

**A Mixed-method Approach
to Measuring Empowerment
in the Context of
Social Policy Monitoring
in Jamaica**

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Abstract

This paper describes the pilot of a mixed-method research instrument designed to measure the empowerment impact of social policy. Research was conducted in three working-class communities in Jamaica (two urban and one rural) to determine young people's sense of empowerment in their relations with the police. The project used two instruments to generate data: (i) a Community Score Card (CSC) completed by focus groups, which produced numeric ratings as well as a narrative explanation of the ratings, and (ii) rapid assessment peer interviews of individual young people in the communities (ethnographic research). Empowerment indicators were added to a CSC already in use in Jamaica and provided useful complementary data. However, the quality of this data would have benefited from a larger sample. Another finding from the CSC tool was that while indicators were useful for measuring the "accountability gap," they can be misleading—and even dangerous—if they reduce power relations to a depoliticized relationship between service provider and user.

The pilot also revealed that a different sequencing of the two instruments (which were implemented simultaneously) was preferable. The completion of CSC exercise first would have allowed for more informed development of research questions for the ethnographic interviews.

The ethnographic research clearly revealed that difficult relations between youth and police in the three study communities were symptomatic of much broader societal problems. Consequently, these relations are unlikely to significantly improve without attention to their wider social context. The ethnographic research made a strong impact on the policy makers to whom it was presented, eliciting interest from many government ministries. Finally, the two research methods did more than produce policy-relevant information about empowerment in a timely and cost-effective way, they had an empowering effect in and of themselves on the young people involved in the pilot.

This paper—a product of the Poverty Reduction Group, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network of the World Bank—is part of a larger effort in the network to conceptualize, operationalize, and measure empowerment. Copies of the paper are available free of charge from the World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433. Policy Research Working Papers are also posted on the Web at: <http://econ.worldbank.org/research>. The manager of the study may also be contacted at ndudwick@worldbank.org.

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Acronyms

CSC	Community Score Card
JASPEV	Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Unit, Jamaica Cabinet Office
PEER	Peer Ethnographic Evaluation and Research
PRMPR	Poverty Reduction Management, Poverty Reduction Network, World Bank
SDC	Social Development Commission, Jamaica
TFESSD	Trust Fund for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development

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Executive Summary

Background

Despite consensus among development practitioners that empowerment is one of the keys to sustainable development, the concept remains loosely defined and few instruments or indicators exist for monitoring empowerment outcomes. This paper is an attempt to address these gaps. It describes the piloting of a mixed-method component to monitor empowerment in the context of ongoing social policy monitoring in Jamaica. The component combined a Community Score Card with rapid ethnographic research, meeting a requirement that the instruments complement each other *and* fit into the information-gathering activities already underway in Jamaica. The pilot was also shaped by the need to use instruments that were simple and cost effective to implement, so that they could be fed back into the policy process on a regular basis.

Specifically, the pilot added an empowerment module of five indicators to the Community Score Card already being implemented in Jamaica. This tool was complemented by a qualitative study. The design of both instruments was based on a simple analytic framework in which empowerment, defined as the capacity to make effective choices, was understood as the interaction of asset-based *agency* and institution-based *opportunity structure*. The indicators and qualitative research questions assessed “agency” through an array of proxies: the material, financial, social, human, informational, and psychological assets that people deploy to achieve their goals. “Opportunity structure” was operationalized as the formal and informal institutions that affect people’s access and ability to exercise their agency. While access to material assets

can be often measured by indicators, assessing the institutional context – as well as measuring and understanding how people exercise choice -- generally benefits from qualitative methods—hence the choice of a mixed-method approach for monitoring empowerment as an outcome of social policy.

Country context

In the last decade, Jamaica has sought to formalize greater public participation in the policy process. In 2003, the Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation (JASPEV) Unit, located in the Cabinet of Ministers, produced a social policy framework. The framework laid out seven major policy goals and an action plan that included extensive public consultations. The action plan explicitly called for introducing innovative survey methods and participatory research on selected social policy issues; it also allocated funds for this purpose. Selecting the issue of youth inclusion, JASPEV organized a round of community consultations on youth-police relations. Its desire to further institutionalize such consultations and test new methods for tracking social policy outcomes provided an exciting opportunity to pilot a mixed-method approach for monitoring empowerment.

An overview of the pilot

When the pilot began, a round of community consultations had just been completed in Jamaica using a Community Score Card (CSC). The CSC is a monitoring tool that has been used in many countries to build social accountability by eliciting user perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and relevance of public services; these views are subsequently shared with the service providers. As part of the pilot, five additional indicators addressing youth empowerment (i.e., their capacity to demand better services) were

added and tested in a subset of one rural and two urban communities during the subsequent round of CSC consultations.

Concurrently, the pilot implemented a qualitative study using “peer ethnography,” a rapid appraisal method that involves selecting and training interviewers from the population to be studied. With the help of JASPEV, 18 young men and women were selected from the same subset of three communities, supported by a trainer from the United Kingdom and Jamaican social scientists with experience in youth issues. These young people identified and interviewed 60 young people about their personal, family, and community relationships, their school and work experiences, and their attitudes and experiences with people in authority, particularly the police. The purpose of the ethnographic research was to better understand how the power relations underpinning social, family, and community structures and institutions affect youth-police relations in poor Jamaican communities, and thereby produce policy recommendations that go beyond targeting youth-police relations alone.

Findings from the pilot

Table 1 shows the five empowerment indicators that were added to five existing CSC indicators, which address youth perceptions of the police. The enhanced CSC was then administered to youth focus groups in the three communities. Young people provided numeric ratings for each indicator and then discussed the reasons for their ratings.

Table 1. Scorecard results from three communities in Jamaica, 2008

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Community score^a</i>			
	<i>Harasson Gardens^b</i>	<i>Poyuton Terrace</i>	<i>Coolblue Gap</i>	
<i>Standard service indicators</i>				
A	Level of trust that youth have in the police	1	4	4
B	Level of respect and courtesy displayed by the police	2	5	5
C	Level of fairness displayed by police	1	4	4
D	Level of responsiveness of police	3	3	2
E	Level of effort made by police to interact with the youth	2	5	3
<i>Empowerment indicators</i>				
F	Level of youth access to information about police activities and services	3	5	1
G	Level of youth willingness to use police services (e.g., reporting incidents)	4	5	4
H	Ability of youth to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions	5	5	2
I	Level of youth willingness to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions	1	4	4
J	Level of youth hope that youth-police relations can improve	2	5	5

Notes: ^aScale: 1= Very poor; 2= Poor; 3= Fair; 4= Good; 5= Excellent.

^b The names of the three communities have been changed here to ensure respondent anonymity.

Findings from the CSC

Responses to the empowerment questions revealed a sizable urban-rural gap in access to information. Young people in rural Coolblue Gap were least knowledgeable about police services and their rights. Youth in Harasson Gardens, the community with the tensest relations with the police, were less informed than their peers in Poyuton Terrace, an inner-city community with an active and more popular police-run club for youth. Across all three communities, youth indicated a high willingness to report incidents, although the peer ethnographers reported that, in fact, young people were often too frightened to report incidents for fear of being seen as police informants. Likewise, although youth in both urban communities felt in principle that they could complain about police behavior, the

CSC narrative (and peer ethnography) revealed important differences between them. While youth in Poyuton Terrace were willing to make complaints because they felt they had the possibility of bringing police officers to justice, in Harasson Gardens, young people were not sure where they could lodge complaints in practice.

Interestingly, both the quantitative and qualitative findings revealed a gap between youth *ability* (knowledge of procedures and mechanisms for lodging a complaint about police behavior) and *willingness* to lodge complaints. In urban Poyuton Terrace, youth indicated both willingness and ability to make complaints, whereas in Harasson Gardens, they indicated an ability to complain, but were unwilling to do so out of fear of police retaliation. In rural Coolblue Gap, with a lower crime rate and friendlier, more relaxed youth-police relations, youth felt *willing* to make complaints, but lacked the ability because they didn't know how or where to do so. Asked about their expectations for an improvement in youth-police relations, youth in Harasson Gardens were the least optimistic, although a few saw a ray of hope in the recent arrival of younger police who were more willing to engage with them.

Findings from peer ethnography

In addition to clarifying why youth responded to the empowerment questions as they did, the peer ethnography provided a deeper understanding of the social structures affecting youth-police relations. It revealed that these relations were but one expression of the generally authoritarian and often punitive character of relationships between young people and people in authority. Where families were relatively more intact, as in rural Coolblue Gap, youth found elders to be more supportive, but in inner-city areas, where adults were also coping with poverty, crime, and family dysfunction, they were perceived

as less able to provide financial or emotional support. Particularly in urban communities, young people felt excluded and even stigmatized by adults as ignorant, idle, and destructive.

Youth also noted the absence of support from neighbors and even local institutions, such as the church, with youth in Coolblue Gap relatively more ready to turn to such institutions than their counterparts in the other two communities. Inner-city youth felt that success invited envy rather than support from others. When seeking employment, they felt stigmatized by the mere fact of living in a high-crime community. Denied formal employment and in some cases forced to live on their own, these young people felt they had limited options to succeed. For such youth, illegal activities, including prostitution, gang behavior, and petty or violent crime sometimes appeared the best way to guarantee survival.

The peer ethnography elucidated some of the reasons why young men and women responded differently during the CSC exercise. Particularly for young men, who saw few legitimate avenues for asserting their identity as social adults, criminal “dons” in the neighborhood had become role models. While young women were vulnerable to abuse and/or exploitation from families and partners, they were less likely to become involved in violent crime and thus elicited less fear and mistreatment from police.

Lessons from the pilot

Findings from the pilot suggest that **the empowerment indicators provided a useful complement to the first five indicators in the CSC**. While the initial five focused on provider behavior and ignored the potential of recipients to change that behavior, the

empowerment indicators revealed some of the obstacles that young people encounter when they try to hold police accountable for their behavior.

At the same time, contradictions between some of the scores and accompanying narratives suggest room for improvement. The findings would clearly be more robust if the CSC had been administered to a larger number of people, possibly in the form of a larger, representative survey. A larger survey would also allow the results to be disaggregated by gender, which turned out to be a critical variable that conditioned how young people were treated by the police. **The quality of the data would also have benefited from a different approach to sequencing the tools.** Instead of implementing the CSC and peer ethnography simultaneously, completing the CSC exercise first would have allowed for more informed development of research questions for the peer ethnographic interviews.

The peer ethnography complemented the CSC by demonstrating the extent to which difficult relations between youth and police are symptomatic of much deeper social structures, including authoritarian relationships that devalue youth and a combined lack of role models, supportive institutions, and educational and employment opportunities. Youth-police relations are thus unlikely to significantly or lastingly improve without attention to the wider social context. In addition to recommendations for increasing the accountability of police to the citizens they serve, as well as improving access to information and grievance mechanisms, the mixed-method research resulted in several recommendations for social policies. Specifically, such policies should address:

- the issue of agency among youth and the fact that in poor urban and rural communities, youth have very little power in the presence of adults;

- the need to rebuild relevant community institutions in inner-city communities;
- the need to reduce the influence of arms and alternative authority structures by combining employment generation with proactive preparation of young people for the labor market; and
- the need to support families to break the cycle of abuse and dysfunction.

The peer ethnography also produced a compelling report that made a strong impact on the policy makers to whom it was presented. As past studies have demonstrated, for research to contribute effectively to policy making, its presentation and dissemination must be effective. Combining quantitative and qualitative data expands the audience for findings among policy makers and decision makers, since some will have greater interest and trust in statistical data, while others will respond more to stories and narratives that illustrate points of interest.

The methods used in the pilot study did more than produce policy-relevant information about empowerment in a timely and cost-effective way. These methods had an empowering effect in and of themselves. By sharing their perceptions in the context of the CSC discussions, youth were able to compare their perspectives with others, receive information from trained facilitators, and share their views with the police in a safe setting. These conversations were a first step toward developing an action plan to improve youth-police interactions. Likewise, one outcome of the peer ethnography was that 18 youth (many of whom were poor, unemployed, and generally quite similar to the young people they interviewed) received training and an opportunity to contribute their own views to a policy document, significantly expanded their social networks, and finally, achieved recognition in a public forum. The fact that the methods selected for producing policy-relevant information were experienced as empowering was important

for JASPEV, given its overall objective of increasing public voice and participation in policy.

Introduction

In recent years, “empowerment” has become more prominent as a development objective in its own right, rather than just a means to reduce poverty. The shift from viewing empowerment as a means to an end has entailed greater efforts to operationalize and measure the empowerment impacts of development interventions. This paper describes the pilot of a mixed-method diagnostic tool¹ for measuring and analyzing the empowerment impacts of social policy in Jamaica. It also highlights lessons learned for researchers seeking to undertake similar exercises. The tool was developed as part of a World Bank activity, “Measuring Empowerment in Four Countries.”² In addition to Jamaica, work for this project was carried out in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Ghana, although in varying policy and program contexts.

Objectives and audience

The specific objectives of the pilot were to: (i) develop a set of indicators for use in survey instruments (including score cards and household surveys); (ii) test to what extent ethnographic techniques are useful in deepening the insights provided by the indicators; and (iii) assess the value of using a mixed-method approach (i.e., one that combines quantitative and qualitative data) for policy evaluation and formulation purposes. The intended audience for this work comprised practitioners in government and nongovernment or donor agencies who were engaged in designing, implementing, and measuring empowerment interventions.

¹ The authors describe this approach as a “tool” on the grounds that it prescribes a specific combination of methods that map qualitative and quantitative data into a simple analytical framework.

² This activity was supported by the Trust Fund for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (TFESSD) administered by the World Bank.

It is important to note here that this paper does not seek to present a step-by-step, “how-to” guide or a “one-size-fits-all” approach and set of indicators. Instead, the paper describes a tool and its application in order to provide guidance for practitioners engaged in similar activities, as well as to provide a basis for adapting a monitoring process in other contexts to include empowerment issues.

Country context: Social policy monitoring in Jamaica

The tool described in these pages was developed as part of innovative work in Jamaica to increase the participation of citizens in making and monitoring social policy. Historically, Jamaican citizens have had little input into policy-making processes. Beginning in the early 1990s, there was increasing recognition that civil society could be an important partner in governance. In 1993, the Government of Jamaica established a process to facilitate “the full participation of people” in local-level decision making, thereby influencing local institutions and the services they deliver (Witter 2004). Since then, the government has made efforts to improve the efficiency and accountability of public services by supporting a better service orientation, performance-based management, and results-based planning and budgeting. Public-sector reforms have accordingly involved more attention to transparency and accountability, with greater community participation in decision-making processes. As part of these reforms, the government established Community Development Committees and Parish Development Committees.

Table 2. Government commitment to civil society participation as an element of good governance, Jamaica

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Indicators and measures</i>
Key Goal 3: Governance	
More effective, complementary, and transparent government structures with the goal of moving decision making closer to the people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in policy, information, and practice that facilitate broad-based participation of citizens in decision making
More transparent public organizations and officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and nature of documents available for public scrutiny • Mechanisms in place to facilitate unrestricted citizen access to information • Extent to which media is included in stakeholder process
More accountable public organizations and officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms in place to ensure accountability of public officials • Extent to which public officials are aware and adhere to codes of conduct
Better-informed citizenry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of: rights, norms, and standards of service delivery; entitlements (e.g., food stamps); institutions
Wider, deeper, and continuous citizen participation in governance and public-sector decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avenues available for public participation • Extent and quality of participation

Source: Government of Jamaica (2002).

The government then gave greater attention to the formulation and monitoring of social policy in a project funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID). The Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation (JASPEV) unit was funded by DFID between 2002 and 2007 to support the Cabinet Office in its public-sector reform agenda. Its objectives were to establish and test mechanisms for monitoring and tracking the progress of the long-term outcomes of Jamaica's social policies; deepen the use of information and evidence in policy making; increase citizen participation in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; improve the coherence of planning and budgeting processes; and increase public-sector responsiveness.

JASPEV's first output was a new social policy framework: *Jamaica 2015: A Framework and Action Plan for Improving the Effectiveness, Collaboration and Accountability in the Delivery of Social Policy*. The policy framework proposed that more information be provided to citizens prior to holding transparent consultations, and that the government should report back to citizens on how their inputs were actually integrated into policy. The accompanying action plan included plans to track progress towards seven national social policy goals, using social, environmental, and economic indicators. In addition to collecting secondary data from public, private, and civil-society sectors, the action plan called for introducing "innovative methods in the context of the public sector (such as market research surveys, participatory research methods, citizen juries). Funds were also allocated for carrying out participatory research on a selected social policy issue.

The JASPEV design recognized three main methodological challenges to improving social policy outcomes in Jamaica (Holland et al. 2005), namely:

- establishing effective institutional links between providers and users of policy-relevant information to increase the timeliness, relevance, and use of evidence in policy making;
- effectively combining data sources and methods for social policy analysis and increasing awareness of their comparative advantages among policy researchers, policy makers, and implementers; and,
- embedding policy research in a continual process of institutional transformation and empowerment at different levels of governance so that the policy process becomes both demand led and supply driven.

To address these challenges, JASPEV developed an organizational and social policy information system to encourage the institutional connections needed to improve policy design, delivery, and outcomes. Two streams of information and feedback were used:

- a national-level system for social policy monitoring that identified social, environmental, and economic indicators (amassed by a

Technical Working Group that collected and analyzed a wide range of data³); and

- a system of locally generated but nationally comparable benchmark indicators collected using a community score card (CSC) and designed to encourage institutional change in relationship between citizens, service providers, and the “political directorate” (i.e., political policy makers and implementers).

Policy context: Youth development

Reflecting community concerns over the poor performance of police in reducing youth violence and crime, JASPEV selected “youth inclusion” and particularly, youth-police relations, as the focus of their first social policy monitoring exercise. As described in the government’s 2003 *National Youth Policy* (Government of Jamaica 2003; see also DFID 2005), Jamaican citizens had ample reason to prioritize youth inclusion. The document observed that while in many respects the situation for youth had improved, employment prospects for certain groups of young people were falling and that young people were disproportionately the perpetrators and victims of violence. Overall, children under 18 were over-represented among the poor, comprising over half of those in poverty. And most youth occupied relatively low-skilled, low-paying jobs, with high under-employment rates.

The document linked urban poverty to crime, violence, and garrison communities,⁴, which control many of these areas. It noted that people from such inner-city

³ The Technical Working Group was comprised of specialists from various organizations and sectors concerned with youth development. Within the JASPEV organizational arrangement, its aim was to support communities and policy makers in developing strategies that translated into meaningful action at both the local and national policy level.

⁴ Urban enclaves (usually with drug economies and high levels of violence) that support a particular political party. These communities are characterized by high levels of autonomy with the role, authority, and power of the state reduced and replaced by criminal gangs and political figures who operate in a mutually supportive relationship.

neighborhoods are often stigmatized and excluded from both employment and access to public goods. Young women, particularly in poor urban areas, are susceptible to high rates of early teenage pregnancy, dependency, abuse, and violence, while young men are marginalized by criminality, poor education, stigmatization, unemployment, and family and school violence. According to the report, young people in these communities are arrested, jailed, and murdered at twice the rate of the general population. Other socially excluded groups included young people in rural areas.

The *National Youth Policy* provided a common framework for the development of Jamaican youth. It articulated a vision of Jamaican young people who could realize their full potential through “access to opportunities... [and] develop, participate, and contribute as responsible citizens to a peaceful, prosperous, and caring society.” Policy objectives included fostering a culture of positive youth development; increasing the participation of young people in decision making about activities that affect their lives; and increasing the capacity of service providers to provide accessible, relevant, and high-quality services for youth and their families. “Participation and empowerment” were focal areas of the policy, which stressed the importance of enhancing the capacity of young people to participate in societal processes and providing space and opportunity for their increased participation. The centrality of youth empowerment provided the basis for developing a way to analyze and measure the empowerment impacts of social policy, as described in chapter 1.

Chapter 1. A Mixed-method Tool for Measuring Empowerment

The mixed-method tool described in this paper combines theoretical and data-collection elements. Based on an empowerment analytical framework that provides a “theory of change,” the tool interprets, presents, and links quantitative and qualitative data to changes in policy design and implementation. It includes two methods for generating empowerment data:

- a Community Score Card, which generates quantitative and qualitative data in the form of numeric ratings accompanied by a narrative explanation of the ratings; and
- ethnographic research that uses interviewers from the communities being studied to delve into the broader social and institutional context that shapes the specific practices, attitudes, and perceptions addressed by the Community Score Card.

The empowerment analytical framework

The empowerment framework was developed by the Empowerment Team of the Poverty Reduction Group, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PRMPER) Network of the World Bank.⁵ It draws on sociological literature to focus on the relationship between structure and agency (Giddens 1984), with empowerment defined as “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland 2006, p. 1).

⁵ This section draws heavily on R. Alsop, M. Bertelsen, and J. Holland, *Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2006).

Transformative choices can be made in the domains of the state, the market, or society. In the state domain, citizens may experience empowerment by accessing justice, participating in politics, or obtaining public services. In the market domain, the access of individuals and groups to markets, land, labor opportunities, and credit are determined by regulations and systems of property rights, as well as by informal institutions. In the social domain, power-based institutions of social hierarchy, patriarchy, or exploitative patron-client relations can empower or constrain individual and group agency. In Jamaica, research focused on the empowerment of citizens in the state domain, specifically, their relationship with service providers (in this case, the police). The analytical framework demands, however, that analysis encompass all domains to explain empowerment processes and outcomes, since disempowerment in one domain may limit individual or group agency in other domains. Analysis and measurement of empowerment thus benefits from a combination of instruments and perspectives.

Empowerment can be further operationalized as the interaction of agency and opportunity structure, with *agency* defined as an actor's or group's ability to make meaningful choices—that is, the actor or group is able to envisage and purposively choose options. For the purposes of measurement, agency can be largely predicted by *asset endowment* (Moser 2007, 1998). Assets are the resources that actors use to be productive, protect themselves from shock, and respond to new opportunities. These assets can be psychological, informational, organizational, material, social, financial, or human.

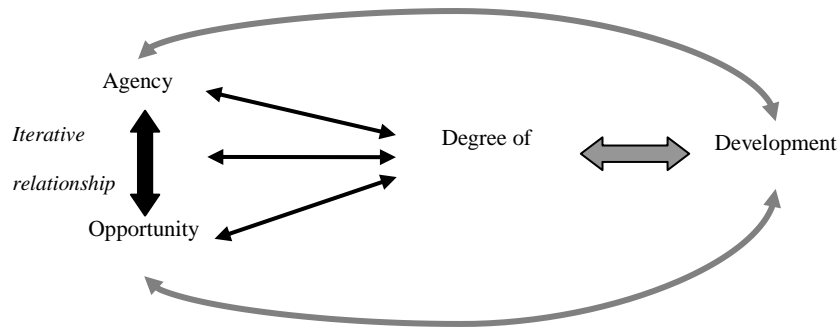
Psychological assets are particularly significant as predictors of agency. Nussbaum (2000) argues that rational choices are “deformed” by underlying differences in capabilities, which include the capacity to aspire to and imagine alternative options.

Empowerment may well require a raised level of consciousness if individuals or communities are to translate their assets into choices, that is, to become “agents.” Without this change in consciousness, people are likely to make choices that reflect “adaptive preferences,” in other words, narrow practical aspirations shape how people conceive of their life possibilities. Low levels of psychological assets mean that actors are also less likely to make choices that can build on or improve the other assets that form the basis of agency.

Agency is a necessary but insufficient element to ensure that actors can make meaningful choices and then transform these choices into desired outcomes because choices are constrained by the relevant *opportunity structure*. This structure comprises the institutions that govern people’s behavior and influence the success or failure of the choices that they make. Institutions are humanly devised “rules of the game” (North 1990) and can be formal or informal. Informal institutions include the cultural practices, value systems, and norms of behavior that operate in organizations, households, social groups, and communities. Formal institutions include the rules, laws, and regulatory frameworks that govern the operation of political processes, public services, private organizations, and markets. In practice, changes that shift power relations involve an interaction between formal and informal institutions and can result in increased tensions. Using these concepts of asset-based agency and institution-based opportunity structure, the framework suggests that investments and interventions intended to empower people must focus on the dynamic and iterative relationship between agency and structure (see figure 1). Interventions to improve agency and enhance opportunity structures can thus

increase people’s capacity to make effective choices, which in turn can bring about other development outcomes.

Figure 1. Empowerment analytical framework



Source: Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland (2006).

The framework emphasizes that choice is constrained by social circumstance or social rules, with implications for individual and group expression of agency. These rules are often embedded in tradition and culture that are so deeply rooted that people perceive them as unchangeable and “natural”—an immutable part of reality.⁶ When discussing agency, the distinction between habitual and reasoned choice therefore becomes important. Choices made within the framework of routines and customs may be comfortable, but rarely confer new or higher levels of agency. A prerequisite to empowerment is an opportunity structure that allows people to make new choices that translate their asset base into effective agency through raised consciousness, better information, or more equitable rules and expanded entitlements.

⁶ See the discussion by Kabeer (1999) of women’s empowerment, in which she cites Bourdieu’s notion of *doxa*, meaning those aspects of tradition and culture that have become so habitual as to be “naturalized.” Such traditions are deeply entrenched in cultural institutions.

The empowerment analytical framework therefore goes beyond income-based and utilitarian approaches to poverty, “in which real incomes are presumed to translate unproblematically into well-being via utilitarian consumption choices” (Evans 2002). Empowerment is based on tackling the differences or “deformities” in capabilities that deny actors the capacity to make transformative choices. It is a dynamic process in which the interaction of agency and opportunity structure has the potential to improve the capacity of individuals or groups to make such choices. This concept of empowerment has similarities with Sen’s notion of expanding human capabilities, or freedoms, by focusing on an individual’s ability to “enhance the substantive choices they have” (Sen 1997, 1999).

The challenge of measuring empowerment

Measuring empowerment means tracking changes in the availability and exercise of choice over time and comparing these changes across populations. This type of analysis permits the relationship between empowerment and other development goals to be analyzed. Although empowerment is now seen as a legitimate developmental goal in its own right, there is a growing body of case-study evidence⁷ that suggests that it also facilitates poverty reduction. In addition to testing these associations, monitoring the empowerment impact of development interventions provides a “feedback loop” on such interventions, allowing for improved reflection on and identification of operational entry points for empowering change.

To date, relatively few attempts have been made to assess whether policy interventions have an empowering effect. This situation is not surprising, given the challenges

⁷ See Alsop, Bertelsen, Holland (2006).

involved. While poverty is usually measured by using an income- or consumption-based approach that measures material outcomes, measuring empowerment has to capture processes and relational changes that are less predictable, less tangible, more contextual, and more difficult to quantify. This reality raises challenges of *meaning*, *causality*, and *comparability*. Identifying meaningful measurements of any dimension of well-being first requires being able to neatly capture the essence of that aspect of well-being and observe changes in it that are meaningful in both *direction and magnitude*. For example, a person or group must be able to be identified not only as having become “more empowered,” but how much more empowered.

The second challenge, that of attributing cause and effect, is relatively straightforward when the causal chain is relatively short and other variables are held constant. Changes in power relations, however, are not single-event outcomes, but dynamic, process-based outcomes tied up with bargaining, cooperation, conflict, co-option, rent seeking, and other forms of contracting. The picture is further complicated by the cross-sectoral nature of empowerment, which can happen (or not happen) in different ways in different domains of life. Choice can, moreover, often be implicit and therefore difficult to observe and measure. Indeed, empowerment often allows people to choose *not* to take action. Even when people do choose to take action, it is difficult to determine whether the action is strategic or dependent. In other words, it is difficult to determine when people are *really* empowered.

The third challenge of tracking and measuring empowerment is to infer *comparability* across populations. “Aggregation” describes whether data can be aggregated across populations so that conclusions about impact and change can be inferred for larger

population groups. Here the major challenge is that empowerment often involves relative rather than absolute changes in states of being. Hence an observable move towards a higher state of empowerment by one person or group cannot be assumed to apply to other individuals or groups, both within and across countries. An improvement in the economic empowerment of a Jamaican inner city youth, for example, is likely to be qualitatively and quantitatively very different from the economic empowerment of a middle-class Jamaican professional.

The methodological approach adopted by the World Bank Empowerment Team used in this paper is based on the premise that empowerment cannot be measured in a way that does justice to its inherent complexity *and* that satisfactorily meets the three criteria of meaning, causality and comparability. What *can* be done is to identify important dimensions of change in power relations that can be measured, albeit imperfectly, and then complemented by more interpretive and explanatory forms of qualitative research.

The challenges identified above point to the need for a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection methods useful for “empowering” social policy thus:

- include numbers, so that the scope and direction of change can be assessed at a glance;
- are accompanied by some kind of interpretation or explanation;
- are easy to implement and analyze quickly; and
- produce compelling results that are easily accessible to policy makers.

Policy monitoring through Community Score Cards

The “Measuring Empowerment” project of the World Bank expanded an existing community-based policy monitoring process in Jamaica led by JASPEV. This process

used the Community Score Card (CSC) instrument to measure and then probe deeply into aspects of power relations among young people, and between young people and the police, in selected poor urban and rural communities. The process of “community-based policy monitoring” involved community members⁸ who identified indicators of local importance that could then be monitored by teams of volunteers and, through partial standardization, compared across communities and over time. This approach enabled the execution of policy to be monitored on the ground using the CSC.

The CSC is itself a “mixed-method” tool because it generates both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. Conducted in a focus-group setting with a stratified sample of 6–12 service users, the CSC produces quantitative perception scores of specific qualities of service provision, which are usually scored on a 4- or 5-point scale. Scores from all focus group discussions can be then be aggregated and compared across groups and over time. CSC data are usually less reliable than survey-generated data because they are elicited from a relatively small sample of respondents. The trustworthiness of the data can be increased, however, by triangulating results with data generated by larger, representative surveys.

In contrast to the way in which household surveys are implemented and analyzed, a CSC is not only used to generate scores, it uses these scores to stimulate discussion and provide explanation. For this reason, the facilitators of CSC sessions are actively involved in prompting and guiding group discussions, in contrast to survey enumerators, who try to minimize their influence on respondents in order to reduce bias. The interactive focus-group setting of a CSC exercise allows facilitators to use the scores

⁸ JASPEV uses the term “community” to describe specific geographic or social groups of people who usually share common concerns.

generated by the tool to encourage an in-depth diagnostic discussion by the group, in which they define the problem/issue; (ii) diagnose the problem; and (iii) identify solutions.

The CSC instrument is also used to encourage reflection and action by participants. In the context of the Jamaican initiative, this involved preparing action plans to address service issues and actively engaging with the service provider (i.e., the police) to resolve some of the problems identified during CSC sessions. If appropriate, CSC facilitators can extend their role to facilitating “interface” sessions between groups of users and service providers at which the results of CSC sessions are discussed and future actions agreed on.

As part of the community-based policy monitoring process in Jamaica, the CSC:

- provided numerical scores of user perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and relevance of youth-police relations;
- generated qualitative analysis of the scores that diagnosed problems and explained successes; and
- identified priorities and action plans for improving police services and youth-police relations, including new forms of partnership between them.

The CSC discussions were held in community centers or other public spaces in each community. Groups were made up of 6–12 young people aged between 14 and 29 years. Discussions were facilitated by community development officers from the Social Development Commission, a government agency specializing in community outreach. Sessions began with the group split into two smaller groups, each of which performed a short role-playing exercise, one that depicted good youth-police relations from the perspective of young people and the other, from the perspective of police officers.

Following the role-playing exercise the groups were asked to discuss their general understanding of each indicator on the Community Score Card until they could define and come to a common understanding of each one. Participants were then asked to score the current youth-police situation using the score card. A facilitated discussion followed during which participants were asked to justify their scores and address the causes and effects of the problems they had identified, as well as possible solutions to these solutions.

The empowerment project extended the perspective of the CSC. The original indicators had been formulated in the context of a “beneficiary approach,” in which the police were rated according to how they treated youth. The additional empowerment indicators were intended to address issues of agency and opportunity structure (in line with the tool’s conceptual framework). The revised scorecard is presented in table 3 below.

Table 3. Adjusted community score card on youth-police relations

JASPEV Community Score Card on Youth-Police Relations		
Name of Community:	Code: □□	Name of Parish
Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	Age <input type="checkbox"/> 15-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29	Code □□
Standard service indicators	Level of satisfaction with services^a	
Level of trust youth have in police		
Level of respect and courtesy displayed by police		
Level of fairness displayed by police		
Level of effort made by police to interact with youth		
Additional empowerment indicators		
Level of youth access to information about police activities and services		
Level of youth willingness to use police services (e.g., reporting incidents)		
Ability of youth to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions		
Level of youth willingness to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions		
Level of youth hope that youth-police relations can improve		

Note: ^a Scale: N/A=6, 1–2=very poor, 3–4=poor, 5–6=fair, 7–8=good, 9–10=excellent.

Peer ethnographic evaluation and research (PEER)

Use of the CSC instrument was complemented by ethnographic research using Peer Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER), a participatory qualitative research tool.⁹

Sequencing the CSCs with ethnographic research enabled in-depth understanding of the power relations underpinning youth-police interactions in the three research communities.

The tool provided greater understanding of the social and cultural factors that affect how

⁹ For more information on the tool, visit the PEER Web site of Options, London, United Kingdom, www.peer-method.com (accessed December 2008).

youth and police view each other, and thus, the very serious challenges that need to be addressed to improve their relations.

Drawing on the principles of ethnography and using rapid appraisal techniques, PEER is useful for obtaining a greater understanding of the needs and social behavior of, as well as behavioral change among, hard-to-reach populations. Initially designed for use in sexual and reproductive health programs, the method can be used to conduct research on a wide range of issues and sectors. For example, PEER can be used as a social appraisal tool during program design, as a continuing monitoring tool to assess whether a program is meeting the needs of target groups, and as an impact evaluation tool. Prior to its use in Jamaica, however, its use in a policy monitoring context was untested.

PEER involves training members of a target or beneficiary community to conduct research within their own social network or peer group (under the supervision of an experienced researcher) by asking members of the group about “what other people like them” do or think. This indirect approach shifts the focus away from respondents’ own direct actions or behavior, making it a suitable method for researching sensitive topics. The trustworthiness of data is enhanced by ensuring the anonymity of respondents.

Three men and three women between the ages of 16 and 29 were selected from each of the three communities by the SDC and received training in PEER methodology prior to starting fieldwork.¹⁰ Based on their input, the PEER tool was adapted to the purpose of evaluating social policy in Jamaica, specifically to complement and probe the CSC on youth-police relations. PEER thus enabled a deeper study and analysis of: how young people understand and interpret the power relations that influence their everyday habitual

¹⁰ Details of this training are provided in a training report produced by Kirstan Hawkins of Options (Hawkins 2007).

lives; the social norms affecting interactions within their communities and with people from outside their communities; the way in which power relations affect their perceived choices and actions, as well as their poverty; obstacles to challenging and transforming deep-rooted social institutions; and finally, the policy implications for empowering young people in these communities.

To get at these complex issues, a set of detailed research questions around three research themes were developed, field-tested, and revised (see box 1):

- ***identity***: influences, decision making, participation, belonging, confinement, choices, trust, self-worth, elevation, motivation, hopes and aspirations, expectations, opportunity, achievements, and goals;
- ***support and authority***: family, church, school, safety, protection, stigmatization, socialization, role models; and
- ***youth-police relations***: trust, protection, communication, responsibility, expectations, and statistics.

Box 1. PEER research questions

Youth identity and inclusion

- How do young people think that they are perceived by others?
- What are the important external influences on them? (Who are the persons who have a say in their lives? How do they affect their lives?)
- What do they feel about availability of opportunities to them—their life chances? (What are their life chances? What opportunities are available? Who gets through or out and who doesn't? Why? What is the difference between those who make it and those who don't?)
- What are the barriers to achieving personal goals? (What are the key things stopping youth from making it?)
- What are their aspirations—what do they hope for in the future? (How do youth overcome barriers? What are the key opportunities that they can guarantee? What are their creative stories of survival? *Not concerned about legality*)
- Are they given sufficient say? Are they able to participate in decisions that affect their lives—how and why?
- What decisions do young people make for themselves? Which ones do people make for them? Who are these people? (Who are making which decisions?) Can they roughly rank the importance of these decisions?
- How do young people perceive themselves (their self-efficacy and sense of being able to do things)? How do they describe themselves? (Better than... worse than... who?)

Support systems and authority structures

- Do people care for young people? Who cares for them and looks out for them?
- Who are the first persons they turn to when times are hard or they get into trouble (if they ever do)? Why these persons? Tell us about them.
- Are there things that they have to do to ensure that the support continues?
- And who is the day-to-day support? Why these persons?
- **Home:** What does a family look like (construction/ family form)? Where is: Mom, Dad, Grandma, and Grandpa? Who do they live with, who brought them up (different stages: childhood, adolescence)? Did they have to move from one community or home to another (migration)? Who were the important influences in the family/ home? (mother / father / other family members)
- **School:** Experiences of: fun, good times, difficulties (teacher, guidance counselor, principal)? Experiences with peers: fun, difficulties, as leader, as follower—what do they lead friends to do? What do they learn from friends? (What things would they never do without the influence of peers?).
- **Street:** How much do they learn on the street? What is it they learn on the street? From whom? Who are the most influential persons in the community? Why do they think so? Who are their role models?
- **Church/ religious affiliations:** What does the (mainstream) church do for young people? Revival churches? Rastafari?

Youth-police relations

- How do youth see the police?
- How do the police treat: male youth, female youth, men, women, the elderly?
- How do youth treat the police? (What could happen to a police officer who antagonizes youth?)
- What do youth say about “area stigma” and the way that police treat them? Is this different for youth and adults who live there? How does area stigma affect their life opportunities? How do these things make them feel?
- What are young people’s expectations of the police (what sort of policing do they want)? What would make it better? What would make relations with police better—what could change to make them better?
- What types of violence do young people, friends, and crews get involved in? What makes youth participate in violence?

Comparing the instruments

A comparison of the CSC and PEER instruments highlights complementary strengths and weaknesses that make a compelling case for combining them. Both CSC and PEER research are participatory, emphasizing local reflection and action. In some instances, the research process can even lead directly to action and change in the relations being researched.

The CSC generates perception scores of qualitative, relational issues and is therefore well suited to quantifying empowerment. The tool is group based and allows for discussion, explanation, and even recalibration of scores by socially stratified groups of participants. The researcher plays an interactive role, facilitating and guiding the discussion and checking that biases do not emerge in the scoring process.

PEER research generates qualitative data based on individual, semi-structured interviews conducted by peer researchers with selected respondents. In this way, the role of the external researcher is removed so that trust and openness can be ensured between peers. This process also helps the researcher probe “normative truths” that can at times be reproduced during group-based analysis, revealing insights about underlying social institutions and relationships.

The reliability of the findings of both instruments can be enhanced through triangulation. In the case of the CSC, this is achieved by cross-checking between different focus groups (of the same social composition) and between different facilitators. In the case of PEER, triangulation is achieved by comparing the views of different peer respondents and the interpretations of different peer researchers. The CSC can also be scaled up, generating

larger numbers and therefore greater reliability, by including the score card indicators as a module in a larger beneficiary or household survey.

Sequencing the methods

Sequencing quantitative and qualitative methods creates opportunities for the findings of one data-gathering instrument to inform the design and content of the next instrument in the sequence. A widely used and effective sequencing strategy is to use findings from quantitative survey tools to inform the development of research themes and questions for further qualitative tools (Holland and Campbell 2005). A frequent subsequent step is to use qualitative findings to inform the redesign of survey instruments.¹¹

In applying mixed methods to the measurement and analysis of empowerment in Jamaica, the aim was to use score card findings to feed into the design of PEER research questions so that the latter could analyze the structural factors underpinning the scores. However, the PEER research was conducted *before* the second round of CSCs were implemented, which included the additional indicators. This meant that although the additional indicators were developed at the time of the PEER study design, and so contributed to the design of the qualitative research to a degree, score card findings did not have an effect on the PEER research questions and design. In practice, therefore, the tools were combined by merging their findings at the analysis stage. The potential added value of feeding the results of one tool into the design of another was unfortunately lost.

¹¹ A specific example from PEER research on the social marketing of condoms among migrant communities in the Dominican Republic is illuminating here. Survey data indicated that women felt able to insist on condom use with their partners, a finding countered by qualitative data. Qualitative findings revealed that in responding to the survey question, women were actually referring to their ability to insist that their partners used condoms with their “other” women in a context in which the fact that men had multiple partners was condoned and reinforced by women, although not openly, publicly acknowledged. This finding demonstrates that an in-depth understanding of the context of multipartner sex was needed in order to both design and interpret survey results.

A promising next step in Jamaica would be to scale up the implementation of (refined) empowerment indicators by integrating them into a national or sectoral survey, thereby generating more reliable, “large n” datasets. A CSC can be filled out individually by household members as a module in a larger social survey, sacrificing the qualitative discussion that accompanies group-based scoring, but improving its reliability by increasing the number of respondents. This outcome would be particularly significant, given that the CSCs in the empowerment research were entirely group based with “small n” datasets. Small groups were also used because JASPEV viewed the *process* of generating scores (with the aim of transforming youth-police relations in the target communities) as more important, in policy terms, than generating robust datasets.

Chapter 2. Findings from the Mixed-method Tool

Mixed-method research was conducted in April and May 2007 in a sub-sample of JASPEV communities selected for community-based policy monitoring, using the CSC tool. This process allowed for methodological continuity, with findings from the JASPEV score card the starting point for more in-depth research with a range of young people in each community. The three participating research communities were purposively selected by the JASPEV Research Advisory Group to ensure diversity as well as common characteristics. The three communities (their names have been changed here to ensure respondent anonymity) were:

- ***Harasson Gardens***: a poor urban community in downtown Kingston with a reputation for violence and poor youth-police relations;
- ***Poyuton Terrace***: an area in Kingston which, while having many of the social problems characteristic of poor urban communities in downtown Kingston, was reputed to have relatively good relationships between the community (particularly youth) and the police; and
- ***Coolblue Gap***: a poor rural community in St. Thomas around 40 miles from Kingston.

It is clear from the scores (see table 4 below) that there were very real differences between all three communities, although the scores in Poyuton Terrace and Coolblue Gap appeared closer for many of the indicators, despite the fact that one was urban and the other, rural. However, there were still significant differences in scores for indicators F and H between the two communities.

Table 4. Score card results in three research communities in Jamaica, 2008

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Community score^a</i>			
	<i>Harasson Gardens</i>	<i>Poyuton Terrace</i>	<i>Coolblue Gap</i>	
<i>Standard service indicators</i>				
A	Level of trust that youth have in the police	1	4	4
B	Level of respect and courtesy displayed by the police	2	5	5
C	Level of fairness displayed by police	1	4	4
D	Level of responsiveness of police	3	3	2
E	Level of effort made by police to interact with the youth	2	5	3
<i>Empowerment indicators</i>				
F	Level of youth access to information about police activities and services	3	5	1
G	Level of youth willingness to use police services (e.g., reporting incidents)	4	5	4
H	Ability of youth to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions	5	5	2
I	Level of youth willingness to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior and/or actions	1	4	4
J	Level of youth hope that youth-police relations can improve	2	5	5

Note: ^aScale: 1= Very poor; 2= Poor; 3= Fair; 4= Good; 5= Excellent.

Analysis of youth perceptions of police

The analysis presented here is based the discussions that accompanied the scoring process and PEER interviews. Data from the CSC reveal some differences between numeric scores and accompanying explanations, with the latter qualifying or even casting doubt on the former. In such cases, PEER findings were particularly useful for understanding how to weigh the differences and evaluate discrepancies.¹² PEER research also helped

¹² For a detailed discussion of PEER findings, see H. Gayle and H. Levy, 2009, "Forced Ripe! How Youth of Three Selected Working Class Communities Assess their Identity, Support, and Authority Systems, including their Relationship with the Jamaican Police." Unpublished report, Poverty Reduction Group, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

contextualize youth evaluations of the police within broader themes of gender, age, and socioeconomic hierarchies.

