**Jim Turnour**

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**How does the work you are doing relate to *governance*?**

I am researching Indigenous economic development in the context of northern Australia through case studies for my PhD. Working through a partnership between the Aboriginal Peoples’ Alliance a peak body of the 20 Traditional Owner Groups in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland and The Cairns Institute. The research intersects with governance in exploring the process of government policy making and its application within the ‘mainstream’ and Indigenous spaces.

It is a term that can mean different things to different people and interests. Still coming to terms with its definition and have following observations:

* More than simply policy making and decision making in governments and institutions
* It is relational and therefore power is important in understanding governance
* Scale is important from local, regional, state, national and global

**What interesting or different insight have you gained about *governance* in your recent research?**

Exploring and making more explicit how governance operates within different spaces can aid in understanding how government policies can better support Indigenous aspirations for economic development. It will be important to define and develop a shared understanding of what we mean by governance.Depending on its application governance as a concept can have a positive or negative influence. It could be used to empower or control.

**What theoretical or practical problem to do with *governance* are you engaging with at the moment?**

Three theoretical frameworks neoliberalism, sustainable livelihoods approach and post-colonial theory are helping to inform my thinking.

Through literature review I have identified neoliberalism as an ideology and governmentality as useful theoretical frameworks. Ideologically it has been the dominant policy framework in Australia since the 1980s although there is a great deal of contradiction in its application. As a governmentality it has been useful in understanding how governments can use power diffusely through the way they structure programs and priorities. Governance could be seen as an example of this as ‘good governance’ becomes a basis for example funding.

The sustainable livelihoods framework highlights the importance of institutions and governance to the development of new livelihoods strategies.

Post-colonial theory in thinking about governance and different world views. For example the contradictions in much of what government says and then does in terms of policy as it relates to Indigenous Australia.