust that exists in the population, and the perceived lack of personal efficacy. The researchers highlighted the overall, “weak trust in the sociopolitical institutions and processes, in politicians and elections, and in the perceived capability of the government to solve problems” (Powell, Lewis, &Seligson, 2011, p. xxxiii). Consequently, people who feel helpless become inactive in the political process and become disengaged citizens. As the disengagement increases, there is a corresponding breakdown in civic order, ultimately undermining development. One way of resolving this problem is to finally get the Governments of the region to follow-through on their promises of electoral reform and constitutional reform that would usher in a republican form of government, and give individuals at the community level more control over who would represent them. This is in contrast to the “present voter-choice-limiting, garrison-based, two party electoral” lock” (p. xxxii).

Personality factors were also found to play a significant role in political orientations (Cottam et. al., 2004; Powell, Lewis, &Seligson, 2011). The study also found correlations between personality attributes, political orientations, and support for democracy in Jamaica. The researchers concluded that “Promoting positive citizen need satisfaction and emotional health, a more pro social, non-zero-sum world view, and what Maslow termed the “self-actualization” of citizens seems to be related, across the board, to development of social capital, civic engagement, political legitimacy and a more robust civic order” (Powell, Lewis, &Seligson, 2011, p. xxxiii). When researchers examined the data for the “big five personality factors,” Emotional Stability vs.- Neuroticism correlated significantly with measures of socio-political system support, interpersonal trust-distrust, (non-) zero-sum perception, and efficacy-powerlessness. In order to overcome these challenges, governments in Jamaica and other countries of the region will have to make the process more transparent, consciously building trust through social policies that facilitate cooperation and empower citizens (Powell, Lewis, &Seligson, 2011).

IV. REFERENCES


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