Trust in the police

The scorecards indicated that young people had very poor levels of trust in the police in Harasson Gardens and good levels in Poyuton Terrace and Coolblue Gap. The narrative explanations of these scores revealed that in Harasson Gardens, youth did not trust the police because of the things they had heard about them. The police were also said not to be trusted because they killed people and then planted evidence, such as guns. Although the score on this indicator was much higher in Poyuton Terrace, the ensuing discussion revealed that while police from the community might be trusted to some degree, young people still had mistrust for “outside police” not assigned to the community. This appeared to be the case in Coolblue Gap as well, where score cards indicated general mistrust of the police, but a trusting relationship between youth and local police. Higher levels of trust in this community may have been due to lower levels of crime, which participants identified as facilitating good relationships with the police.

However, peer research strongly emphasized the youth did not trust the police to any great extent in all three communities. While this research confirmed that Harasson Gardens had the lowest levels of trust, the levels of trust in Poyuton Terrace and Coolblue Gap were not as high as the score card results indicated. The reasons for the varying levels of trust and mistrust identified by the PEER tool were more complex than the score card explanations. For example, even where police appeared friendly, as in Coolblue Gap, youth were suspicious that this meant the police were looking for informers.

The peer research revealed that gender also played a significant role in determining levels of trust in the police, with young women feeling they could afford to trust the police because the latter were “just looking at them.” However, while females acknowledged that they were more likely to be protected, they also wished the police would stop sexually harassing them.

Peer research found that youth-police relations were best in Poyuton Terrace, an inner-city area with an active police youth club. However, despite a relatively high score in the score cards, not all youth trusted the police in the community, with peer research revealing a sense that the police used youth for their own ends and “only fools trust them.”

PEER findings in Harasson Gardens supported the results of the score cards, which showed the lowest levels of trust among the three research communities. The research also supported the narratives of CSC discussions that police were not to be trusted, with explanations that they were corrupt, thieves, and “criminals, just like gunman.”

Respect and courtesy displayed by the police

Scores for respect and courtesy displayed by the police followed the same pattern as those for trust, with Harasson Gardens having the lowest scores and Poyuton Terrace and Coolblue Gap, much higher scores. In all three communities, scores were slightly higher than those for trust in the police.

During the discussions associated with the score cards, participants explained that showing respect and courtesy meant dealing with youths “in the right manner,” that is, approaching people in a friendly manner even if they were about to search them. It also meant treating inner-city youths in the same way as “uptown” youths. Despite high scores

for this indicator, two male analysts in Poyuton Terrace explained that they did not agree that police in the area were courteous and respectful, arguing that they sometimes intentionally disrupted their makeshift football post without showing any regard for them. In Coolblue Gap, young men explained that younger officers tended to be more disrespectful and used expletives when speaking with young people.

Peer research also elicited interesting insights on broader issues of authority and social institutions within the communities. Young people felt that adults “assessed” them by their dress and attire, with generally negative assessments leading to disrespectful views, stigmatization, and abuse. In addition, they felt that they were expected to serve rather than be served. This expectation applied not only to the police, but also to other authority figures, such as parents, “dons” (heads of a gang or a local executive of a political garrison,¹³ or pool of voters), politicians, church members, and pastors.

Fairness displayed by the police

To young people, police fairness meant carrying out their duties according to the law, being impartial, non-judgmental, unprejudiced, and unbiased. Again, there was a stark difference between scores for Harasson Gardens (very poor) and the other two communities (both good).

In Harasson Gardens, the score cards indicated a difference in gender perspectives, with some female analysts suggesting that the police acted fairly, but the majority of respondents, particularly males, perceiving that the police treated inner-city youths

¹³ A garrison community in this context refers to a reservoir of voters designed to allow a Member of Parliament to win repeat victories. It is created when a building in a large-scale housing development is allocated to supporters of a specific political party. Political homogenization is maintained by dominant party activists, who push out the minority from within and guard against invasion from without. A hard-core garrison community exhibits an element of autonomy—it is a state within a state. Garrisons also usually have drug economies and high levels of violence. See Gayle and Levy (2007).

differently from others (e.g., “uptown” youths). Differences between the treatment of males and females and inner-city and uptown youth were also clearly identified in the peer research. Young people in Harasson Gardens explained, for instance, that if an inner-city youth wanted to be treated better, he would have to dress differently and seem as if he was a visitor to the area (i.e., from another area). To quote one respondent: “Inner-city youth get box and kick up and abused in every way imaginable. This cannot happen uptown.”

Young people in Harasson Gardens recounted the treatment they or their peers experienced at the hands of the police, such as being kicked and beaten, forced to eat their lit cigarettes, and even killed with a gun planted on them. They felt that the police forgot the law as soon as they left training school. Peer research showed that one reason for the gender difference in police treatment was that police saw males as most likely to be carrying guns. Young males felt that there was “a war between the police and the youth” and acknowledged that police felt they needed protection from young people. This factor was also cited by the police to justify why they treated males and females differently.

Finally, peer research showed that young people perceived that they were treated less fairly than adults by the police. A common complaint was that the police never gave young people a fair chance in the case of a conflict with an adult. Their perception was that their voices were not heard in such cases, even to defend themselves in the face of accusations.

Responsiveness of the police

The scores for police responsiveness were much more equal among the three communities than other scores, with the two inner-city communities rating this indicator a 3 (fair) and the rural community (Coolblue Gap), 2 (poor). During discussions associated with the score cards, it became clear that young people's expectations of police responsiveness were that the police should take the law seriously, be alert, practice what they had been trained to do, be more assertive when complaints were made, and respond in a timely manner.

In all three communities there were complaints that the police did not respond properly to either minor situations or emergencies. In Poyuton Terrace, where the police were described as "laid back," a male respondent explained that he had been caught in a shootout while coming home from work. He ran to the police station but no one would let him in. He concluded that all the officers were afraid. In Harasson Gardens, some respondents explained that the police station door was closed after 11.00 pm (although some participants said that if you went to the door, they would open it); they also said that someone had to die before the police would come. In Coolblue Gap community members explained that they had to call another station that was far away to get a response.

Several reasons were given for the poor level of police responsiveness, including too many young, inexperienced police officers (the police in Harasson Gardens were described as being mostly young boys), police being occasionally too scared to respond, and lack of resources, including vehicles.

The lack of responsiveness shown in the poor scores was amplified by the peer research. The interviews described in powerful terms that young people felt they received very little protection from a service that should offer them protection when they needed it. Young people in Coolblue Gap, for example, explained that police often played dominoes and became irritated by young people who disturbed them by coming to the station with complaints. To quote one respondent: “It is God who protects the youth. All the police do is idle. They always have an excuse to avoid any problem that they are called to address.” Whereas females were more likely to feel protected in the two urban communities, peer research showed that very few males felt the same. The research echoed CSC discussions about the war between the police and youth, with both sides hunting and killing each other. In Coolblue Gap it was explained that the police also did not feel safe around youth and that they lumped all young people together and viewed them negatively. Moreover, the police were seen as unconcerned about putting young people at risk by pressuring them for information about their peers, even though these young people could be injured by adults and other youths if they informed.

Efforts made by police to interact with youth

Scores for this indicator varied between 2 (poor) in Harasson Gardens, 3 (fair) in Coolblue Gap, and 5 (very good) in Poyuton Terrace. In both communities with lower scores, discussion of the CSC revealed a desire for more interaction and socialization with police as a way to increase trust. Low levels of police effort to interact with young people in Harasson Gardens were also ascribed to lack of communication and police fear of young people.

Poyuton Terrace has a vibrant police youth club and received a relatively high score for police efforts to interact with youth. This higher level of interaction may be linked to relatively higher scores for other indicators. Nevertheless, young people still expressed distrust and identified other elements of poor youth-police relations during the peer interviews that were not revealed in the group score card discussions. For example, young people in Poyuton Terrace explained that police benefited from their “closeness” to youth by using them to obtain information. They illustrated this by describing cases that had led them to conclude that the police used information obtained from them not only to investigate crimes, but also to inform on young people. Thus, despite superficially better relations, youth retained their distrust of the police even in this community.

Whereas some young people felt that most youth who distrusted the police were not innocent of wrongdoing, others expressed a fundamental alienation from the police. While in principle they liked the police youth club, these young people still felt a profound suspicion of police motivations. As one participant remarked, “Those people are my enemies and it is not because I am any criminal. They have not changed their spots, they are police.”

Analysis of youth empowerment

As noted earlier, the second group of indicators was designed to measure and track young people’s agency: their capacity to demand better services. This capacity is in part reflected in their knowledge of relevant laws and redress mechanisms, as well as their willingness to make complaints and their perception of actual possibilities to exercise this agency.

