

The IMF and Public Sector Wage Negotiations in Jamaica

By [Tina Renier](#)

Global Research, January 13, 2018

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

With the emergence of international organizations (IO) in international relations, the discourse on the sovereignty of states especially small states has become increasingly relevant. Globalization is a process that facilitates interdependence and co-operation among states and non-state actors through negotiations in order to achieve common interests. This is known as multilateralism or global governance.

Therefore, this means that governance of sovereign states in international relations is no longer limited to governments but now incorporates the powerful influence of international organizations in internal matters. Scholar Samuel J. Barkin (2006) accurately pointed out that power is transferred from governments to international organizations and this leaves the state with limited autonomy in its policy options. Barkin's argument holds true for the Jamaican experience, as the government grapples with the critical decision of public sector wage negotiations while attempting to remain committed to the conditions of the IMF agreement.

The entrapment of the state, government and citizens in a complex web of finance and decision making must not only be attributed to the fiscal mismanagement of different government administrations and consistently high debts. The predicament can be also analysed using a system level of analysis whereby our foreign policy behaviour possesses typical small state characteristics. Jeanne Hey (2003) explains,

“small states rely on superpowers for protection, partnerships and resources and join multilateral institutions whenever possible”.

As a result of our small size and position in global affairs, Jamaica's foreign policy is constructed on the principle of 'survival' but eventually a deadlock situation is created whereby the government is forced to meet the demands of both citizens and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). By extension, it is also no surprise that there is a growing level of resistance and public protests in the form of “sick outs” from police officers because the structural adjustment loan conditions of the IMF agreement which includes a public sector wage freeze, cutbacks in social spending and devaluation of the currency subvert indicators of robust human development. This is most evident in the 2013 United Conference on Trade and Development: Trade Policy Framework on Jamaica which comments that real incomes of citizens have not increased significantly for decades while the 2016 UNDP Report on Jamaica demonstrates that 76,000 Jamaicans are poor based on indicators such as health, education and income using the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is not concerned about human development problems and our peculiar economic experiences but rather meeting macro-economic targets. The government's major challenge is to consolidate a model of development which balances vibrant productive sectors with expanding the real freedoms and privileges that citizens should enjoy. Nevertheless, public sector wage negotiations have complex dimensions to it. It is also very difficult because the policy options are restricted by the dictates of the IMF and making a narrow, impulsive decision can compound serious implications on our nation's development. The current public sector wage negotiation forces us then, to reflect on the notion of global governance by critically asking, 'whose interests does our development serve and who will we serve?'

*

Tina Renier lives in Jamaica and is currently a final year student at the University of the West Indies, Mona pursuing a Bachelor of Science in International Relations.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Tina Renier](#), Global Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Tina Renier](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca