

Public Transportation in the Caribbean: Dominance of Paratransit Modes

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Abstract: *The use of paratransit modes is one important part of public transportation system in developing countries. Many studies have documented the different types, physical and operational characteristics of paratransit modes in African and Asian developing countries. However, there are few studies on paratransit modes in Caribbean developing countries and their significance in their transportation system. This paper documents the types of modes in the public transportation system in five Caribbean countries; Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago. Although these countries are different in geography, social culture and economic growth, the paratransit systems have developed similarly in each country and share identical cultures around these modes. In some countries, the paratransit modes are the only form of public transportation available. Despite there being a negative culture around paratransit modes in the Caribbean, these modes are more reliable than government-owned buses and more frequently used. This paper focused on the paratransit modes of six Caribbean countries, and provided some factual analysis of the current public transportation system. More studies are needed addressing the provision and development of these paratransit modes in the entire Caribbean. This study would contribute to provide a foundation to future studies aiming to establish a general methodology framework that could assist in solving some of the transportation issues the Caribbean faces, through a system using paratransit modes and policy development.*

Keywords: *Paratransit Modes, Public Transportation, Developing Countries, Caribbean*