Youth access to information about police activities and services

Young people rated their access to information about police services very differently across the three communities, with the worst score (1, very poor) given in Coolblue Gap, the rural community. The general agreement there was that young people did not have enough access to information about the role of the police. In Harasson Gardens, which has a police youth club, the score was slightly better (3, fair), as a police representative is always present at the center to provide information on police services and activities. However, most young people in the community did not attend the youth club because they did not trust the police, so their access to information through this channel was limited.

Poyuton Terrace had the highest score for this indicator (5, very good). The police youth club in this community was reported to be very active, which could have been a contributory factor. However, young people described access to information as more than information provided through the youth club, it also concerned being able to go into a police station and enquire and obtain information.

Youth willingness to use police services

Given the scores and PEER research on most of the previous indicators, the level of youth willingness to use police services (e.g., report incidents) was unexpected. Scores in all three communities were either 4 (good) or 5 (very good), despite the mistrust and perceptions of poor police responsiveness described above.

Narratives of the CSC discussions suggested, however, that the scores do not reflect the full situation. In Harasson Gardens, for example, despite a “good” score of 4, young people said they were not willing to report incidents because they feared the police would

tell people they had informed. They also argued that the police must know the law and act accordingly in order for young people to become more willing to report incidents. In addition, they suggested that police leadership needed to improve in order for residents to become more amenable to expressing themselves without fear. They explained that if a police inspector were at the police station, their reports were handled seriously, but that young policemen took their reports lightly. In rural Coolblue Gap, some participants remarked that their willingness to use police services depended on the seriousness of an incident.

Ability of youth to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior

According to the score cards, the perceived ability of young people to officially complain about police behavior and/or actions appears to be very good in the two urban communities (both scores of 5), but poor (score of 2) in Coolblue Gap. However, discussions of these scores indicated a more nuanced reality, with explanations sometimes appearing to contradict the scores. In Harasson Gardens, for instance, young people gave this indicator a score of 5 and felt that complaining about police behavior was possible in principle, there was no one in the community with whom a complaint could be lodged. Most participants were unaware of the police complaints division. Others explained that complaints could be made in a nearby community; still others felt they could contact Mark Shields (the Deputy Police Commissioner of Jamaica) directly, although it would not make any sense to do so because it was generally felt that the “police back the police” and did not follow up on complaints.

In Poyuton Terrace, being able to officially complain meant that young people could inform on the police and bring them to justice. It also meant that they could speak out

about police injustice. Although the score in this community was high, participants explained that it only applied to local police. In rural Coolblue Gap, where the score was lowest, there was general agreement that more information was needed regarding the process for complaining about the police.

Youth willingness to officially complain about inappropriate police behavior

The scores regarding young people's *willingness* to complain are interesting in light of the scores for *ability* to complain. In Poyuton Terrace, willingness and ability were both scored highly. However, in the other two communities, the two indicators were ranked very differently.

While respondents in Harasson Gardens scored their ability to complain very highly, their willingness to do so was scored very poorly. This is an inner-city urban community with low levels of trust, poor youth-police relations, and high levels of violence. Participants explained that although they felt able to complain, they were not willing to risk their lives by doing so. They elaborated that police work was about a power struggle and that the police used their might to fight rights. Given the peer research regarding the poor (and often violent) treatment of youths by the police in this area, it is not surprising that youth perceived complaints about the police to be too risky. In Coolblue Gap, the picture was very different. There young people had a much higher willingness to complain, but a very low ability to do so because of poor information.

Level of youth hope that youth-police relations can improve

In general, young people expected the police to perform better and more professionally. However, their personal experience generally caused them to expect little change. Some youth expected nothing but brutality from the police. The findings of the peer research

did not, however, suggest a complete lack of hope—especially among female youth—that youth-relations could improve. In both Poyuton Terrace and Coolblue Gap, young people gave high scores (5) to the indicator on hope that youth-police relations could improve.

In Harasson Terrace, youth were less optimistic, scoring the level of hope as poor (2). Participants there felt there was no reassurance, no protection, and no service from the police. They noted, however, that the poor score did not mean they were entirely hopeless. Some structures were in place through which their voices could be heard, individuals remained who were unwilling to change. Recently, a new set of police had arrived and most were young. They occasionally played football and smoked marijuana with certain youths. There was hope that this informality marked a new beginning.

The peer research also revealed that young people suspected that the police were just as pessimistic as they were about the possibility for positive change. Policemen were perceived as being convinced that young people would continue to hate them. The CSC and peer research found, however, that young people across the three communities felt that dialogue was essential for creating change. Both police and youth needed opportunities to meet and develop plans to get youths involved and active in their communities. While this could be done through police youth clubs, the negative perceptions of many young people regarding police involvement in these centers, and the risks or problems that occurred as a result, suggests the need to find alternative locales without formal connections to the police.

The institutional context: Additional ethnographic findings

The peer ethnographic research provided a deeper understanding of the environment within which youth-police relationships unfold. Interviews with almost 60 young people, which were then further interpreted by trained peer interviewers, revealed that youth-police relations are but one expression of generally hierarchical and often punitive relationships between young people and their elders in the three communities. Where families were more intact, as in the rural community of Coolblue Gap, youth experienced older people as more supportive, but in inner-city areas, where adults were also coping with poverty and family breakdown, they were less able to provide support, whether financial or emotional, to young people. Particularly in urban communities, young people felt excluded and even stigmatized as ignorant, idle, and destructive. These differences were reflected in the CSC scores.

The interviews also showed that youth keenly felt the absence of support from parents, neighbors, and even local institutions, such as churches. While young people in Coolblue Gap found more sources of help, inner-city youth felt that success invited envy rather than support from others. When seeking employment, they felt stigmatized by the mere fact that they lived in a high-crime community. Denied formal employment, and in some cases without any financial support from parents, young people in these communities felt that they had limited options to succeed. For such youth, illegal activities, including prostitution, appeared the most viable option for surviving. Particularly for young men, who saw few legitimate avenues for asserting their identity as men, criminal “dons” in their neighborhoods had become role models. Serving such dons conferred a degree of reflected power and authority on these young men. Young women were vulnerable to

abuse and exploitation, but less likely than young men to become involved in violent crime, a difference also reflected in the CSC discussions.

Chapter 3. Policy Recommendations

The application of a mixed-method diagnostic tool allowed the evaluation to look at the problems that affect everyday service provider-user interactions, as well as to delve deeper into issues of class, gender, and social hierarchy. In this way, the mixed-method approach identified youth-police relations as a symptom of a deeper set of structural tensions, and thus unlikely to significantly or lastingly improve without attention to the wider social context.

PEER research was able to go beyond the diagnostic work of the score card sessions to produce important insights on poverty and power in the research communities. The combined methods demonstrated the different ways in which the relationship between agency and opportunity structure plays out within communities and underpins everyday relationships between service providers (the police) and youth. This social analysis is in itself interesting, but it also has far-reaching implications for policy analysis and recommendations. Rather than simply tinker with policy implementation at the interface of police-youth interaction (a kind of “empowerment lite” approach), the mixed-method tool generated more “upstream” and cross-sectoral social policy analysis, as outlined below.

Social policy must address the agency of undervalued youth: Among poor urban and rural communities, youth have very little power in the presence of adults in Jamaica.

Young people in Jamaica lack agency in their relationships with adults. Youth are described as “forced ripe,” a Jamaican metaphor for fruits or children that seem to mature too quickly and thus lack quality or substance. The metaphor suggests an important

contradiction: while adults may have high expectations of youth, they fail to invest (emotionally, psychologically, materially, etc.) sufficiently in young people to allow them to realize these expectations. Young people are prevented from participating in vertically hierarchical forms of decision making; guns and gangs thus fill a gap by providing a ready way for young people to command the respect denied them in adult-youth relations in the country. Social policy must address young people's need to participate in social life by engaging them more actively in government-sponsored programs (including schools), as well as supporting a more enabling environment for their participation in nongovernmental or private-sector activities.

Social policy needs to rebuild relevant institutions: Within inner-city communities, in particular, young people have lost faith in traditional institutions, preferring to rely on themselves, their peers, and alternative street and/or gang institutions.

There are a range of institutions that are common to all three communities in the project, but the importance and influence of these institutions varies, as do their impact on behavior and outcomes. In rural communities, traditional institutions—the family, school, and church—operate effectively at some levels, providing a supportive, albeit hierarchical, frame of existence and support for youth. This situation contrasts with inner-city communities, where young people have lost faith in traditional institutions and have become self-reliant or turned to alternative social institutions—notably street life and gangs—that offer other social and economic opportunities. These alternative structures can have a major, and negative, impact on the life choices of young people, with gender playing an extremely important role in mediating these choices. Thus any social policy aimed at improving youth-police relations must incorporate programs to support families.

Such programs exist, particularly in the nongovernmental sector, but many operate on limited budgets and are subject to changing donor priorities.

Social policy should be geared towards generating employment to break the trap of involvement with guns and alternative authority structures.

