



Promoting Professional Public Management in Smaller Cities: The Jamaican Experience

Introduction

- ▶ Institutional capacity building in Local Government in Jamaica is being developed through a structured Reform Programme with special focus on legal, financial, organisational, economic development and citizen participatory frameworks
- ▶ The reform model is a “devolution model” as opposed to being an “agency of Central Government” approach and was developed through consultation with a broad based representational profile of the citizens of Jamaica
- ▶ Core Argument - Capacity development for public executives at the local level is best conducted in the context of a discrete and structured programme with identified objectives that are clear and specific

Main Capacity Gaps of Public Executives in Local Government

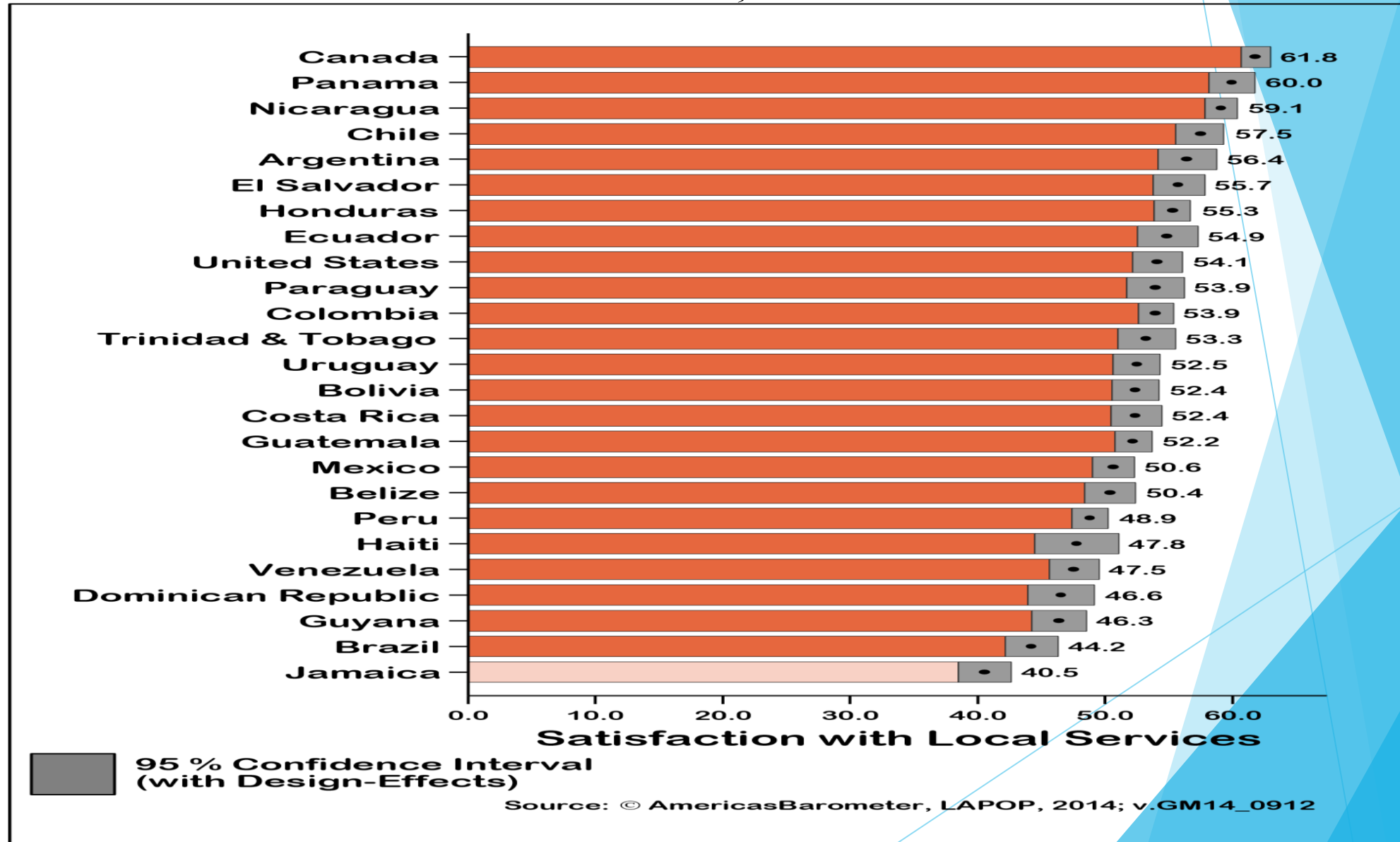
- ▶ Leadership - Generally, unwillingness or inability to lead change to mitigate adverse circumstances, resistance to change
- ▶ Strategic Management - Generally, inability to consistently articulate strategic approach to major challenges
- ▶ Performance Management - Inability to drive performance management culture in institutions
- ▶ Networking - Generally, inability or unwillingness to establish and manage collaborative networks, particularly with elected officials
- ▶ Image - Inability or unwillingness to develop preferred image associated with chief administrator of jurisdiction