Low levels of hope for an improvement in youth-police relations among young people reflect a sense of hopelessness. Many young males living in the inner city appear to have little hope of earning a livelihood by non-criminal means. Many lack positive role models, support systems, and opportunities to help them avoid criminal life. Role models for inner city males included “gunmen,” “dons” and politicians¹⁴, all of whom helped perpetuate a situation of violence to achieve their own purposes. Business people and other adults were perceived as both habitually stigmatizing young people who come from high-crime, inner-city communities and denying them employment opportunities. Youth in these areas are sometimes forced to depend on support from a don—selling marijuana for him, or even robbing or killing at his behest. The don had the power and authority on the street corner - he told the youth what to do, when to do it, how to do it. He had the last word because of the punishment he could inflict – including threats to harm their family members. Many young males see the gun as the only solution to the poverty and problems they face, with no consideration of the long-term consequences of using them. The gun provides a chance of a way out and for getting the power and respect that they lack.

Youth-police relations are therefore unlikely to improve significantly without addressing the wider causes of their disempowerment and disenfranchisement at the same time.

¹⁴ Politicians in this context connotes pervasive cronyism and patronage.

While the issue of young people's engagement in criminal activity is complex, the peer research conducted for the project highlighted the great extent to which young people felt forced into such activities just to survive.

While school is still perceived as a fundamentally important institution in framing the life choices of young people, gender increasingly influences the choices and outcomes of young people.

There is a widespread perception among young men that there is an institutional bias in favor of girls which influences choices and outcomes. A mix of explanations were cited for this bias, including the attitudes and expectations of educators and other people in power; a less active form of institutional bias reflected in a lack of male role models in schools; and a biased investment by parents in the education of daughters. As a result of this bias, boys in the three communities used their agency to choose not to invest time and effort in education, perceiving that there is no value or return in it for them. These choices in turn influence decisions about alternative social institutions and support structures (the street corner and gangs). It seems that some boys recognized that education offered a route of social mobility for girls and were even prepared to make a strategic choice to sacrifice their own education in order to give sisters or partners the best chance.

Power relations between young men and young women and the use of agency is complex.

The PEER research generated an important gender message about self-esteem and agency. Young men have low self-esteem, partly as a result of school failure and lack of opportunity and stigmatization. However, they also have low self-esteem because they

evaluate themselves against better-performing girls. Peers interviewed in Coolblue Gap commented, for example, that some girls even go back to school after the “mistake” of a first pregnancy, while young men are idle at school and may emerge illiterate.

Girls are also imbued with agency in their ability to use their sexuality to negotiate support. This revelation nuances the conventional narrative in Jamaica, and elsewhere, that sexuality can disempower young women because they may enter into high-dependency relationships with men, becoming locked in to such relationships through pregnancy as part of an intergenerational cycle of poverty. This finding reinforces the centrality of gender for any social policy that addresses youth.

Antagonistic youth-police relations are symptomatic of habitual power relationships in Jamaican society; as such, they are challenging but not intractable.

The case of Poyuton Terrace suggests that youth-police interaction and improved communication has an impact on their perceptions of one another, as evidenced by the results of the score card. Even in Harasson Gardens, a new generation of younger police officers is changing its behavior towards young people. These positive changes are reflected in the finding that young people’s *expectations* of improved police performance are rising and that they see a way forward through dialogue.

Yet the PEER research reveals that beneath these habitual changes are deeper-seated, structural power relations that are more resistant to change. These power relations are accompanied by a lack of trust and a suspicion of motives (e.g., the idea that police “use” youth), while the power of the police is perceived as corrupt rather than legitimate. Young people do not feel that they are served and protected by the police. On the police side, the level of power exerted is connected to their own fear and hatred of youth in

violent communities. These power imbalances have gender dimensions. Young women are more likely to feel protected, although with the trade-off that male police officers use their power to compete with local young men for sexual relations with women. Making structural changes to this type of insider-outsider contact will be difficult without addressing institutional distortions. The rules may change slowly through increased interaction and dialogue, but rule changes need to go hand-in-hand with efforts to tackle broader institutional constraints and lack of agency.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

This paper has described the application of a mixed-method diagnostic tool for measuring empowerment. The project analyzed here attempted to measure empowerment in the context of evaluating social policy in Jamaica. The analytical lens for the study was based on two fundamental assumptions about human behavior. First, that everyday interactions are framed by “adaptive preferences,” in which people’s awareness of what is desirable or possible is shaped (and limited) by habitual interactions. The implication for empowerment is that when people have very low expectations of what they are entitled to, a survey of their attitudes, perceptions, and expectations will not necessarily provide guidance for improving a given service.

The second assumption is that in order to create an enabling environment for empowerment (i.e., to enable people’s capacity to envision and demand change) through policy interventions, it is essential to broaden the focus from the immediate locus of a given service or interaction (in this case, youth-police relations) and instead address it within the broader context of political, economic, and social empowerment.

The diagnostic social policy monitoring tool developed here to examine user-provider relations (specifically, young people and the police) therefore goes beyond looking at client access to services or their level of satisfaction (the “beneficiary” model). The tool added benchmarks for tracking changes in the *capacity of young people effectively to demand service improvements from the police*. In the future, it would be useful to complement these benchmarks with indicators related to the capacity of the service provider to actually provide these services. Identifying changes requires measuring and analyzing empowerment *outcomes* (changes in power relations attributable to policy or

program intervention) and empowerment *processes* (changes in perceptions and behaviors indicative of empowerment and attributable to policy or program intervention). The empowerment framework findings point to the importance of building capabilities and transforming social institutions. The CSC generated perception scores that in turn provoked local dialogue and subsequent action planning. **Because the score card exercises were conducted with small numbers of respondents, the reliability of the scores is questionable.** The fact that findings from the peer ethnographic research often appeared to contradict CSC scores (especially the more positive ones) could be due to either the added value of probing the habitual responses of the focus groups or to the unreliability of scores given by a small sample.

The only way to assess the relative significance of these two explanations would be to elicit perception scores through individual surveys of larger populations, either alongside CSCs administered to focus groups (if the local process remains important) or *instead* of group-based CSCs. Of course, if the objective is to test new modalities of service provision in particular areas or communities, then survey size and coverage should be designed with that population in mind. The pilot exercise generated a set of baseline indicators for ongoing monitoring of empowerment, which the authors recommend be mainstreamed into larger survey instruments, both to strengthen the reliability of the data and maximize the potential for policy monitoring and analysis.

A finding from the CSC tool was that while indicators are useful for measuring the “accountability gap,” they can be misleading—and even dangerous—if they reduce power relations to a depoliticized relationship between service provider and user. The qualitative data generated by the peer ethnographic research was critical for

achieving a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the scorecards findings, broadening the context of youth-police relations by looking at social institutions in terms of identity, authority, and power relations. Although findings from the PEER research were not unexpected to members of the research community, they uncovered important, policy-relevant issues that provoked strong responses from the policy audience (see below).

Although the outcome of this exercise constitutes a strong case for the added value of using mixed-method tools for policy analysis, it is too early to say whether its application in Jamaica has had a tangible impact on policy. It does appear, however, that the framework and ethnographic research will enable a policy narrative about “empowering social policy” that has the potential to move the policy framework away from programmatic bundling to a more genuinely cross-sectoral perspective on reducing poverty.

Finally, by adding depth and a “human face” to the numbers and the relatively brief accompanying narrative of the CSCs, the ethnographic research powerfully appealed to policy makers’ imaginations and emotions. For many Jamaican policy makers, these qualitative insights and their manner of delivery were very new. The experience of delivering PEER findings made it clear that this type of analysis, with compelling accounts of young people’s everyday experiences, has the potential to shift policy makers’ subjective world views in a way that numbers, diagrams, and graphs cannot.

More than the *content* of policy recommendations, the *process* of community-based policy monitoring energized and engaged many stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation in Jamaica. The Ministry of National Security and the Jamaica

Constabulary Force were brought into the process, particularly as it related to the current rollout of community policing. The Ministry of Education agreed to address youth-police relations as part of the national youth strategy. Youth-police relations were also due to become part of the National Security Strategy, and the suggestion was also made to use score cards in the schools as part of the Safe School Project.

When the qualitative study, "Forced Ripe," was presented at a workshop, the findings resonated strongly with audience members. The media, although invited, did not attend, but the session was taped and the draft report subsequently distributed in response to requests by several government agencies. The Ministry of National Security, for example, requested a copy for the team working on a new strategy, to help them link the findings to the formulation of policy. Under the DFID-funded project, the funding for which concluded in 2007, JASPEV continued to work with different ministries to advocate for the institutionalization of community-based policy monitoring (including score cards, facilitated discussions, and peer ethnography) as part of a regular monitoring process.

In conclusion, it appears possible and useful to operationalize the concept of empowerment and apply it meaningfully to social policy through measurement and analysis. In Jamaica, while initial interest in research results was considerable and positive among policy makers and policy implementers, the experience of applying the tool in a social policy context -- in contrast to a context of more manageable and predictable programme or project cycles -- confirms the continuing challenges of effectively and systematically feeding outcome evidence into the design and delivery of social policy.

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