Perception of Capacity Gaps by Citizens and Elected Officials

- ▶ Very critical of local government performance
- ▶ Negative view of the value and relevance of local government
- ▶ Low trust in attempts to build participatory governance framework
- ▶ Perception of corrupt practices by public officials, including those in local government
- ▶ A 2014 study commissioned by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), looking at Democracy, Performance and Local Government in the Americas, found that:
 - ❖ More citizens made demands of their local officials than at any other time since 2006.
 - ❖ Citizens that are most satisfied with local services were most likely to attend local government meetings when compared to those with wavering satisfaction in local services.
 - ❖ Satisfaction in local services in general remained fair with respondents viewing service provision as “neither good, nor bad”
 - ❖ Jamaica recorded the lowest levels of satisfaction with local government in the Americas

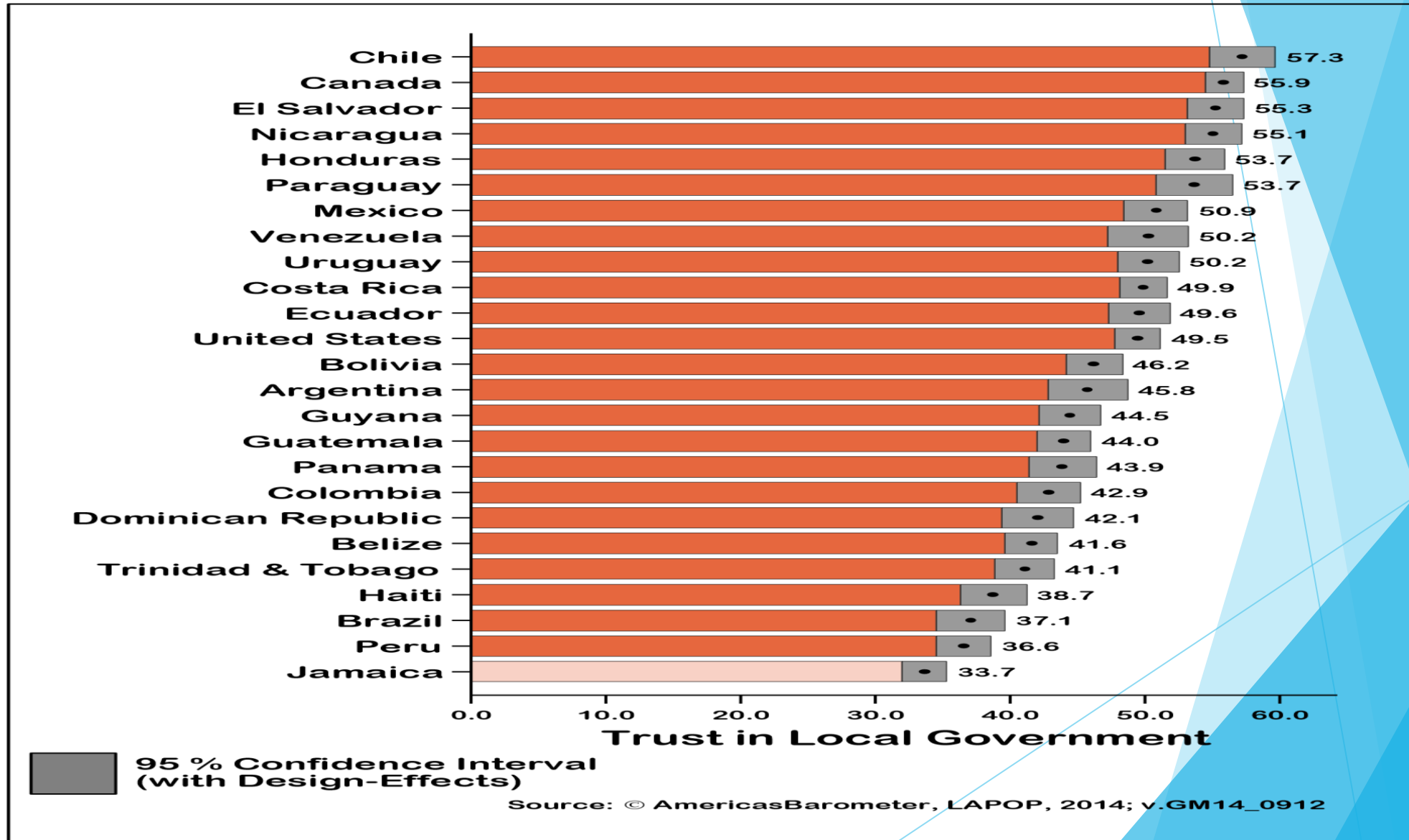
Perception of Capacity Gaps

Appendix 4.4. Evaluations of Local Government Services in the Countries of the Americas, 2014



Perception of Capacity Gaps

Appendix 4.5. Trust in Local Government in the Countries of the Americas



Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Reform programmes should be structured to include incentives and sanctions in complying with objectives
- ▶ There is dissonance between Central Government policy re local government transformation and the allocation of resources to drive this transformation
- ▶ Transformation is best achieved when all elements of a transformation programme are being conducted simultaneously for momentum and effect; this is highly dependent on allocation of resources
- ▶ Transformation programmes are most sustainable when wide agreement exists on all major elements of the programme. The Jamaican programme has survived changes in administration due to this bipartisan approach to its development

Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Transformation programmes should be so structured that specific service delivery objectives are identified fairly early in the life of the programme. This allows for sustained buy-in by programme beneficiaries and the beneficiary publics
- ▶ Public Education is a critical component of transformation as the general public becomes:
 - ✓ more aware of the role of local government
 - ✓ an ally in the process
 - ✓ stimulant for programme performance
 - ✓ a critical mass for programme ownership
- ▶ A successful public education programme is dependent on resources allocated

Challenges faced in attracting, motivating and retaining local executives

- ▶ Lower salaries and less scope for career movement when compared with Central Government counterparts
- ▶ Exclusion from most if not all of the career development opportunities available to Central Government counterparts
- ▶ Responsibility for direct interaction with elected officials
 - ❖ perceived negatively by many prospective executives
- ▶ Periodic relocation to other jurisdictions creates financial and other challenges
- ▶ No institutionalised training development programme in existence as training is currently reactive to identified weaknesses

Opportunities existing in attracting, motivating and retaining local executives

- ▶ Local government is dynamic, interesting, multifaceted
- ▶ Low turnover of local executives once they enter the local government service
- ▶ Qualifications of local executives compare with their central government counterparts
- ▶ Introducing a Shared Corporate Services programme in order to retain and attract local executives at competitive salaries. SCS is referenced as local jurisdiction obligation in new law relating to governance

Thank You

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